

International Seminar:

Women in uniform and peace operations: advances and challenges in the creation of safe and inclusive environments

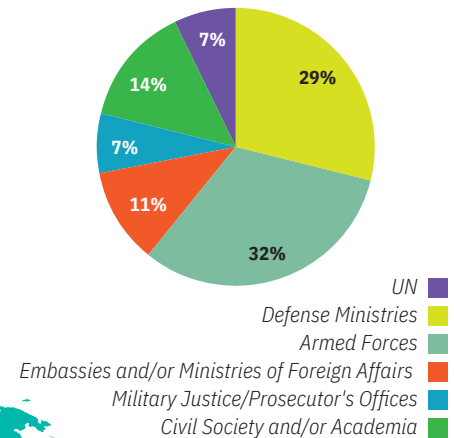
The International Seminar: “Women in uniform and peace operations: progress and challenges in creating safe and inclusive environments” was an inter-regional space for exchange on good practices and experiences in the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse in military forces and in UN peace operations, as well as to address the challenges and explore possible recommendations in this regard.

Led by [RESDAL](#), [REBRAPAZ](#), the [Brazilian Army Land Operations Command \(COTER\)](#) and [IAEN](#), and funded by Global Affairs Canada, it sought to promote the construction of a safe and trusted space to share good practices and experiences in addressing issues of discipline, the inclusion of women, and challenges both at the national level and in UN peace operations.

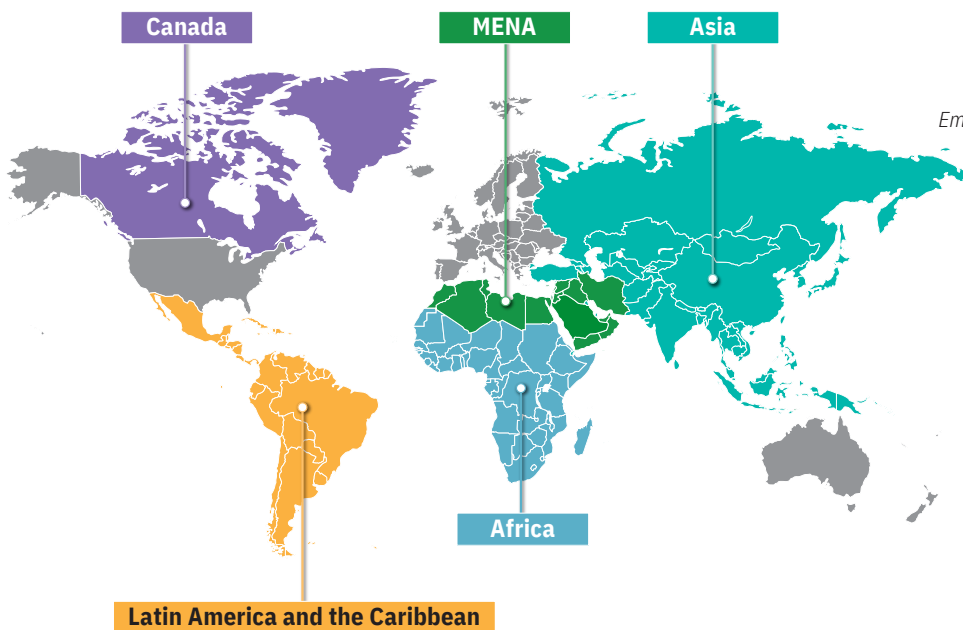
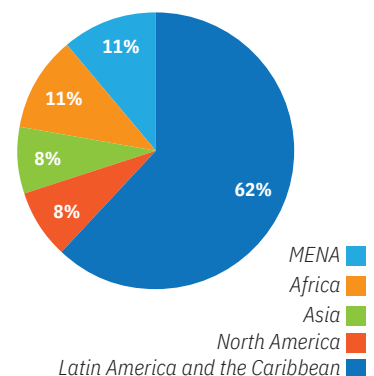
During two days, on October 22 and 23, 2024, military personnel, United Nations representatives, Ministries of Defense and of Foreign Affairs representatives and civilian specialists from different regions met at the Brazilian Army Headquarters to share and exchange information about the role of women in uniform in UN peace operations, and the creation of safe environments in institutions at the national level and in peace operations. One of the central themes of the discussion was the scope and impact of policies and measures aimed at preventing sexual harassment and abuse.



Participants by institution



Participants by region



The seminar became a space for the exchange of knowledge and experiences on challenges and good practices in relation to the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse in peace operations and in national institutions, promoting the consideration of these issues in the international agenda and in the agenda of the different regions of the world that provide uniformed personnel to UN peace operations.



Andrea Chiappini, Gen. Brig. Ricardo Luiz Da Cunha Rabêlo, Minister Counselor Simon Cridland, and Eduarda Hamann.

Gen Ricardo Luis Da Cunha Rabelo, Chief of Peace Operations of the Brazilian Army, Minister Counselor Simon Cridland of the Canadian Embassy in Brazil, Andrea Chiappini, President of RESDAL, and Eduarda Hamann, Coordinator of REBRAPAZ, highlighted the opportunity to strengthen ties and actions around the theme of the event in an interregional manner.

1st panel: Women in uniform and peace operations

In a key panel, participants highlighted the role played by women in uniform in peace operations, as well as the challenges, good practices, proposals and recommendations in this regard. The exchange was based on the advances and challenges for the prevention, treatment, and sanctioning of sexual harassment and abuse with the following key recommendations:



Brig. Gen. Ricardo Luiz Da Cunha Rabêlo, Christian Saunders, and Deborah Warren-Smith.

- a) Institutionalize continuous leadership training on sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment.
- b) Implement culturally adaptive policies and training; and
- c) Develop and align national policies with international standards.

2nd panel: Between norm and practice: progress and challenges in legislation to prevent sexual harassment and abuse in the security forces.

A central element when it comes to observing progress and challenges in the creation of safe and inclusive environments for women in uniform at the national level, relates to the regulations established to prevent sexual harassment and abuse in the military forces. In this regard, the panel presented information regarding the case of Brazil, as well as the advances in regional research promoted by the interregional project that RESDAL is developing.



Dolores Bermeo, Elisa Rial, Dr. Mariana de Aquino, Dainzú Lopez de Lara, and Niloy Biswas.

3rd panel: Troop and police contributing countries: national standards and peace operations.

The panel focused on examining key aspects of sexual harassment and abuse, including their alignment with international human rights law, as well as institutional responses, with specific insights from Cameroon, Pakistan, and the broader African region.



Lt. Col. Sara Alvi, Dr. Roxana Arroyo, Major Catherine Mbappe Mbome, Cecil Griffiths, and Col. Jorge Luis Ramos.



Lt. Col. Sara Alvi participated in a panel discussing progress and challenges in legislating against sexual harassment and abuse within the military forces.

Perspectives from national institutions

With panels focused on inter-regional exchange, participants shared their own national experience and perspective. They identified several institutional actions to address the issue, as well as different advances and challenges faced in each country and region. These spaces were key to the development of the event, and left a series of good institutional practices that can be analyzed by other countries.



Lt. Col. Sherihan Abouelkhir Roshdy Mohamed, Capt. María Lorena Flores Velasteguí, Lt. Col. Renata Monteiro, Dr. Caroline Piloni, Magister Ana Carolina Podlesker, and Frigate Capt. Sarahí Vargas de Jesús.

Lt. Col. Lorena González Correa, Col. Zead Alrwashdeh, First Secretary Helena Lobato, Capt. Karla Cubas Ahumada, and Maj. Reyna Melina Morales Morales.



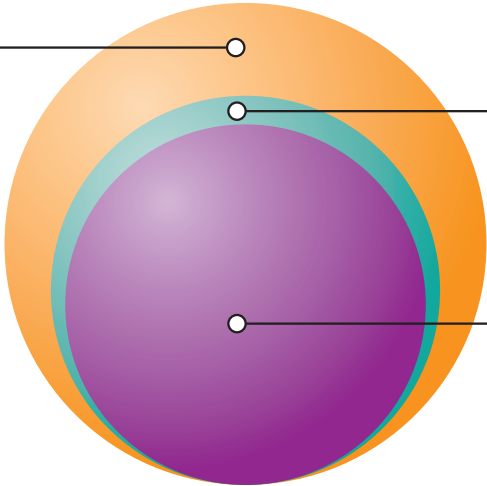


Capt. María Lorena Flores Velasteguí, Maj. Catherine Mbappe Mbome, Capt. Karla Cubas Ahumada, Maj. Reyna Melina Morales Morales, Maj. Gen. Ahmed Reda Farghaly Mohamed Mostafa, Lt. Col. Sherihan Abouelkhir Roshdy Mohamed, Frigate Capt. Sarahí Vargas de Jesús, Lt. Col. Sara Alvi, and Lt. Col. Lorena González Correa.

75 % of participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the interregional seminar, highlighting its effectiveness in fostering meaningful dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration across regions.



100%
of the participants considered the exchange between regions to be key.



81%
of the participants found new knowledge and information in the seminar.

75%
of the participants were very satisfied with the interregional seminar.



All participants unanimously agreed that the exchange between regions was essential, emphasizing its importance in fostering collaboration and sharing best practices.



81% of participants reported gaining new knowledge and insights from the seminar, highlighting its value as a learning opportunity.



Messages to the United Nations

The global and international scenario was key at the time of the inter-regional exchange. Taking advantage of the appreciated participation of two UN officials, Special Coordinator Christian Saunders and Deborah Warren-Smith, Elsie Fund Manager, participants were asked to respond anonymously to the following question: *If you could give three messages to the United Nations, what would they be?*

The responses reflected the need to address the barriers and challenges identified, as well as to disseminate good experiences internationally, and especially to support UN efforts on sexual exploitation and abuse. They can be summarized as follows:

IF YOU COULD GIVE THREE MESSAGES TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?





International Seminar: Uniformed women and peace operations: progress and challenges in creating safe and inclusive environments

October 22 and 23, 2024, in Brasília/DF, Brazil

Latin American Security and Defense Network (RESDAL Internacional), Rede Brasileira sobre Operações de Paz (REBRAPAZ),
Comando de Operações Terrestres do Exército Brasileiro (COTER/EB) and Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales de Ecuador (IAEN)

Participants

Latin America and the Caribbean

Magister Ana Carolina Podlesker (*Ministry of Defense, Argentina*)

Brig. Gen. Ricardo Luiz Da Cunha Rabêlo (*COTER, Brazil*)

Dr. Mariana de Aquino (*Military Justice, Brazil*)

Dr Caroline Piloni (*Military Prosecutor's Office, Brazil*)

Lt. Col. Renata Monteiro (*Army, Brazil*)

First Secretary Helena Lobato (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil*)

Capt. María Lorena Flores Velasteguí (*Ministry of Defense, Ecuador*)

Dr. Roxana Arroyo (*IAEN, Ecuador*)

Lt. Col. Flor Hilaria Ubeda Yat (*Ministry of Defense, Guatemala*)

Dr. Dainzú López de Lara Espinoza (*UDLAP, Mexico*)

Maj. Reyna Melina Morales Morales (*SEDENA, Mexico*)

Frigate Capt. Sarahí Vargas de Jesús (*SEMAR, Mexico*)

Capt. Karla Cubas Ahumada (*Army, Peru*)

Col. Jorge Luis Ramos (*CEEP, Peru*)

Dr. María Cecilia Chumbe Rodríguez (*Ministry of Defense, Peru*)

Lt. Col. Lorena González Correa (*National Army, Uruguay*)

Africa

Maj. Catherine Mbappe Mbome (*Ministry of Defense, Cameroon*)

Cecil Griffiths (*LINLEA, Liberia*)

Lilian Ukaegbu (*Ministry of Defense, Nigeria*)

Asia

Dr. Niloy Biswas (*University of Dhaka, Bangladesh*)

Lt. Col. Sara Alvi (*Army, Pakistan*)

MENA

My. Gen. Ahmed Reda Farghaly Mohamed Mostafa (*Armed Forces of Egypt*)

Lt. Col. Sherihan Abouelkhir Roshdy Mohamed (*Peace Operations Training Institute, Egypt*)

Col. Zead Alrwashdeh (*Military Attaché, Jordanian Mission to the UN*)

United Nations

Christian Saunders, Special Coordinator for Enhancing the UN Response to Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (*UN*)

Deborah Warren-Smith, Elsie Initiative Fund Manager (*UN Women*)

Canada

Minister-Counsellor Simon Cridland (*Embassy of Canada in Brazil*)

Second Secretary Victoria Jull (*Embassy of Canada in Brazil*)

REBRAPAZ and RESDAL

Dolores Bermeo

Andrea Chiappini

Marcela Donadio

Eduarda Hamann

Elisa Rial