Afghan Women Police: Tomorrow's force for inclusive security

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Executive summary

While today around 3,200 women serve in the Afghan police force, it is realistically still *tomorrow's* force for inclusive security. The number of women is far behind the target of 5,000 places that are currently reserved for women in the staffing plan. Afghan women only represent around 2.5 percent of the police force and face an uphill battle against institutional and societal barriers. The police force and the Ministry of Interior still have neither an inclusive institutional culture nor a critical mass of women that can help normalize their inclusion and maximize their added value. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has so far not been able to act as a catalyst for change and more meaningful participation in the security sector.

The research confirms that many of the challenges highlighted in Oxfam's 2013 Women and the Afghan Police report persist, especially when it comes to the lack of awareness about and implementation of policies and practices that can help support and protect women police officers. There is still very limited knowledge among implementing bodies and civil servants about WPS and related policies. In addition, low levels of literacy and inadequate training prevent women from performing well and being promoted.

Women continue to face harassment and discrimination within a male-dominated institutional culture that sustains structural obstacles to both women's meaningful inclusion and women's protection within the police. More than 50 percent of the women interviewed cited experiences of daily harassment. Some of them also mentioned demands of sexual favors in return for promotions, permission to take leave or participation in training programmes outside the country.

In the midst of this gloomy assessment, there are glimmers of hope. For example, anecdotal evidence gathered in some provinces revealed that there may be a bit more tolerance and acceptance around women joining the police force. There has also been a slight increase in the number of women police and some improvements to the facilities designed for them.

Nevertheless, much more needs to improve before women can effectively fulfill their contribution to inclusive security. This includes raising awareness among female police officers about their rights and the policies that are designed to protect them. It also requires sensitizing male colleagues and supervisors about gender and respecting their female colleagues. For more women to join and stay in the police force, the protection mechanisms have to be strengthened and women should be offered more opportunities to get promoted. A delicate balance needs to be struck between women's inclusion and protection in the police. Both need to go hand in hand, but women should never be put in harm's way.

Lastly, without more awareness and acceptance in society around the contribution and added value of women in the police force, inclusive security will remain an empty shell in Afghanistan. This precondition is also important for the expectations around the international community's support for inclusive security in Afghanistan. The internationally driven agenda of Women Peace and Security can only go as fast as Afghan institutions, traditions and cultural norms allow it to go.

List of acronyms

AIHCR	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ANP	Afghan National Police
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan
DoD	US Department of Defense
EVAW	Law on Elimination of Violence against Women
FRU	Family Response Units
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
NDS	National Directorate of Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPSO	Women & Peace Studies Organization

About the report

The Women & Peace Studies Organization (WPSO) and Oxfam have worked together since 2012 with a strong focus on inclusive security[1] and support for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan.[2] This partnership started with a baseline assessment of the situation of Afghan women in the police force in 2012, followed by collaboration on three projects funded by the government of the Netherlands: Bayan I, Bayan II and the ongoing Safhe Jaded project, funded through the third Dutch National Action Plan (2016-2019).

To address insecurity in a more effective and sustainable way, all three projects have a strong focus on inclusive security with specific interventions related to the protection and inclusion of Afghan women in the police. These interventions range from awareness-raising campaigns to capacity building and evidence-based advocacy.[3] The focus on women police is highly important as more participation of women in the security sector is expected to result in more awareness about and opportunities for protecting Afghan women in general and for their participation in other sectors of society.

In partnership with WPSO, Oxfam launched its Women and the Afghan Police briefing paper in September 2013, highlighting a series of challenges related to the practical implementation of inclusive security in Afghanistan.[4] Oxfam currently runs three projects related to Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan, two funded by the Dutch government and one by the Canadian government. In addition to its work on inclusive security, it has also been working on inclusive peacebuilding, resulting in the Behind Closed Doors report[5] in 2014 and a forthcoming report later this year which explores the seven modalities of inclusion of the 'Broadening Participation' research.[6]

WPSO last reported on the 'stalled agenda' of inclusive security in Afghanistan in 2015.[7] This new report takes stock of and analyzes some progress and setbacks over the last five years since the publication of the 2013 briefing paper on Women and the Afghan Police. It reviews progress since 2013, identifying remaining challenges and recommending actions that can be taken to improve the situation. In Annex I, the report compares the situation between 2013 and 2018 on various important issues and indicators already identified as measurements of progress on inclusive security within the broader agenda of Women, Peace and Security.

Research methodology

This report is a combination of literature review and field research, consisting of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The quantitative part of the research was mostly limited to a comparison of specific data related to the inclusion and conditions of women in the police force between 2013 and 2018, which was mostly done through interviews. Literature review consisted of primary sources (including, for example, police law, criminal law and policy documents) as well as secondary sources (e.g. newspaper articles, civil society reports and academic articles on the implementation of Women, Peace and Security).

To collect primary data, three methods were used: 1) Key informant interviews with experts such as officials working in the police departments at national and provincial levels; 2) Focus group discussions involving various stakeholders such as police officers, civil society organizations (CSOs), students and Provincial Council members; and 3) Questionnaires directed at female police officers. In addition, previous interviews conducted by WPSO in seven provinces informed the research.

The research is based on interviews with female police officers, cadets, relevant directorates, and senior officials within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and police force. WPSO has interviewed over 110 female police officers, and over 40 male police officers and commanders, department directors and other officials that are responsible for recruitment, promotions, training and retention of female police officers in Kabul, Herat, Bamiyan, Daikundi, Ghor, Kunduz, Kandahar, Badakhshan and Jowzjan. Six focus group discussions, consisting of at least ten participants, were organized in Kabul and Bamyan; and fourteen key informant interviews were conducted in Kabul with representatives of relevant government agencies.

As the research partly depended on written responses to questions and many female police officers are illiterate, the data collected was limited to those with greater access to education, which may be reflected in the results. In addition, the security situation as well as the patriarchal culture within the police force complicated and limited the research, in part because of the limited value that male police officers and the management still attach to research about women's inclusion in the security sector. Lastly, there is a clear limit to the use of quantitative data. For example, while in some cases numbers could be compared (e.g. the number of women in the police force or the number of Family Response Units), this says very little about the 'meaningful' participation of women within the police force, which admittedly is a much more subjective classification, which we have tried to give meaning by asking the women themselves about this.

Status of Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan

Adopted in 2000, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 established a new legal framework for women's protection, empowerment and participation in fragile and conflict -affected countries. While this resolution addresses the huge impact of conflicts on women and children as victims of violence, it also specifically encourages the active participation of women in decision-making processes related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Since the 2000 resolution, the framework was further clarified and strengthened in seven subsequent resolutions.[8] The Women, Peace and Security Agenda has significant potential to help bring about transformational change in Afghanistan. If properly applied, it could be an important catalyst for more inclusive decision-making processes, inclusive institutions and inclusive security.

Inclusive security can be defined broadly as the active and meaningful participation and the structural inclusion of citizens, vulnerable groups, women and CSOs in policies, structures and mechanisms for addressing basic security and protection.[9] One crucial aspect

is the inclusion of women in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, which is important in at least three ways. Firstly, it helps improve the effectiveness and impact of the security forces by drawing on the contribution and added value of women. The gender representation within the security forces would better reflect the gender representation in the Afghan population generally. This would improve female Afghans' identification with the force, enhance the credibility of this public institution, and, assuming women occupy relevant and meaningful positions, enable more exchanges between women and the police in general, while specifically facilitating the reporting of crimes committed against women.

"Women in police forces can access the female half of the population that may be closed off to men in conservative cultures, and women are more likely to report gender-based violence to female officers. In addition, policewomen are more likely than their male colleagues to de-escalate tensions and less likely to use excessive force."

Marie O'Reilly, 'Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies' report (October 2015)[10]

Secondly, inclusion contributes to more gender equality and women's empowerment in the security forces. Including women will mean that their diverse and different priorities (e.g. in terms of protection from gender-based violence) become part of the police force. As experience in other contexts suggests, policewomen have access to a "broader set of perspectives and information."[11]

Thirdly, inclusion can help normalize women's participation in other sectors of society through the creation of role models. The police force is a highly visible part of Afghan society, with a presence at all levels of governance. As such, the meaningful participation of women can have strong spill-over effects on the awareness about and acceptance of women's empowerment.

To implement the international agenda of Women, Peace and Security, most countries have chosen to establish National Action Plans (NAPs) to translate the international commitments contained in UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions[12] into national policies and programmes. As of June 2018, 74 countries have adopted such a NAP.

While the Afghan government adopted its NAP on June 30, 2015, more than three years later the corresponding budget was still being finalized between the Afghan government and its international partners. Line ministries have started to implement activities, this means that the full potential of the Women, Peace and Security framework as a catalyst had not been realized yet. When finalizing this report in June 2018, however, a meeting of the Women, Peace and Security working group in Kabul confirmed that there is, now, agreement on the implementing budget between the Afghan government and the international donor community.[13] This means that soon additional activities can start that will further boost the integration and protection of women within the security sector.

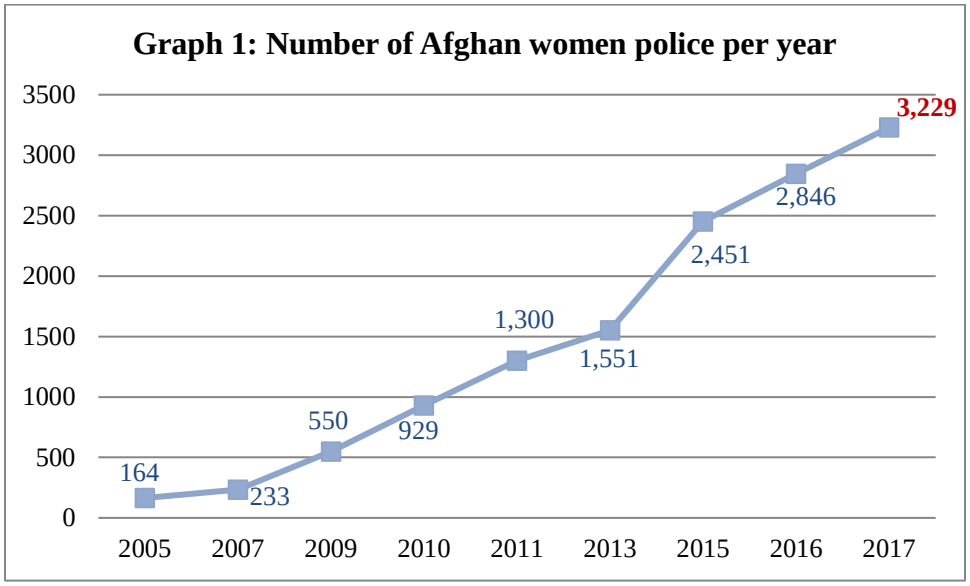
Progress since 2013

More policies but lack of implementation: Over the past five years, the MoI has taken a number of initiatives to improve the working conditions for female police, including the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy, anti-harassment mechanisms and the 2009 EVAW Law-related policies and directives, and the establishment of complaint commissions and Women Police Councils. However, when it comes to implementation, there are still serious challenges. These are related partly to external societal factors and partly related to internal factors, such as the lack of an institutional culture and a critical mass of women in the police force that could help normalize the integration and meaningful participation of women in the Afghan police. Implementation of the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy continues to be challenging because lack of technical and financial resources at the MoI and the strategy still lacks the important impulse that the full implementation of the Afghan NAP for Women, Peace and Security can potentially give it in terms of additional funding, international support and draw more attention to the importance of inclusive security.

Milestones since 2013:

- *January 2014:* First female ANP training started in Sivas, Turkey with 94 women
- *August 2014:* Female Police Gender Integration Strategy and Implementation Plan adopted
- *May 2016:* Police Ombudsman MoU signed between AIHRC, MoD, MoI and NDS
- *Autumn 2017:* First independent AIHRC Ombudsman report on the situation of women in the security sector
- *February 2018:* Start of a Female Foundations Course, focusing on special police tactics and techniques, including evidence handling, rule of law, marksmanship, and physical fitness
- *April 2018:* First Women's Police Town inaugurated, offering housing for female officers

Numbers increase but remain behind target: Beginning with 164 female police officers in 2005, the MoI currently has around 3,200 women in the Afghan National Police (ANP) out of a total of 129,000 (2.5 percent). While this is double the number we reported in 2013, it is still far below the 5,000 target in the *tashkeel* (staffing plan) that the MOI aimed for by the end of 2017 (later again set for the end of March 2018), and is even further removed from the 10,000 target to be reached by 2020. Men are currently filling many of the positions reserved for women under the *tashkeel*, partly because of a lack of commitment to women's inclusion at the senior management level and partly because sometimes qualified women cannot be found for certain positions.



Key numbers:
- 129,000 total police force
- 3,229 women (2.5%)
- 2 female generals (out of 483 – 0.4%)
- 22 female colonels (out of 2,350 – 0.9%)
- 75% of female police are illiterate (similar to men)
- Current MoI *tashkeel* target of 5,000 (until end of March 2018).
- MoI target of 10,000 female police by 2020
- 86 Women Police Councils established
- 208 Family Response Units (2017)
- Around 48% of women serve in Kabul

The MoI points to the traditional society and general insecurity as key obstacles to more recruitment. These two factors also highlighted by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHCR).[14] The lack of progress in quantitative terms indicates the limited impact of international efforts to boost recruitment, for example through NATO's Resolute Support Mission. According to the research, there is a lack of effective advertising and recruitment campaigns, a gap that is reinforced by the lack of female role models as well as male 'champions' of women's inclusion within the police force and the line ministry.

More effective complaint mechanisms: Monitoring should be further strengthened to make sure protection policies work well and harassment can be tackled effectively. The MoU between the AIHRC and the Ministry of Interior is a step forward in this regard as it can provide the Police Ombudsman with more political muscle. In terms of complaints mechanisms, there is a police information hotline as well as an information center in eight provinces. Under MoI's Department of Gender and Human Rights, an office has been set up in 2014 for the recording and receipt of complaints by female police officers. Furthermore, a gender department was established in 2014 inside the police academy to raise awareness on gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming. This has resulted in the development of a manual for students on how to address violence against women, but

so far does not seem to have decreased the incidence of gender-based violence or harassment.

Persistent challenges

Many of the challenges identified in 2013 persist today: At the general level, our research finds there is widespread corruption in government institutions, lack of implementation of the laws that support and protect women, lack of an effective monitoring mechanism to monitor the implementation of laws and policies, and structural gender discrimination, partly related to patriarchal institutions and traditions, as well as to conservative societal norms.[15] More specifically, there is still very limited knowledge among implementing bodies and civil servants about Women, Peace and Security and related policies, low levels of literacy and professionalism in the police force, harassment and discrimination, as well as a male-dominated culture in the security sector that sustains structural obstacles to both women's inclusion as well as women's protection within the police force.

Discrimination: Our research confirms that discrimination that ultimately prevents women from joining the police force or advancing their careers is still widespread and comes in various forms, having regional, linguistic, ethnic and religious elements. The challenge includes the discrimination itself, the lack of protection, but also the lack of knowledge about policies that should counter it. There is also a lack of knowledge about protection measures for women police and the proper implementation of policies is present in not just the lower ranks of the police force, but can also be found among the senior management. Some policewomen interviewed only mentioned the heads of their offices or departments when asked about safeguarding mechanisms.

Among the men interviewed for this research, protection and safety measures for female police officers were not seen as a priority, which in most cases seemed to reflect more the general lack of knowledge about the challenges related to inclusive security than an explicit objection against more protection of their female colleagues. According to AIHRC's 2017 report, 40 percent of the 579 policewomen interviewed by AIHRC for this research faced discrimination in using facilities, and when accessing other rights and privileges such as access to training and capacity building.[16] .

Harassment: In our research, more than 50 percent of the women interviewed cited experiences of daily harassment. This harassment takes many forms including verbal harassment (either denigrating or sexually suggestive remarks) and physical harassment (unwanted physical contact such as brushing shoulders or disrespect for personal space). Some women also received demands of sexual favors in return for promotions, permission to take leave or participation in training programmes outside the country. These alarming findings are in line with AIHRC's 2017 report, which confirmed that harassment is widespread in the security sector. A total of 86 women (13.2 percent) of the women interviewed for that report, suffered some form of sexual harassment.

In fact, the challenge may be far greater than the limited available data suggests, especially as some women are not willing to speak out "because of fear of losing their jobs" and "maintaining their social status."[17] Nevertheless, the MoI claims that the level of harassment has decreased in the past few years.[18]

Key challenges for policewomen identified in the research:

- No institutional culture conducive to women's inclusion
- Few male 'champions' of women's inclusion in the police force
- Few female 'role models' that can create incentives and help normalize women's inclusion
- Women's roles restricted to menial tasks
- Lack of promotion, especially to senior ranks
- No proper workplace facilities
- No proper uniforms, protection or office related equipment
- Delays in salary payments
- No proper transportation for women
- Lack of implementation of policies and practices intended to boost inclusion
- Illiteracy

Neither an institutional culture nor a critical mass for inclusive security: As a result of the structural challenges mentioned above, women are still underrepresented and marginalized in a sector that neither has the institutional culture nor the critical mass to fully benefit from the added value of women's inclusion. Within a male-dominated institution, women in the police are mostly working in menial roles such as body searches or administration, or worse, are treated as servants to male colleagues or commanders. They are virtually absent when it comes to influencing or deciding on policy and strategy. The lack of participation in decision making and specialized work has also wider consequences in terms of learning potential. One policewoman commented: "Because we are not able to use our expertise, we gradually forget what we learned."

There is a lack of political and institutional support for female recruits, which is sometimes intentional but often also the result of lack of knowledge or awareness about the value of inclusive security. Very few women are promoted to higher positions. Only 2 women have made it to the rank of general (0.4%), while 22 have reached the level of colonels (0.9%). Two thirds of the female police officers interviewed for this research mentioned that they had not been promoted since joining the police. However, this is not always necessarily the result of gender-based discrimination. As the level of illiteracy is still very high[19] among female police officers and the majority has only lower levels of education, this also prevents women from being able to access higher positions and leadership roles. It is true that illiteracy is still also a major problem among male recruits, but the recruitment pool for male officers is much higher than the one for women, which means more literate candidates can be found among the men.

"One of the main problems of Afghan women in the police is their lower level education."

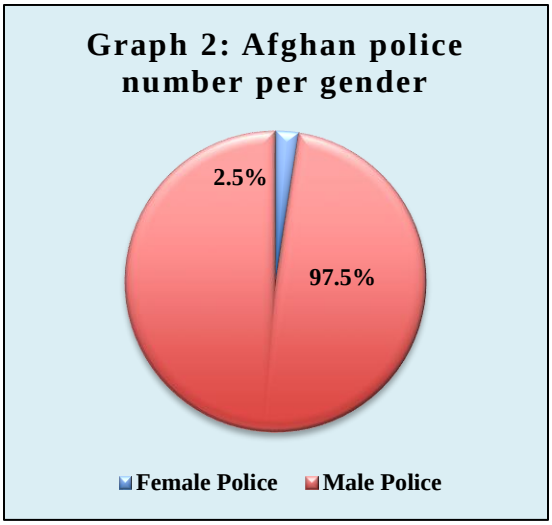
Lieutenant Jamila Barekzai

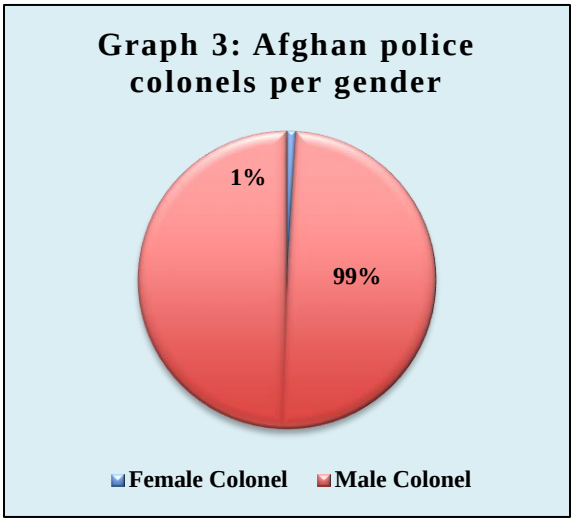
In our research, almost all women interviewed cited lack of promotion opportunities as a major challenge for them. Even among those serving for a long time within the force, many

women have not received promotions during the 10-20 years of their careers. For example, the two female generals (out of 483) have been in the same position for about twenty years.

"Promotion is the biggest challenge for female police officers. Male colleagues get promoted more often. Women even get harassed during the promotion process."

Participant to focus group discussion with female police





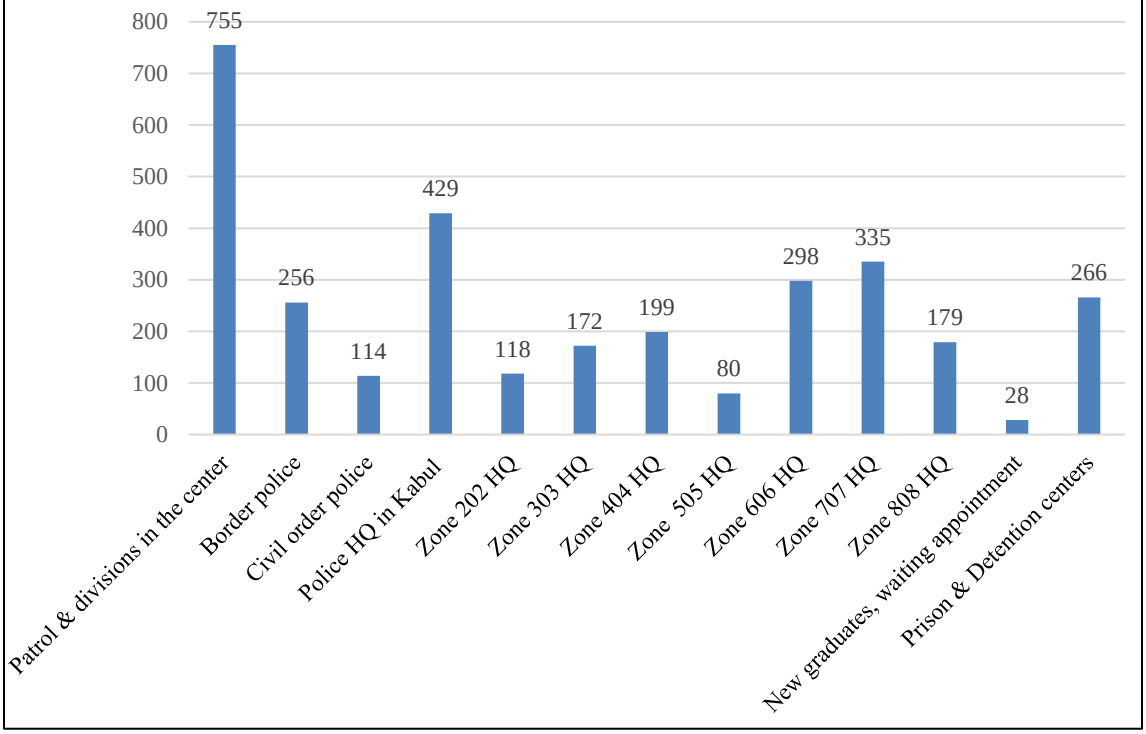
In some of these cases, male managers of policewomen cited the women's lack of capacity as well as the lack of senior positions in the *tashkeel* of the MoI and ANP as obstacles to promotion. While it is true that the staffing plan's 5,000 reserved positions for women are mainly among the lower ranks, their inclusion among higher ranks and their capacity building is foreseen under the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy. Even if policewomen are currently getting a higher position, they do not receive the same treatment as their male colleagues in that same position. The unequal treatment includes many aspects, ranging from the office space, desk, chair, or stationery, to the (delayed) payment of salaries or limited possibilities to take (sick) leave.

"Usually, female police officers do not receive appreciation or support. Even the women, who are highly educated and deserve promotions to better positions, do not get them and still work in lower positions. I request the government and the Ministry of Interior to pay more attention to the situation of female police and respond to their challenges and needs."

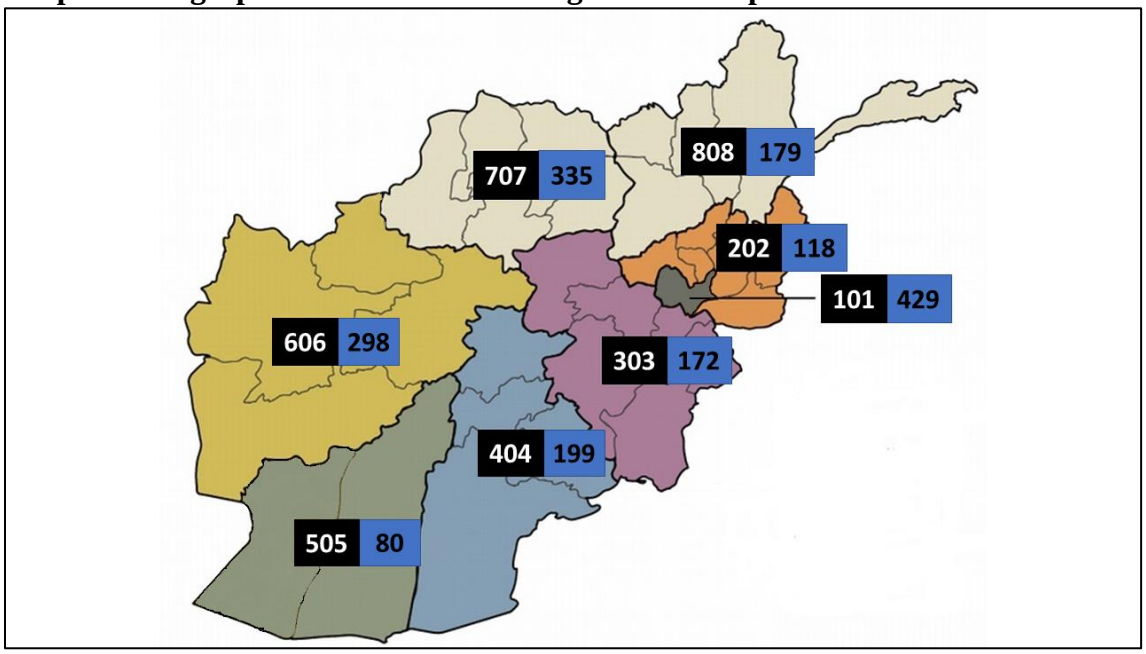
Captain Massoma

While there are female police officers in most provinces now, some provinces such as Khost, Logar, Nuristan and Paktika have no female police, while others, such as Laghman and Kunar, continue to have very few. Graphs 4 and 5 below offer some insight into both the geographical and institutional distribution of policewomen.

Graph 4: Number of Afghan women police per geographical zone and unit



Graph 5: Geographical distribution of Afghan women police in 2018



Source: Map adapted from US Department of Defense, Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2016, p. 90. The number in black represents the number of the ANP geographical zone. The number in blue is the estimated total number of women police at the time of the research. This does not include border police and other categories mentioned in Graph 4.

These graphs show that women police are predominantly found at the center (especially Kabul and surroundings) and much less in the periphery. In addition, in more conservative areas such as Kandahar province in the south or Nangarhar province in the east, their numbers are significantly lower.

When it comes to management within the police force, the Afghan government is still very far from delivering on its commitment under the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) to increase women's participation in decision-making and leadership to 30 percent by 2020.

Reasons to join the police: An increase of women in the police force will partly depend on women's willingness to become a police officer, In the interviews and focus groups, women shared various motivations for joining the police force. Some women argued that joining was important as a step forward in gender equality and women's rights. This can be considered at least partly driven by an ideological motive. Others argued that women are needed in the police force to protect women and address gender-based violence, which is a more instrumental motive focusing on the added value that women have within the security sector. Some women mentioned they had joined the police force because they perceived it as their national duty. Still, others mentioned poverty and the need to have a livelihood as the reasons for joining the force. In fact, 80 percent of those interviewed expressed how joining the ANP is often not a career option for women, but rather something they do out of economic necessity because they are the sole breadwinners of their families or lack other income opportunities. The latter could also increase the risks and vulnerabilities related to exploitation and abuse.

What emerged strongly from this research is that there is still no agreement, among men or even women themselves, about the need for women to join the police or the security sector at large. At various times during the research, interviewees stated that there is no reason for women to participate in this sector and that it is merely done to please international donors. Some of the policewomen interviewed also mentioned that the ministry currently does not seem to believe in women's leadership and decisionmaking capabilities.

There seemed to be some more agreement, however, on the need for convincing arguments for Afghan women's inclusion, especially in the face of conservative societies. In addition, those interviewed called for clear objectives that are subsequently translated into concrete policies and action plans for achieving more meaningful inclusion. Without concrete plans and follow up, the inclusive security agenda will continue to have limited impact in Afghanistan.

Untapped potential: In most police districts, female police officers are not authorized to investigate cases of domestic violence, which is an area where they would have clear added value as they are allowed to speak to the women involved. 86 Women Police Councils have been established in the provinces, which are associations of policewomen intended to strengthen networks, build capacity and solidarity between female police officers and

encourage more women to join the police force. Nationwide, 1,666 women are members. However, these councils have not been integrated yet within the *tashkeel*, are still often merely symbolic and unable to effectively demand more security and protection for female police and women in general. Similarly, while Family Response United (FRUs) have now been established in all provinces in Afghanistan, they do not have the required authority to follow up on cases involving violence against women within the Provincial or District Police Headquarters. Instead, these cases are generally taken up by male officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Professional, qualified and educated women in the police force can help build trust between society and the police, as they can effectively bridge the gap between Afghan women and law enforcement institutions, as well as contribute to more positive attitudes among men. If policewomen are able to demonstrate their skill set and added value, the opinions of male colleagues and the men in their families (husbands, brothers, etc.) may also become more positive. Moreover, if more women obtain leadership positions, they can more effectively demonstrate the positive benefits that accrue from the presence of female police officers, and become role models for other women to join.

"Women's presence in leadership and decision-making positions, such as leading the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of policies, will help support other women as well."

Lieutenant Jamila Barekzai

Once underway and growing, this could all result in a virtuous cycle, but so far not even the international framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda has been able to act as a catalyst for this cycle to start given the basic challenges that still exist toward widespread acceptance of women.

Generous international support but not always effective: Based on an AIHRC Ombudsman monitoring report on the security sector (conducted in November 2017), 94m Afghanis (around $1.3m/ €1.1m) were allocated by the Resolute Support Mission for the recruitment of more women to the police. Nevertheless, the MOI failed to achieve the 5,000 target by March 2018. The Ministry also mentioned that traditional societal barriers and insecurity would prevent it from achieving the target of 10,000 by 2020.

The limited progress also suggests that the 2013 Female Police Gender Integration Strategy and its Implementation Plan for the integration of female police officers were largely ineffective in boosting recruitment and enabling women to better integrate into the police force. The strategy and implementation plan had been approved by the Minister of Interior in August 2014 and were supported by UNDP and the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA). After the development of the female police integration strategy, a commission was established in 2014 for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the strategy, which consists of eight ministerial representatives, but none of the implementing bodies reported any positive and concrete achievements.

The international community is a strong supporter of training efforts directed at policewomen through LOTFA, which is managed by the MoI but governed by UNDP's financial rules and regulations. In recent years, the Female Afghan National Police Training programme held by the Sivas Police Vocational School in Turkey has become a more significant contributor and is funded by Japan. Despite these training efforts, the women interviewed for this research mentioned that they are later appointed to positions that have no relation with their newly acquired skills or their broader field of study, which also means that they struggle to perform well in such positions. So far, more than 1,100 women have graduated from the training programme in Turkey since women were first included from January 2014 onwards.

"Women are part of the society and need capacity building, but unfortunately there are lots of barriers and limitations for them."

Rahimullah Burhani, Head of the Minister's Office at the MOI

Support for facilities comes from UNDP, funded by countries such as South Korea, which supported UNDP's Ministry of Interior and Police Development (MPD) project to build around 60 dressing rooms and washing facilities for female police officers across the country.[20] Similarly, in April 2018, the construction work started on a residential township for Afghan female police in Kabul, funded by Canada, the United Kingdom and South Korea.[21]

While the international community has been quite generous in their support for women's inclusion in the Afghan police force, international expectations about the pace of inclusive security in Afghanistan have been unrealistic. While there is progress, the Women Peace and Security agenda can only go as fast as Afghan institutions, traditions and cultural norms allow. At the same time, international donors tend to expect quick results, results that (especially in terms of numbers of women) are even difficult to achieve in European countries or in international missions.[22] The reality in Afghanistan requires strategic patience among donor countries and dictates that short-term support focusing on the implementation of policies and practices within the MoI and the ANP should always be accompanied with a longer-term perspective on contributing to the work of Afghan civil society to change societal norms and traditional beliefs over time.

Efforts to increase inclusive security in Afghanistan should, therefore, focus also on how to address cultural norms, traditional attitudes, conservative beliefs as well as other structural conditions of Afghanistan's patriarchal society that keep marginalizing women. Donors should also do more to proactively counter the argument that the Women, Peace and Security agenda is an international donor agenda, which, for example, entails giving Afghan women and civil society organizations more space and platforms to express their needs when it comes to inclusive security.

Conclusion

The research reveals a worrying picture of the current state of inclusive security within the police force. Despite an increase of women in the police force, the meaningful participation of women has hardly improved and the spill-over effects for both the security sector and society have been minimum. More worryingly, all interviewed police women mention at least some form of discrimination, stigmatization, prejudice, and (sexual) harassment, as well as various barriers to the recruitment, training, promotion and proper functioning of women in the police force.

Inclusive security is hampered by existing restrictive and abusive social norms, as well as by poor implementation of policies that support or protect female police officers. Although the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy stated that the government would "provide a safe and decent working environment and the prevention of all kind of harassments in administration and other national police institutions", this has not been implemented, monitored or seriously followed up thus far with any indications of success. As a result, some women, families and parts of society that were convinced about the added value of inclusive security have lost trust in the security sector. According to the research, for some families, this already seems to negatively influence their willingness to allow wives or daughters to join the police force, which could undo some of the initial progress made in terms of awareness raising and societal change.

There is an urgent need to address the twin challenges of harassment and discrimination as it hinders progress on inclusive security, for example, by affecting recruitment and normalization of women in the police force. As long as women cannot take up police work in a safe working environment with proper protection mechanisms, fair career opportunities, and independent complaints mechanisms, women will not join the police force in large numbers and wives and daughters will not be allowed to become police officers.

Where support and protection mechanisms do exist, there is a lack of knowledge about them, even sometimes among senior managers. A major obstacle towards improving the working conditions of policewomen, lack of awareness can be found among female and male police officers alike, but even among the senior management. This means the Afghan government and international donors supporting inclusive security should put more efforts into awareness raising and information sharing, two relatively low-cost investments that can produce a lot of impact.

While inclusive security is important as part of gender equality and women's empowerment, it is also important to promote the inclusion of women in the police force in a more instrumental way, by focusing on their added value and on the particular job-related strengths and skills they have compared to men, for example, when it comes to talking to other women. In the short term, such an instrumental approach may be a more effective approach to reducing societal barriers and changing attitudes of men and women in a society that remains very conservative, rather than only focusing on gender equality. However, such an approach is only a stopgap, as ultimately gender justice and equity will

not be achieved without a fundamental challenge to attitudes and structures that suppress and discriminate women.

An instrumental approach should, therefore, not replace the longer-term objective of women's equality and women's rights. It should also not lock policewomen in roles such as body searches as normalization of women in the police force can only truly happen if they are increasingly involved in decision making on policy and strategy. This will to fulfill varied roles was voiced by policewomen during the research. They generally understand the cultural and traditional perspectives around their image and roles in a still conservative society but do not wish to be limited by this external context. They wish to undertaken important tasks related to policy making, planning, management, administration, public outreach, strategic communication and criminal investigations, thereby gradually changing the perceptions of men and women alike.

Recommendations

To the Afghan government and the MoI:

1. Address harassment, discrimination and abuse of police women as a number one priority. Although ideally women's inclusion in the police force should go hand in hand with increasing their protection within and outside of the institution, a minimum of effective prevention, safeguarding measures should already be in place before more women join.
2. Establish a safe working environment for all policewomen by prioritizing the implementation and monitoring of practices and policies aimed at protecting policewomen from all types of abuse, harassment and discrimination. It is unacceptable that police women – who play an important role in the protection of Afghan women in society – are not even protected themselves within the police force.
3. Establish an independent complaint hotline through the Police Ombudsman, so that women can file a complaint without risking their jobs.
4. Ensure that any complaint hotlines or mechanisms for female police reporting sexual abuse and other forms of harassment are led and sufficiently staffed by women.
5. Use the new Four-Year Strategic Plan of MoI to reinforce inclusive security, including by stepping up recruitment and training efforts as well as by providing safer working environment for women police.
6. Accompany training and recruitment efforts with reinforced efforts to change social norms, both within and outside of the police force.
7. Include women in departments where they can really make a difference in terms of strengthening gender equality and inclusive security. For example, during the research, female police have identified the following areas where qualified policewomen should work to a) enhance their public image; b) improve the

effectiveness of the MoI and ANP; and c) support the protection and normalization of women in the police force:

- *Policy and strategic development*: involving women from the beginning in budgeting and planning decisions that can support inclusive security;
- *Human Resources*: ensuring women are involved in decisions about hiring and promoting other women;
- *Training and capacity building*: guaranteeing women are involved in decisions about professional development, training and follow up;
- *Inspector general positions:* involving women as much as possible in oversight activities that can help address discrimination and harassment;
- *Prosecution*: including women in the processes that make sure complaints and cases of abuse result in prosecution;
- *Legal affairs*: ensuring women are involved in all relevant legal matters that have an impact on inclusive security, including the legal steps that can be taken if women are not treated equally or respectfully within the police force.

8. Integrate gender equity mechanisms into the Human Resources structure of the MoI and ANP: gender quotas should be integrated (together with proper evaluation mechanisms to assess their effectiveness) into the department structures as part of the planning process of the *tashkeel*, with a particular focus on higher ranks and senior management. Also, promotion opportunities should be planned during the *tashkeel* development so that women can identify early on the positions to which they can get promoted. Discrimination and harassment during promotion processes should be strictly prohibited with clear penalties for those not following the rules.
9. Provide degree level police education available for female police who are already in the ANP but do not have higher education and wish to pursue it, and make sure those requiring literacy courses receive them (on equal terms with their illiterate male colleagues).
10. Make literacy mandatory for all new female and male police recruits. No illiterate women should be recruited into the ANP as it would reinforce non-meaningful roles, foster sidelining of women, and would prevent them from being promoted into higher positions or other jobs that go beyond body searching. There is a new generation of more educated women which should be able to access jobs in the ANP and the MoI, although differences remain between urban centers and rural areas, as well as between ethnicities. Having more qualified women in the police force will increase their added value and will over time also increase acceptance by male colleagues.
11. Priorities recruitment efforts in areas with few policewomen such as rural areas, and among ethnicities that are underrepresented in the police force.
12. Allocate senior positions and recruit for female Generals, Colonels and civilian women in the *tashkeel* of 1398 (2019) and beyond, and generally change promotion policies to correct the persisting gender imbalance that currently prevents women from reaching a critical mass within the police force.

13. Create a special position or working group at directors' level under the leadership of the Deputy Minister of Policy and Strategy to effectively implement the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy, inviting civil society to provide constructive input and advice. In order to ensure commitment and ownership at the highest senior management level, this position should directly and regularly report to the Minister of Interior, not only about the progress on the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy, but also about efforts to stem discrimination and harassment and improve the general working conditions for female police.
14. Invite civil society to provide capacity building and organize tailored workshops to improve understanding of relevant senior officials, particularly those working in the provinces, about the existence of current female integration and protection policies and directives that support inclusive security and gender mainstreaming.
15. Implement a national-level recruitment campaign and in coordination with Afghan CSOs and international NGOs to inform all those interested in joining join the police force about opportunities and recruitment processes.
16. Sign an MoU between the MOI and Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to encourage female school graduates to join the Police Academy. This could include an arrangement that adds the opportunity of joining the police academy as one of the options listed on the university entrance exams and includes proper referral services for those students interested in going to the police academy.
17. Establish an advisory board that includes representatives of the MoI, the Ministry of Education (MoE), MoHE, the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to discuss challenges and opportunities and provide constructive advice on how to advance inclusive security. Half of the members of this advisory board should be women, among which representatives of the Women Police Councils.

To the International Community and Donors of the MoI:

1. Improve aid effectiveness by structurally and critically monitoring any funds earmarked for gender integration and inclusive security that go to the ANP and the MOI (including the new funds that will be channeled through the Afghan NAP 1325).
2. Assign a specific percentage of those funds to be spent on a) specific activities for police women-related issues such as recruitment, protection and awareness raising; and b) mandated training (with structural follow-ups) for male police officers on unacceptable behaviours such as sexual harassment, abuse, discrimination and exploitation.
3. Engage with civil society organizations and women's rights organizations to jointly develop awareness and police recruitment campaigns targeted at women that are tailored to the context of each province.
4. Support Afghan civil society and women's rights organizations to work on transforming social norms and traditional obstacles to inclusive security.
5. Make continuation of donor contributions dependent on critically monitoring the functioning and use of the facilities (e.g., female washrooms, changing rooms,

training centers, etc.) that have been built for policewomen to see whether they are actually being used by female police officers, and if not, why not.

6. Invest more in linking inclusive security with inclusive justice when it comes to the protection of women police. Without a more responsive senior management, better case referral systems and effective follow-ups by prosecutors, complaints about misbehavior or abuse will never make it to court, which means women will not be able to seek justice or will need to rely on the male-dominated informal justice system.
7. Set up scholarship programs and explore other ways of helping the government to boost the recruitment, education and professional training of policewomen.

Annex I: Comparative table 2013 versus 2018		
	Oxfam's Women and the Afghan Police (September 2013)	**WPSO/Oxfam research (July 2018)**
Number of women in the police force	1,551 out of 157,000 (1 per cent).	3,229 out of around 124,000[23]-129,000[24] (around 2.5 percent).
Number of women reserved in the *tashkeel* (organizational structure)	3,249.	5,000.
Target of women in the police force	5,000 by the end of 2014; 10 percent of both MoI and ANP staff by 2024.	10,000 by the end of 2020 (found in international documents).
General conclusion	No critical mass of women in the ANP to meet the security and justice needs of Afghan women and girls, as well as to help change the ANP into an effective, accountable civilian police force.	Still no critical mass, but an increase in the number of Family Response Units (established in 34 provinces, 17 police station of /Kabul with hiring 124 female in 31 provinces).
Coordination between the relevant government agencies	Lack of coordination and lack of clarity about who is responsible for women's integration at various levels (national, provincial and district).	MoI is clear that the directorates themselves and then PCoPs and DCoPs are responsible for promotions and the integration of female police at all levels. However, there is a clear responsibility for the Gender Directorate at the national level to play a strong role in coordinating with the relevant directorates as well as with MoI leadership.
Coordination among donors	Lack of coordination of support in general, and specifically about reforms and the gender integration strategy. The ongoing reforms at the time, jointly led by the International Police Coordination Board and MoI, were expected to improve coordination.	The 2018 MoI Strategic Plan is a good example of the coordinated effort by the donors of MoI. There is a technical support team that brings together all the donors to coordinate. In January 2018, the NATO Civilian Representative's Office Advisor took the lead in coordinating the MoI Gender Working Group that is co-chaired with the MoI Gender Director and is a good forum of coordination around issues related to female police.
Urban/rural divide	Most policewomen work in the capital and provincial centers.	Situation unchanged and may even have deteriorated, due to the worsening security. This is partly caused by

		the increased number of districts that are now under control of the Taliban or where control is heavily contested.
Acceptance	APPRO found in 2013 that policewomen were becoming more accepted in society.	No similar survey or research has been carried out.
Family Response Units (FRUs)	In May 2013, there were 184 FRUs operating in 33 provinces. Out of 354 police assigned to the FRUs, 24 were female. 11 FRUs were under female leadership.	There are 208 FRUs[25] and they have now been established in all 34 Provincial Police Headquarters as well as in all 17 Police Districts of Kabul. The number of female members has increased to 109 (Kabul 11; Herat 31; Balkh 12; Badakhshan 6; Takhar 7; Kunduz 5; Ghazni 6; Logar 1; Parwan 3; Nangarhar 4; Laghman 2; Maidan 1; Kapisa 2; Nimroz 1; Zabul 1; Baghlan 3; Samangan 1; Faryab 1; Jawzjan 2; Bamyan 4; and Daykundi 3). No data was available on how many FRUs are under female leadership.
Training facilities	Five centers had training facilities for women: Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Kabul.	Same five training facilities as well as the Police Academy in Kabul.
Recruitment campaigns	Since 2009, MoI has a Directive on Female Recruitment. In 2010, MoI and UNDP/LOTFA launched a recruitment campaign.	UNDP LOTFA is taking the lead on behalf of the international donor community to work with the MoI Gender Directorate on an ongoing recruitment campaign.
Incentives to join the police	A training programme started in 2013, implemented by UNDP and MoI, funded by Japan and hosted by Turkey. However, in general, training opportunities were still limited.	There are some financial incentives for female police (e.g. higher salaries than male counterparts) funded by the US Department of Defense for female police through Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A); education-related incentives such as the training programmes in Turkey or India; and some protection related incentives such as special facilities for female police and housing such as the Women's Police Town in Kabul funded by Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom and South Korea. However, there have been a number of complaints from female police officers that

		such incentives are not available in all parts of the country.
Concrete action plans to increase the number of women, and assure their protection and capacity building	During 2013-2014, MoI developed its first Female Police Integration Strategy.	The Strategy is still in place but is not properly implemented through working groups in all the directorates. Awareness among female and male police is limited about the strategy itself, even among higher ranks and leadership positions.
Monitoring and evaluation of investments and programs promoting women in the police	Very little data available about the impact of support programs. Also, there is a lack of sex-disaggregated data on women's participation in the ANP.	Situation unchanged. There is still no data available on the exact number of women in each police station across the country. This could be solved by the UNDP Census Survey that is expected to be published later in 2018.
Policewomen associations/Police Women Councils	Established in Kabul, Baghlan, Takhar, Bamyan, Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat and Daikundi. Some are formal Police Women Councils; others are more informal	There is no adequate capacity inside MoI and the Gender Directorate to mobilize the Police Women Councils and turn them into effective bodies. At the time of research, they had not had an official meeting in more than a year.
Police Ombudsman's Office	Established within the AIHRC. In 2012, the AIHRC received 105 complaints about harassment and sexual abuse carried out by police as well as complaints about unfair promotions practices concerning female police. Underreporting of such issues was believed to be extensive.	In 2016, the Police Ombudsman's Office received more political weight after signing an MoU with the relevant government institutions. In 2017, The Ombudsman Office published its first report on harassments with the ANP. It found that harassment (verbally, non-verbally and physical) was widespread in the police force.
Harassment and abuse by the ANP	AIHRC found in 2013 that policemen committed nearly 15 percent of honour killings and sexual assaults recorded between 2011 and 2013. There were also reports about allegations of systematic sexual coercion and even rape of female police officers by their male colleagues in Mazar-e-Sharif.	In this research, more than 50 percent of the women interviewed cited experiences of daily sexual harassment and demands of sexual favors in return for promotions, permission to take leave or participation in training programmes outside the country.
Types of abuse	Sexual harassment, coercion and assault, rape, discrimination and intimidation	Continues to happen. However, there is now more engagement by the Gender Directorate to (try to) address such cases.
Responses to harassment and abuse	Policies and directives were developed to deal with harassment and abuse, such as the 2013 Directive on Sexual Harassment and the 2013 Policy on	Data on the implementation and impact of these policy mechanisms are still not available.

	Prevention of Violence against Women and Children at the MoI and Society Level. Generally, these policies were not being enforced, especially at the local level.	AIHRC found in 2017 report that there is a need for more awareness about what harassment is and the forms it takes at the workplace. They recommend training of all staff in defense and security institutions.
Helpline	A helpline was established in 2010 by the MoI within the Gender and Human Rights Unit (GHRU) in Kabul. However, awareness is low and the helpline is regarded as ineffective. The GHRU lacks capacity to oversee, monitor and follow up on complaints effectively.	There is currently '119' emergency hotline run by MoI (since 2009) where people can report crimes but also police misconduct. There is also a '100' information hotline available in Kabul and eight provinces. As both numbers are run by the government, there is no independent number that women could call.
Facilities	Structural lack of female-friendly facilities, such as separate changing, sleeping and eating facilities.	As funding and support have increased (mainly through U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and CSTC-A, more facilities are being constructed. Recent examples include housing facilities for up to 20 women police in Camp Pamir in Mazar-e-Sharif and the Women's Police Town in Kabul. However, there is no proper reporting on the existence and availability of these facilities for female police by the provincial and district level chiefs of police or by the Ministry in Kabul.
The organizational culture of the MoI and the ANP	Male-dominated, hierarchic structures in which there are few incentives and champions that can increase the inclusion and meaningful participation of women.	Situation unchanged.
Discrimination	Women were found to be denied advancement and career opportunities within the ANP. Many policewomen were also found to only perform menial tasks or administrative work. With the exception of female body searches, women were rarely able to engage in core police functions. Women were also found to receive no or different equipment than men	Situation unchanged. Various complaints about gender-based discrimination and unfair treatment were documented during the interviews for this research. According to the AIHCR report dated 1396 (2017), 40 percent of the female police interviewed are facing discrimination when it comes to access to capacity building programmes. In addition, 65 percent of respondents say they have no access to rights in the workplace.

Promotion	In January 2014, Colonel Jamila Bayaz was appointed as the first female district police chief.	There are currently only two female Generals in MoI. They are in the positions of Director of the Gender and Human Rights Directorate, and Deputy Director of the Passport Department. This also means that the only female Director-level staff person is part of the gender unit, which does not help to promote more general equity in senior staff positions.
Role models	Saba Sahar, who played the fictional female head of a crime scene investigation unit in *Commissar Amanullah*.	In 2017, the Los Angeles Times portrayed Sergeant Monesa Kashefi, a 25-year-old police officer that is part of an elite Crisis Response Unit.[26] Another role model could be Lieutenant Colonel Ayar, the first woman to join the police force in Afghanistan's central provinces under the transitional government in 2001.[27] She currently manages the Gender and Human Rights section of Bamyan province's police Headquarters. Similarly, Reuters portraited Shokria Jan, a female police officer working in the relatively insecure and conservative province of Kandahar.[28] An important remaining question, however, is to what extent these women are role models for young Afghan women or merely in the eyes of international media.
Illiteracy	70-80 percent of the ANP were illiterate. The number was considered to be even higher for women. This made it more difficult to advance into high-ranking positions.	Although a recent estimate is not available, it seems that this situation is largely unchanged.
Training	In 2013, the MoI approved a textbook for gender-related training called "Human Rights, Gender and Child Rights". However, with the end of ISAF nearing, it was feared that gender training might be de-prioritized.	Over 1,100 women have now been trained in Sivas, Turkey. However, they still face structural challenges including lack of promotions and even lack of appointment for the new recruits. Each round of training takes four months and includes around 200-250 women. However, many policewomen found it not relevant to their daily work, stating that the training is quite high

		level, that does not match the everyday operations of (women in) the police in Afghanistan. The language barriers were also mentioned as a factor that reduces the impact of the training.
Social and cultural barriers	Female police were regarded as having particularly low status. Many people even thought policewomen were prostitutes. There was little acceptance on behave of families of women joining the police.	This situation seems to have improved somewhat. In some of the provinces visited during the research, the demand among women to become a police officer now seems a bit higher. While no full normalization yet, some communities seem to be more aware of the fact that women can join the police force. However, this is only based on anecdotal evidence.
Targeted killing of women police	Lieutenant Colonel Malalai Kakar, the country's top policewoman, was shot dead by the Taliban in Kandahar in 2008. In Helmand in July 2013 Islam Bibi, a well-known police officer was shot dead by unknown gunmen on her way to work. Her successor, Sub-Inspector Negar, was shot dead in September 2013 by two gunmen.	Two female police officers were killed and thrown into the river in Badakhshan in 2017. A number of them were killed in Parwan and Ghor provinces in 2017. More recently, in 2018, there were again reports in Ghor of continuing threats to female police officers.
Political will	Under Minister Mohammad Omar Daudzai (September 2013 to August 2014), the target of 10,000 women was established. He also committed to appointing women to higher positions, sending hundreds of women abroad for training courses.	Minister Wais Ahmad Barmak, appointed in December 2017, seems to have the potential to bring new energy and offer political support for gender-related issues. However, there have been no concrete new steps in the first six months of his mandate beyond reiterating in March the government's commitment to protecting female police officers from workplace harassment on the occasion of 242 women graduates from the training course in Turkey.[29].

References

[1] Inclusive security can be broadly defined as the active and meaningful participation and the structural inclusion of citizens, vulnerable groups, women and CSOs in policies, structures, and mechanisms for addressing basic security and protection. In this report, the focus will especially be on the participation of women in the security sector.
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[3] For example, WPSO. 2015. Enhancing the Roles and Perceptions of the Female Police in Afghanistan. Project Report. Kabul.
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[6] Paffenholz, Thania, Nick Ross, Steven Dixon, Anna-Lena Schluchter and Jacqui True. 2016. Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing women's inclusion and influence on peace negotiations. Geneva. Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (The Graduate Institute of International Development Studies) and UN Women, p. 30. See; http://www.inclusivepeace.org/sites/default/files/IPTI-UN-Women-Report-Making-Women-Count-60-Pages.pdf (last accessed on 1 July 2018)
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[12] In addition to UNSCR 1325 (2000), the following resolutions have added issues and provisions to the international framework of Women, Peace and Security: UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); and UNSCR 2242 (2015).
[13] The final consolidated budget dating 30 April 2018 mentions that the total NAP budget is $47,335,496 for the period 2018-2012 of which $15,999,501 is available. It lists additional requirements of $4m (for the Afghan government) and $27,335,995 (for the international donor community).

[14] AIHRC. 2017. Situation of Women Employed in Defense and Security Sectors. Kabul, p. 12. See: http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5a4f76654.pdf (last accessed on 1 July 2018).
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[26] 'In Afghanistan, an elite female police officer battles cultural taboos as well as the Taliban', *Los Angeles Times*, (3 May 2017).
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