

**TURKISH NATIONAL REPORT ON
FEMALE SOLDIERS IN THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES
BRUSSELS/BELGIUM –2008**

1. THE EXISTING POLICIES/ AMENDMENTS IN THE POLICIES/ NEW POLICIES:

a. The general personnel policy of the Turkish Armed Forces about the female soldiers consists the qualified female officers and non-commissioned officers who are in the appropriate service and rank. By the regulations arranged within the framework of this policy, it is essential that the female officers and NCOs are appointed to the posts which are utmost suitable for their educations, experiences, personal skills and their existing capacities as their male colleagues in order to utilize the qualifications of the female officers and NCOs effectively.

b. For the purpose of ensuring the permanency of the activities conducted by the Turkish Armed Forces in wartime and peacetime, the female officers and NCOs are posted together with their male colleagues considering the requisites of the post without nourishing sexual discrimination in combat troops, combat support troops and combat service elements, various-level HQs, military hospitals, recruiting units, military factories and technical and social facilities.

c. The legal regulations and existing practices are regularly reviewed and the research and development efforts are achieved in the light of the acquired experiences and studies for the purpose of appointing the female officers and NCOs in the utmost suitable posts and clearly determining the terms and conditions of their duties and increasing their numbers and facilitating their employment without nourishing sexual discrimination in execution of the duty.

d. The results of the AR&D efforts on improvements in personal rights are as follows:

(1) The male and female officers/NCOs serving in the Turkish Armed Forces have the equal rights. Furthermore, the female officers/NCOs have special rights of leave of absence due to their sex and physical features like pregnancy and maternity.

(2) Thanks to the law, which newly went into effect, have made new improvements in favour of the personnel on pregnancy and maternity leaves. According to this law, the leave for giving birth will be 8 weeks before and on the date of giving birth and that the period of 3 weeks for which the personnel have to work before giving birth could be added to the leave periods taken after giving birth and that the nursing leaves would be prolonged until the child is one year old and the mother have the right to decide the time of nursing during daytime. In addition, they can take leave without pay for six months if required.

(3) By the amendments on the concerning directives of the Naval Forces Command, the female officers the pregnancy of whom are confirmed with health

reports are withdrawn from active duties on ships and appointed to the HQ components of their units until the end of their nursing leaves.

(4) The female pilot officers of the Air Forces Command are taken from flights starting from the 13th -14th weeks of their pregnancy and considered legally on leave starting from the 24th week. The female officers who can return to their flight services during their leave of nursing by a health report after giving birth can take leave, if necessary, by the approval of the flight surgeon.

(5) Concerning the appointments of the female officers and NCOs who are married their colleagues, as protecting the unity of the family is essential it is attached importance to appoint the female officers to the garrisons of their spouses and that if the spouses work in a state institution, the post of their spouses is taken into consideration.

(6) The female officers and NCOs whose spouses are appointed to foreign countries for permanent duties can take four-year leave without pay if they require.

(7) The female officers and NCOs who married a colleague from a different service are transferred to the services of their spouses in order to protect the unity of the family.

2. ORGANISATION :

a. Within the Turkish Armed Forces only officers and NCOs are employed as female soldiers. There are no female personnel within the Turkish Armed Forces employed in the status of ranks and files.

b. Total number of the female officers and NCOs within the Turkish Armed Forces is 1.451 as of April 2008.

c. The employment areas and distribution according to the ranks of the female officers and NCOs are as follows:

EMPLOYMENT AREAS OF THE FEMALE OFFICERS AND NCOs

DUTY AREAS	LAND FORCES	NAVAL FORCES	AIR FORCES	GENDARMERIE	COAST GUARD	TOTAL
COMBAT ARMS	39	71	97	167	1	375
AUXILIARY ARMS	613	172	217	71	3	1.076
TOTAL	652	243	314	238	4	1.451

DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEMALE OFFICERS AND NCOs ACCORDING TO THE RANKS

RANKS	LAND FORCES	NAVAL FORCES	AIR FORCES	GENDARMERIE	COAST GUARD	TOTAL
GENERAL/ ADMIRAL	-	-	-	-	-	-
COLONEL	15	5	4	-	-	24
LT.COLONEL	16	14	8	-	-	38
MAJOR	171	44	40	8	-	263
CAPTAIN	243	90	81	20	2	436
1st Lieutenant	145	73	138	26	1	383
2nd Lieutenant	55	17	43	12	1	128
NCO	7	-	-	172	-	179
RANK&FILES	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	652	243	314	238	4	1.451

3. EMPLOYMENT :

a. It is essential in the Turkish Armed Forces to appoint female officers and non-commissioned officers to appropriate duties by considering their personal skills, training, experience and their potentials and without gender discrimination.

b. In this scope, female officers and non-commissioned officers are employed in various posts in troops, headquarters and agencies including United Nations and NATO duties in and abroad, and in all arms of the Turkish Armed Forces excluding armour, infantry and submarine.

c. No discrimination is made in the legislation and implementation phase of the legislation governing the personal rights such as employment and living standards as well as appointment, promotion, health, salary etc of female officers and non-commissioned officers.

4. RECRUITMENT, CONSCRIPTION AND TRAINING :

a. In accordance with Turkish Constitution, every male Turkish citizen is obliged to complete military service. Female Turkish citizens are not under such a liability. Regular female officers and non-commissioned officers serving in the Turkish Armed Forces join the armed services voluntarily.

b. The conscription, training and classification of female officers and non-commissioned officers in the status of professional soldier are implemented as follows:

(1) Conscription and Training;

- (a) Female officers: They are received from Military Academies. They are classified under two categories namely regular and contracted female officers. Regular Officers are trained in Military Academies in accordance with the provisions of the related law and manpower plans and / or are obtained from civil universities. Contracted officers are supplied from civil universities.
- (b) Female non-commissioned officers are chosen among the graduates of the civil universities and two-year universities to work in a contractual status.
- (c) Regular officers graduated from Military Academies start their duties after they complete 4-year-education and contracted officers start their duties after they are given military training in service schools centres following the preliminary contract.

(2) Classification;

(a) A classification system that will allow the employment of female officers and non-commissioned officers suitable for their capabilities, training and experience and provide them with skills, capacity and personal improvement was established.

(b) The following criteria are taken as a basis in the preliminary and reclassification of female officers and non-commissioned officers:

- (I) Personnel requirement of the arms
- (II) Health conditions of the personnel
- (III) Intellectual capabilities of the personnel
- (IV) Education level, experience, personal talents and interests of the personnel
- (V) Physical profile
- (VI) Willingness

(c) Female officers who are currently at combat arms in the Armed Forces can be reclassified to be transferred to auxiliary arms by considering the abovementioned criteria.

(d) Flying female officers are not reclassified as long as they keep their flying capabilities.

5. TRAINING :

a. There are equal opportunities with respect to the training of female and male soldiers in the Turkish Armed Forces. The training is given in Military Academies and in other military training institutions.

b. Female officer cadets in the Military Academies are provided with four-year-undergraduate education. Besides academic education, at the end of four-year-military training, female officers graduated from Military Academies acquire the knowledge and competence to command an infantry team.

c. Female officers who successfully complete their education-training in Military Academies are provided with branch training in the service schools of their respective military arms.

d. The curriculum and education programmes of the female cadets in Military Academies are prepared according to modern scientific and technological essentials, requirements of the country and related services and in a way to allow postgraduate level training and education of the cadet.

e. Female officers who joined the Turkish Armed Forces in the status of contracted officers after graduating from civil university and by signing preliminary contract in accordance with related legislation are trained during six months to gain the notion of being an officer. Those who complete the training successfully are provided with branch training in the military arms service schools from which they graduated in the rank of second lieutenant. Those who completed branch training successfully, start their duties in the units / institutions to which they are appointed after finishing their training.

f. Female officers, who will join the Turkish Armed Forces in the status of contracted non-commissioned officer designate, following the preliminary contract, are subjected to training to acquire the notion of being a non-commissioned officer. Those who complete this training successfully receive six-month-occupational orientation training in the rank of staff sergeant and those who achieved this start their duties in the units / institutions to which they are appointed.

g. Female and male officer / non-commissioned officer candidates both in Military Academies as well as in Service Schools in the status of contracted officer / non-commissioned officer in the Turkish Armed Forces are subjected to the same academic and military training programmes without making any discrimination.

6. INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING AND NATO MISSIONS :

a. In all the international peacekeeping operations in which Turkish Armed Forces actively participates, together with male personnel, female officers and military nurses are also assigned without considering gender.

b. During the assignment of female personnel in peacekeeping operations, the requirements of the unit participating in the peacekeeping operation and the training level, capabilities and capacity of the personnel are taken into consideration.

c. Female officers and military nurses in the Turkish Armed Forces have served in peacekeeping operations in the body of ISAF, KFOR, IFOR, SFOR and EUFOR.

d. Presently; one woman captain serve in the Multinational Brigade Headquarter located in Zenica/Bosnia-Herzegovina which is subordinate to EUFOR; one woman first lieutenant serve in the Turkish Task Force located in Prizren/Kosovo which is subordinate to KFOR; two women officer, including one captain, one first lieutenant and two women NCOs serve in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

e. The employment of female officers in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) led by NATO has become one of the most useful experience in this respect.

f. The experience gained in the field of female officers within the ISAF-II Operation conducted by TAF between 20 June 2002 and 10 February 2003 can be listed as follows:

(1) Female officers have been assigned both in TAF units and other national units. The success achieved in the first employment of female officers has played an important role in the increase of female officers in other rotational tasks.

(2) Female officers have contributed to ISAF operations such as male officers and served in those administrative and support tasks requiring the employment of women due to cultural structure of the regions where the operation is conducted.

(3) Female officers in Turkish units have especially operated in the medical field and served as technical personnel in the communication branch to sustain the strategic warfare.

(4) Female officers coming from other nations have served at units and headquarters in various fields such as administrative and support tasks in particular, health and medical services, public relations and media, civil-military cooperation and security.

(5) Female officers have given the Afghan people the image of modern woman who walks on the same path with her male colleagues by their employment in ISAF-II operation.

(6) The presence of female officers has created a positive impression regarding ISAF-II operation both among their units and local people.

(7) The presence of women has facilitated the face-to-face contact with Afghan women. Only female officers could approach the Afghan women. Thus, the employment of women for the explosives and arms smuggling has been prevented.

(8) Through female military doctors it became possible to make the health care and medical treatment services available for Afghan women and children.

(9) It has been well understood that female officers to be assigned to the units participating in peacekeeping operations are accurately informed of social, historical, geographical and cultural structure and features for the successful achievement of the mission.

(10) As a result of the above-mentioned experience and observations, it has been found out that the employment of female military personnel in peacekeeping operations;

(a) has played an affirmative role in the establishment of good relations with civilians and greatly contributed to the achievement of success in Civil-Military Cooperation activities,

(b) has contributed to the elimination of gender discrimination and integration of women officers in NATO and played an important role in the increase of the activities within NATO.

7. CARREER BUILDING :

a. Our female officers and NCOs serving in TAF are included in the professional improvement program implemented for all officers and NCOs after starting their jobs without any discrimination.

b. The professional improvement program implemented for the officers in TAF consists of four stages. Information regarding these stages can be summarized as follows:

(1) Basic Professional Improvement Stage:

It covers the period beginning from the promotion from the rank of second lieutenant to the rank of senior captain. During this stage, officers participate in those courses regarding the tasks of a platoon and company commander and those who fulfill the required conditions receive post-graduate education in service war colleges and other educational institutes at home and abroad.

A change made in the related laws has allowed our female officers to attend the entry examination of service war colleges and to be appointed to the command posts in TAF as a staff officer in the future when achieving success in the related examinations and study.

In addition, there are also some encouraging implementations for all personnel without any discrimination regarding the post-graduate education covered by this stage of the professional improvement program.

(2) Advanced Professional Improvement Phase;

In this stage covering the period from the office of senior captain to the office of major, the officers attend preparation courses for the office of battalion commander and staff officer. In this stage, staff officers participate to Armed Forces Academy, on the other hand, successful service officers attend the course for commandership and office of staff officer.

(3) Final Professional Improvement Stage;

This stage covers the rank of lieutenant colonel. The officers under the scope, hereby, serve as staff officer and battalion commander.

(4) Advanced Commandership and Managership Stage;

This stage consists of the rank of colonel. The officers in this stage are assigned as the senior staff, troop, regiment and its counterpart commander in order to get prepared for the managership. Furthermore, the eligible colonels are subject to education of National Security Academy.

c. The non-commissioned officers are subject to preparation courses for their troop and staff offices related to their class and specialty and also professional improvement program containing on –the- job training.

The professional improvement program prepared for the non-commissioned officers is divided as follows;

(1) "Basic Professional Improvement Stage" extends from the rank of staff sergeant to the rank of first sergeant,

(2) "Advanced Professional Improvement Stage" extends from the rank of first sergeant to the rank of command sergeant major,

(3) "Final Professional Improvement Stage" extends from the fourth year of the rank of sergeant major to the rank of command sergeant major.

8. ISSUES AND EVENT OF SPECIAL CARE (DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO NEAR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE) :

The works requiring amendments and improvements for the women in line with the needs in the policy for woman commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the Turkish Armed Forces.

9. CONCLUSION :

a. The common personnel policy of Turkish Armed Forces related to the female soldiers covers the employment of the qualified female officers and non-commissioned officers of related class, branch and rank. Within the framework of this policy, it is essential that our female officers and non-commissioned officers are assigned with most suitable office in terms of best use of their qualifications, training, experiences, personal skills and their current capacity, like their male counterparts.

b. The female soldiers in the Turkish Armed Forces, without any gender discrimination, are employed as commissioned and non-commissioned officers in all the task fields including the combat offices.

c. In order to enhance the employment rate through suitable assignment of our female soldiers and improve their acquired personal rights, the existing legal legislation and experiences are been reviewed continuously and the experiences and the outputs of research executed are being benefited.

d. It is the indispensable aim of our policy that the harmony established among our female officers and non-commissioned officers with their male colleagues throughout the Turkish Armed Forces is improved and sustained.

e. We extend our great respects and thanks to NATO Committee of Female Soldiers on behalf of female soldiers attached to Turkish Armed Forces due to their constructive and leading role in order to accelerate the harmonization process of female soldiers to NATO structure and increase their professional activities within NATO.

Best regards.