



The National Action Plan 1325: The third national action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda expired in 2022 and new is not yet developed. However, the new Gender Action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023-2027 includes a chapter on Gender and Security, which states the goals to be achieved in the area by 2027.¹ In addition, the key topics of the third local action plan on 1325 are mainstreamed in other strategic documents dealing with migration and asylum seeking, prevention of terrorism and control of small arms and light weapons.



Participation of women in the MoDs and the Armed Forces: Compared to the previous research, the total number of professional military personnel and civil servants shows an increase in the representation of women by one percent, but women stagnate in the ranks of officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. According to data from the Ministry of Defence of BiH, the Armed Forces had about 8734, soldiers and 791 civilian employees in 2023. Among them, there are 758 women as uniformed personnel or 9 percent of the total number, while 107 women or 45 percent work as civilians.² Women make up a quarter of the civilian employees of the Ministry of Defence. In the Armed Forces, about 143 women, or 8 percent of the total number, are officers in the ranks of brigadier, colonel, major, captain, lieutenant, and second lieutenant. A positive development is that in 2023, the Armed Forces received their first female pilot, Draženka Panić.³ Furthermore, there are 148 female non-commissioned officers, or about 6 percent of their total number. These are the ranks of sergeant, senior sergeant, sergeant first class, staff sergeant and chief sergeant. Finally, around 12 percent constitute female enlisted personnel.

According to the media reports, about 270 women in the Armed Forces identify themselves as Bosniaks regardless of their religion.⁴ Until recently, wearing hijab in the military was not allowed by the rules of service. The policy changed after Emela Mujanović, one of the hijab-wearing soldiers, sued the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina for discrimination. To solve the problem, Defence Minister Zukan Helez recently proposed changes to allow the wearing of headscarves of the same material and colour as the uniform.⁵

1 Gender action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2023-2027, February 2023, <https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GAP-BiH-2023-2027-Bosanski-jezik-1.pdf>

2 Radio Slobodna Evropa, „U Oružanim snagama BiH sve više žena, nijedna sa činom generala,“ [There are more and more women in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, none with the rank of general], 16 May 2023, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/bosna-hercegovina-zene-vojska/32413772.html>

3 Hercegovina info, „JEDINA ŽENA PILOT U ORUŽANIM SNAGAMA BiH Draženka je savladala sve prepreke i sada ruši tabue,“ [THE ONLY WOMAN PILOT IN THE ARMED FORCES OF BIH Draženka has overcome all obstacles and is now breaking taboos], 10 December 2023, <https://www.hercegovina.info/vijesti/bih/jedina-zena-pilot-u-oruzanim-snagama-bih-drazenka-je-savladala-sve-prepreke-i-sada-rusi-tabue/219633/>

4 Radio Slobodna Evropa, „Uposlenice sa hidžabom ‘problem’ za pravosuđe BiH,“ [Female employees with hijab a ‘problem’ for the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina], 29 August 2023, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/bih-sudovi-pravosudje-hidzab/32569534.html>

5 Ibid.



Representation of women in command and leadership positions: There are 69 women appointed to leadership positions in the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces. The highest rank held by women in the Armed Forces of BiH is still that of Colonel. Nevertheless, two women and 36 men, who hold the rank of brigadier, are awaiting appointments to the rank of general.



Participation of women in peacekeeping operations: After an institutional deadlock in decision-making, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a decision in 2023 to deploy two members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and three members of the Armed Forces to the European Union (EU) Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTMRCA).⁶

⁶ Preporod info, „OSBiH angažirane u dvije mirovne misije: BH. put od konzumenta do aktera kolektivne sigurnosti,“ [Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina engaged in two peacekeeping missions: BH. the path from the consumer to the actor of collective security], 25 December 2023, <https://preporod.info/bs/article/48457/osbih-angazirane-u-dvije-mirovne-misije-bh-put-od-konzumenta-do-aktera-kolektivne-sigurnosti>