

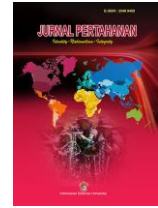


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# **THE ROLE OF INDONESIA'S FEMALE PEACEKEEPERS IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY**

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### **Abstract**

Women expand their feminist value to protect local societies from conflict impacts which put mostly women and children as victims, in line with the growth of women's capacity in peacekeeping operations. Women perform a significant role as peacekeepers in UN missions for peace and conflict resolutions to create a counterbalance in masculine dominance of UN Peacekeeping Operations based on UNSCR 1325. Women have played an important role as peacekeepers in the UN missions for peace and conflict resolution, to build trust among local communities especially women and children who are vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence. This paper will analyze the strategic role of Indonesia's female peacekeepers in peace and conflict resolution under UN missions with a qualitative method in the concept of gender equality based on a phenomenological approach. This research finds that Indonesia's female peacekeepers can provide approaches that can foster the inclusive peace process and become a role model for local women to achieve their right socially and politically. Indonesia's female peacekeepers prove their vital part in fostering the achievement of peace and conflict resolution with a psychosocial approach that emphasizes psychological recovery and social development by Indonesian Peacekeeping Contingent under UN Missions.

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## INTRODUCTION

United Nations (UN) is an international organization established post World War II aimed at maintaining peace and preventing war as stated in its charter (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2018). It provides a forum for its members to express their views on these various international issues through dialogue and negotiation (Morgenthau, 2010). In terms of maintaining peace, security, and world order, the Security Council, carries out this task through peacekeeping missions that carry the mandate of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, called peacekeeping operations.

UN Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of threats to peace or acts of aggression. This body calls on parties to the dispute to resolve it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement to be formulated in a hearing. In some cases, the Security Council may impose sanctions or even permit the use of military forces to maintain or restore international peace and security. In terms of maintaining world peace (Institute of International Studies, 2013). Peacekeeping operations or PKO are operations in the form of world peace missions that are carried out in all parts of the world, especially in conflict countries. This mission aims to reduce conflict tension, create peace, conflict resolution, and post-conflict management (F. Hutabarat, 2017). For more than 70 years, the UN has deployed peacekeepers in various conflict countries to navigate conflict become peace. UN also deploying the missions of peaceful societies and provide security for local societies, especially women and children. UN provide efforts to restore political and social stability in conflict areas as well. Hence it can be said that UN PKO is one of the most effective instruments and has strong legitimacy in maintaining international peace and security. PKO is a thrived instrument from the Peace Support

Operations of Chapter VI and VII UN Charter (Paramasatya, 2017).

PKO began to develop not only in overcoming armed conflict but also in addressing issues that were the impact of the conflict itself (Wendt, 1999). This has been caused by the development of international dynamics regarding conflict and the concept of anarchy which shifted not only to focus on conflict and security between countries but the impact of multidimensional conflicts which in the case of the UN Peacekeeping Operations had an impact on women and children. Women and children receive special treatment from the UN based on UNSCR 1325 which states that the protection of children and women is more prioritized to ensure their safety from conflict, crime, violence, and even sexual harassment (De La Vega & Nelson., 2006).

Unfortunately, the protection of children and women is very difficult to implement because of the UN peacekeeping operations masculine system that can be seen through male forces dominancy in every assignment and operations (Kember, 2010). Women and children are in a state of subordination to the system of male masculinity who consider themselves to have protective roles (Moncrief, 2017). Moreover, there are many cases of threats, violence, and harassment for women and children in conflict areas which make them traumatize and sensitive when interacting with male peacekeepers (Heinecken, 2015). Therefore, the UN began to spread feminist doctrine in every peace mission including the obligation of each member country to send female peacekeepers which became one of the conditions that had to be fulfilled as part of gender equality values integration effort. This value is not only used as a term to achieve the equality in UN peacekeeping body but also to spread the equality value in the conflict area.

This paper will describe how gender equality is promoting and implementing by Indonesia's female peacekeepers in

peacekeeping operations. It will be shown what approaches can be used to give effective results in conflict resolution also in social and political development to be built in local societies as part of gender equality implementation.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is using qualitative methods through a phenomenological approach to understanding the phenomena experienced by the subjects, including behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and others holistically in the form of words and language in specific contexts and utilizing various natural methods (Moleong, 2005). The qualitative method in this study was chosen to provide a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's female peacekeeper's role to promote gender equality and help local societies to build themselves from conflict effect based on the literature study with sources such as books, newspapers, websites, research documents, statements, also other sources related to the topics. This paper will give results in descriptive analysis to explain facts, situations, and events found in the field with a range of qualitative and quantitative data systematically, actually and accurately (Mas'ood, 1994).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Gender Equality Concept**

The concept of gender equality is widely known through the Gender and Development program which emphasizes the importance of women and men involved in development processes (Reeves & Baden., 2000). This concept is not only focused on women's equality but also socializes the equality of social roles between men and women. It is far more modern to bridge traditional masculine thinking towards modern social construction. So gender equality introduces not only women's involvement in development but also on how men's understanding and thinking in

accommodating and paying attention to women's needs in each program or project.

Gender equality emphasizes the equality of conditions for men and women in obtaining opportunities and their rights as human beings to be able to play a role and participate in politics, law, economy, socio-cultural, education, national defense and security activities. So that both women and men have common sense in enjoying the results of development equally (Nugroho, 2008). Gender equality provides an overview and understanding of social systems in interpreting equality, so there is no discrimination between women and men in each access, participation, and social control for development include in the military field. Thus it can be able to view how women and children are impacted by conflict and military operations.

Military institutions are widely regulated by men who make and implement norms related to heterosexual masculinity both culturally and in time (Kronsell, 2012, p. 44). Military institution is culturally monopolized by male domination thus organizational norms are based on masculine practices. However, with the development of public and government understanding about the importance of women's existence with their femininity, they began to change the stigma of male domination in the military. This has led to an understanding of feminism and gender integrating the military institutions which then developed towards gender equality. Gender equality in the military field stresses that there must be the cohesion of roles between men and women (Kronsell, 2012).

An understanding of gender equality began to develop over time in breaking down military masculinity undermining patriarchal values and norms could be reduced. There are issues and security matters that can only be surmounted by femininity values and norms so gender equality is one of the requirements in dealing with demands in the system. Gender equality shows the existence of a fair

treatment process of men and women so that there is no subordination, standardization of roles, double burden, marginalization, and violence against women and men. Therefore, an understanding of gender equality does not only apply to women but emphasizes equality and justice that applies generally to men and women.

### **The Previous Studies that Relevant to the Study Object**

This section will mention several previous studies that relevant to the topics to understand the urgency of the topics related to promoting gender equality by a female peacekeeper in peacekeeping operations. First is the study conducted by Leonard Hutabarat from Indonesia Defense University. The second study is conducted by Connie de la Vega and Chelsea E. Haley Nelson from William and Marry School (De La Vega & Nelson., 2006). Hutabarat (F. Hutabarat, 2017) revealed that the needs of female peacekeepers are very high to approach children and women. He mentioned that gender perspective becomes a necessity related to the reconciliation of children and women related to conflict and sexual violence during the conflict (F. Hutabarat, 2017). On the other hand, de la Vega and Nelson gave their views that women must be heavily involved in the decision-making process as part of the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325. Protection for women must be prioritized through the integration of a gender approach in peacemaking and peacekeeping during conflict and post-conflict by being included in all levels of decision making related to conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution management (De La Vega & Nelson., 2006). Both of these studies use gender equality as ways to achieved reconciliation and implementation of UNSCR 1325 but they don't mention how peacekeepers reach those goals. This study is different from previous studies because it focused on the way female peacekeepers reduce masculine domination in UN

peacekeeping operations. It is aimed to make gender equality as goals promoted by female peacekeepers not only in UN operations but also in societies.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Since the first assignment in 1957, women were deployed in the post of a military observer that made them difficult to reach women and children in conflict areas closely (Das & Kelli, 2019). On the other side, the male masculinity system authorizes men only to protect women and children, the right didn't come to female military officers (Moncrief, 2017). Thus, the UN realizes that in every conflict, gender perspective becomes a necessity related to the reconciliation process of children and women during the conflict (De La Vega & Nelson., 2006). UN then adopted gender issues and decided gender equality as a strategic pace to dealing with conflict complexity under UNSCR 1325. It constitutes to protect children and women and ensure their safety from conflict, crime, violence, and even sexual harassment. This resolution is mandated to call for the participation of women in decision-making processes, gender perspective and training in peacekeeping, protection of women and gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems, and programmatic implementations mechanisms (UN Peacekeeping, 2018). Gender perspective within the UN realized through the female peacekeepers' deployment in peacekeeping operations.

Female peacekeepers are believed adequate to change the stigma of the masculinity of peacekeepers so that they can interact with local communities (Heinecken, 2015). Psychologically women are adaptable more when interacting with local society thus obtain information, provide protection, and security for children and women which disrupted as a result of crime, violence, and sexual harassment. In promoting gender equality under women, peace, and security, the UN is calling on member states to play an active role by

sending their representatives to UN peacekeeping missions, including Indonesia (UN Peacekeeping, 2018). As a member of the UN, Indonesia included in one of the countries that played an active role in UN Peacekeeping Missions since its inception. Per the national goals of Indonesia listed in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution to protect the entire nation and all of Indonesian, promote public welfare, educate the nation's life and participate in carrying out world order. The implementation of national objectives in carrying out world order is carried out by Indonesia through its activities in every UN peacekeeping mission by deploying peacekeeping forces to conflict areas in various parts of the world.

The Garuda I contingent which deployed in 1957 is a forerunner to the Indonesian peacekeeping force which deployed more than 40.000 peacekeepers until now (PMPP TNI, personal data, 2019). Indonesia's commitment to peacekeeping is increased under the Vision Map of 4,000 Peacekeepers 2015-2019, Indonesia has sent more than 3,000 peacekeepers to all mission countries out of the target of 4,000 personnel in 2019 based on Indonesia's Foreign Minister Regulation No. 1/2017 (Peta Jalan Visi 4.000 Personel Pemeliharaan Perdamaian 2015-2019, 2017). The Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi once gave a proposal to the UN to form a special women's peace force because female peacekeepers are more needed for post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation (VOA Indonesia, 2018). The statement was even emphasized through the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs' Regulation Number 1/2017 (Peta Jalan Visi 4.000 Personel Pemeliharaan Perdamaian 2015-2019, 2017) in the following points, there are:

- Efforts to increase the number of Indonesian women personnel in UN peacekeeping missions are a challenge that must be accompanied by the provision of appropriate incentives.

- Carry out socialization regarding increased participation of female peacekeepers.
- Optimizing the involvement of the International Association of Women Police is encouraging an increase in the number of female peacekeepers.
- Increase the number of Indonesian female personnel at UN peacekeeping missions and UN Headquarters.
- Utilizing Indonesia's participation and contribution to UN peacekeeping missions, especially female peacekeepers, to support Indonesia as a non-permanent member of the UNSC 2019-2020.
- Increase the number and quality of Indonesian female personnel at UN peacekeeping missions and UN Headquarters.
- Increase the number of Indonesian female personnel with special skills at UN peacekeeping missions and UN Headquarters.

The involvement of Indonesia's peacekeepers is an active form and an important indicator of Indonesia's role in maintaining international peace and security. The deployment of peacekeepers is an instrument to achieve Indonesia's foreign policy as well as a means to increase Indonesian National Army professionalism. Peacekeepers become one of Indonesia's bargaining power instruments at the UN and the international system (Kaya, 2015). It gives government leverage to deliver international security issues and push each member country to elevate women's deployment and role in peacekeeping operations.

The efforts to involve women in peacekeeping missions have evolved. For 2018, the UN is targeting around 15 percent of women's involvement in peacekeeping missions (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2018). Indonesia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has always voiced a vision to increase women's contribution to UN

peacebuilding, peacekeeping missions, and post-conflict reconciliation. Through the Vision Map of 4,000 Peacekeepers 2015-2019, Indonesia has sent 3,545 peacekeepers with 94 of them are women, about 2,3 percent, in November 2019 (Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). This number has increased from year to year which believes that the role of women is needed, especially in conflict areas that are very vulnerable to the safety of children and women.

Women and children are the majority of victims of violence in conflict areas. Gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence often occur against women and children, inducing trauma and affecting their ability to move freely in meeting their needs (Sjoberg, 2009). Other impacts arising from conflict occur that many civilians affected by the conflict when receiving humanitarian assistance, women, and children are forced to provide sexual as rewards and gratification (Dunkle et al., 2006). This is what causes trauma that strikes their mental health which makes it difficult to assist even by male peacekeepers. The tendency of violence perpetrated by men makes women and children withdraw from UN masculinity (Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Therefore, the role of women in peacekeeping missions is unique in overcoming issues related to conflict-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence by psycho-social approach and treatment.

Psychological approaches play a significant role in building the trust and courage of children and women to overcome the impact of the conflict they receive who are vulnerable group because they have to deal with violence and sexual harassment as a result of conflicts which mostly committed by men (Niens & Ed, 2001). Children and women are even as a medium of exchange in conflict or in transactional sex which may be prone to commit sexual abuse or rape (Dunkle et al., 2006). Transactional sex in the context of

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse may be a major symptom of conflict masculinity, an aggressive form of masculinity needed for warrior culture to flourish in conflict. Sexual violence and abuse during conflict could be viewed as an exacerbation of existing patterns and accepted norms of behavior under conditions that tend to multiply the number of armed actors and heighten their authority and freedom to women.

On the other hand, some reports said a detailed allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the conflict area, women and girls being offered by small amounts of money or food in exchange for (sometimes forced) sexual favors (Nordås & Rustad, 2013). Women and children are in a precarious situation and that male peacekeepers are more likely to take advantage of women's vulnerabilities in these contexts, despite their task to protect them. Poverty is frequently used as an explanation of sexual exploitation and abuse as a definition of vulnerabilities for women and children in the conflict areas. Particularly in situations where local women have few alternatives for survival and security, the risk is increased that they will be forced into transactional sex. The local situation in terms of economic underdevelopment, food insecurity, and lack of economic rights for women can make transactional sex more necessary to engage in. Despite the fact and many allegations emerged about sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, in 2003 the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, announced a "zero-tolerance policy" that forbade peacekeepers from exchanging money, food, help, or anything of value for sex also in 2005 Department of Peacekeeping Operation (UNDPKO) established the Conduct of Discipline Team to train peacekeepers about a new policy, to enforce it, and to conduct investigations of violations of it (Secretary-General's Bulletin, 2013). Those acts are followed by the establishment of Voluntary Compact to Eliminate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

by UN in 2017 which fully supported by Indonesia.

Indonesia shows commitment to diminish the impact of conflict on children and women through the signing of the Voluntary Compact to Eliminate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (United Nations, 2017). As one of the signatories, Indonesia shows its commitment here in line with creating world peace and security through the involvement of women in peacekeeping operations under UN missions. Indonesia's female peacekeeper's readiness approach to obtain information on violence and sexual exploitation acts in local communities, then provide assistance for victims recovery and encourage capacity building in the community so that they can return to their activities and build themselves as part of the psycho-social approach.

UN believes that increasing the number of female peacekeepers affects reducing sexual exploitation and abuse. There is a direct and indirect connection between increasing women's representation in peacekeeping missions and sexual exploitation and abuse expected that women simply shrinks the offenders in which men are the predominant-though, not the sole-sexual exploitation and abuse offenders (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). However, the proportion of women in peacekeeping missions is very low especially for military contingents and is unlikely to increase shortly, because there are more men in military institutions than women. The expectation that including more women in mission can mitigate the militarized masculinity that fosters sexual misconduct. If sexual exploitation and abuse are symptomatic of a male-dominant culture in the missions, it needs the participation of women and changes in mission culture (Moncrief, 2017). Which when women involved in peacekeeping operations will influence to hold down the dominance of military masculinity by male peacekeepers with their femininity and protective role to women and children as

Indonesia's efforts to increase the role of female peacekeepers in world peace.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi accommodates Indonesia's interests in world peace efforts by promoting peace, security, and eliminating gender-based violence as an important agenda in the international system. Minister Retno in Indonesia's leadership as a non-permanent member of the UN even mentioned in the UNSC session that the issue of peacekeeping operations to be strengthened within the geopolitical framework of global peace and stability. Indonesia stresses its attention to aspects of personnel safety and security, especially increasing the role of female peacekeepers. Women can emphasize the process of building relationships, reconciliation, cooperation, to interpersonal and intrapersonal relations with a psychological approach to peace (McKay and Mazurana, 2001, p. 349). By its involvement and strategic role, female peacekeepers promote the values of gender balance and women's empowerment as part of a strategy to achieve gender equality for personnel serving in the UN and to address the root causes that lead to sexual violence. It gives believes that women in peacekeeping missions can adapt and obtain information from local societies about violence and the needs of those affected by the conflict (education, food, health, and social life).

Indonesia's female peacekeepers often can access populations and areas that are closed to men, which can improve vigilance information about potential security risks that include not only war but also defense in the household, rape, welfare, and gender subordination (Sjoberg, 2009). They are better in screening women during searches and helping to close a security loophole that increasingly exploits by the extremists (Bigio & Rachel, 2018). Besides, the presence of female officers improves access to community members with amplifying situational awareness and helping military commanders accomplish their mandates,



**Figure 1.** Indonesia's female peacekeepers when interacting with local society

*Source:* Indonesia Foreign Ministry, 2019

including the protection of civilians (United Nations, 2019). Female peacekeepers prioritize communication and negotiation to de-escalate tensions in building trust in society, promoting social stability and rule of law compared to male personnel.

Women's participation in peacekeeping forces improves the conflict resolution process by encouraging disputing parties to make peace in creating prosperity as the roots of the conflict itself. Women's participation in UN missions can reduce misconduct complaints and rectify citizen trust of troop's integrity. For example, in Congo, on the MONUSCO mission, women and children received priority assistance of reconciliation, reintegration, and special fulfillment process by female peacekeepers as the DDR (disarmament, demobilization, reintegration) program implementation (Paramasatya, 2017).

Women, female peacekeepers, are better received by local society while interacting with women and children. They can adapt and enter society, especially in areas where access to men is closed. As the case of Sudan conflict in 2014-2015, there was a village specifically for women, a widowed village, where only female peacekeepers were permitted to enter for security patrols checking (Fitriani & Widyatmoko, 2018). In the patrol, communication was difficult to be done because of the unavailability of local linguists from the UN peacekeeping force to interact with society. Even though the needs of women and children in conflict

areas are very important to be fulfilled by the UN as part of the program to create and maintain peace. Hence, female peacekeeper's capacity in local languages is needed not only for male peacekeepers.

Female peacekeepers are more sensitive to environmental and cultural situations so they can provide a sense of security and comfort for those who are victims of violence in conflict. They act as early peace-builders and role models for women and children by winning the hearts and minds in encouraging peace-building activities in the local area (Robinson, 2012). The presence of female peacekeepers is an instrument for digging up information on sexual violence in conflict areas which is very difficult for men to obtain. They provide recovery from the trauma of victims after the conflict then build confidence and encourages them to develop themselves in the social system (Kienzler & Pedersen, 2012).

Indonesian female peacekeeper's approaches to women and children in conflict areas are mostly done through community engagement activities. Community engagement activities are usually carried out in the form of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in the form of humanitarian assistance (teaching, providing medical facilities) as well as facilitating a ceasefire and the peace process. Indonesia has several CIMIC-based programs in various UN peacekeeping missions, including through health facilitation for the local community, providing smart cars (mobile libraries) for schools, and sharing Indonesian culture and arts with them (UN Peacekeeping, 2018). Those programs are aiming to build its security and confidence to interact with others. CIMIC is a routine activity in carrying out the mandate of maintaining peace by female peacekeepers because they are easier to be listened to by children and women in conflict areas. In this regard, female peacekeepers become role models for local women in promoting peace-building activities, including those relating





**Figure 2.** Indonesia's female peacekeeper s is conducting a program to disseminate the danger of UN Blue Line

*Source:* UN Peacekeeping, 2019.

to security aspects such as the ceasefire, demobilization, and reintegration, also negotiations (UN Peacekeeping, 2018). Indonesia underlines three things to ensure that women's involvement in security and peace is emphasizing, there is the important role of women as agents of peace and tolerance, doubling efforts to mainstream the role of women in the peace agenda in the region also building and fostering a network of women negotiators and mediators in the region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, 2019).

In various international forums, Indonesia emphasized the important role of women in world peace. One of the milestones in this effort was the first meeting of women foreign ministers held in Montreal, Canada, on September 21, 2018, which was attended by Indonesia Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi. The topic of promoting peace and security and eliminating gender-based violence is an important agenda at that meeting (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, 2019). This is an effort to increase the number of women in peacekeeping missions also in national decision-making and every stage of the peace process through the establishment of a Global Gender Advisory network, which consists of expert advisors on gender mainstreaming. This network serves to ensure that gender mainstreaming perspectives take place across divisions and in various lines of operations (Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). The

existence of these expert advisors must be championed by leaders so that they can deliver the urgency of having more women in UN peacekeeping missions, providing more training including special training for women prepared at missions, as a gender focal point or in units that require special preparation, Intelligence Task Forces, Operations Staff, CIMIC, negotiators and mediators also tasks outside the field that are considered as feminine tasks (medical, logistics, admin duties) to strengthen the implementation of mandated tasks.

In this regard, Indonesia has also organized a regional training program on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Jakarta which was attended by 60 female diplomats from ASEAN member countries, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea (Feely et al., 2019). Through various programs to increase the involvement of female peacekeepers in the UN mission, Indonesia hopes that the role of women in international peace and security can be a universal norm as what the UN has called for more female peacekeepers to enhance the overall holistic approach to current peacekeeping operations. There is more work to be done to integrate more female peacekeepers into UN missions. More skilled and trained female peacekeepers can only be an asset to future peacekeeping operations.

## CONCLUSIONS,

The deployment of peacekeepers is an instrument to achieve an increasing Indonesian Army capacity and professionalism. Indonesia as one of the biggest contributors to the peace mission, especially the female peacekeeper's role in peacekeeping missions. Indonesia's female peacekeepers have an important role in promoting universal gender equality values both in the UN bodies also in conflict areas (societies) under peacekeeping operations. The involvement of women in peace missions plays a role in building trust among local communities by psycho-social approach, especially for women and

children who are vulnerable to conflicts, such as exploitation, violence, and gender-sensitive sexual harassment. Through this, female peacekeepers forces promote gender equality values to help conflict reconciliation and build political and social stability in conflict areas in increasing the confidence of children and women as an effort to eliminate sexual violence and crime against them as an effect of conflict. Therefore, the composition of the female peacekeepers is needed and took into account in the implementation of peacekeeping missions. UN needs to integrate the psycho-social approach in peacekeeping operations to accommodate the needs to diminish conflict impact also as effective tools to create inclusive peace.

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