“From trial to success”

Women’s participation in the defense and security forces in Mali: a vehicle for trust

Illustrated Synthesis

October 2018
WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THE DSFs

1. Beyond women’s rights, a question of peace in Mali: having female personnel in the armed forces fosters trust between the DSFs and civilians (Ch. I)

2. The importance of including women in the DSFs
   A concept to be deconstructed: “Women do not have their place in the army” (Ch. I & IV)

3. Conditions to facilitate women’s inclusion in the DSFs
   Despite male dominance, the doors of the DSFs are open to women (Ch. IV)

4. “There is no he or she in the armed forces”: equal chances does not translate into equal conditions. (Ch. II & III)

- KEY MESSAGES -

5. Societal conditions to include women in the DSFs
   Between respect and reject: community buy-in is essential for the inclusion of women in the DSFs (Ch. I)

6. Conditions to advance women’s careers in the DSFs
   Opportunities exist but are not always seized: some women lack self-confidence (Ch. III)

7. “They must make a choice”: women in uniform have a hard time reconciling the opposing expectations of family and job. (Ch. III)
For a positive view of women in uniform...

For strengthened Government’s efforts for peace...

For more applications to the DSFs by women...

For a more attractive integration in the DSFs for women...

For the application of Malian lessons by regional or international actors...

- RECOMMENDATIONS -

1. Facilitate a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different armed forces.
2. Document and disseminate the added value of women's participation in the DSFs.
3. Inspire integration in the DSFs through the showcasing of women role models from the DSF.
4. Include all initiative for the inclusion of women in the DSFs in existing Government efforts.
5. Mainstream gender in the Security Sector Reform process.
6. Increase the age limit for recruitment from 22 to 26 years for all armed forces.
7. Disseminate information related to the recruitment process via radio and in local languages.
8. Create synergies between CSOs and DSFs, for example in the preparation of potential female candidates.
9. Adapt the medical checkup process to the needs of women: female doctors and protection of privacy.
10. Adapt dormitories and other rooms to the presence of female personnel.
11. Recognize the importance of women's participation for the implementation of the GS-Sahel Joint Force.
12. Research the impact of the participation of women in MINUSMA contingents, identify lessons learned for Mali and beyond.