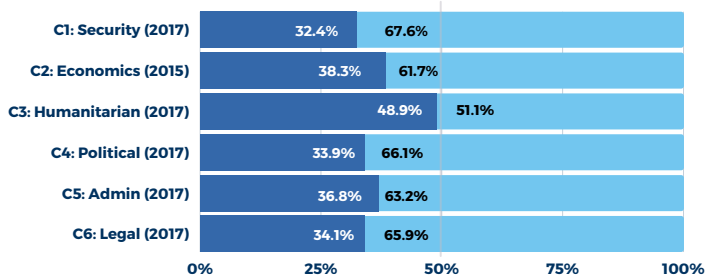


Arab Women in International Security and Disarmament

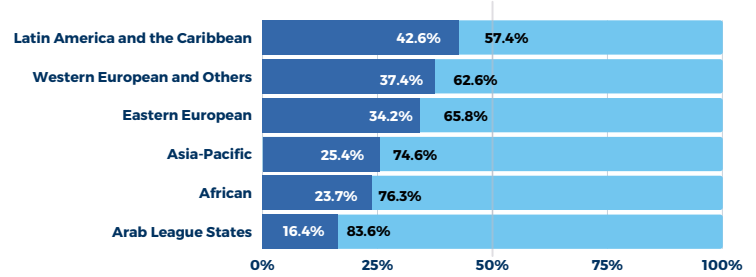


The international security and disarmament field is characterized by a noticeable gender imbalance, where women are underrepresented at all levels. On average, women make up 30% of all delegates accredited to disarmament forums. This proportion is even lower when it comes to heads of delegations. In comparison to other regions, the countries in the Middle East region tend to have the lowest proportion of women delegates in disarmament forums.

**Proportion of Women in
UNGA Committees**



**Delegation Gender Balance
by Regional Groups**



■ Women ■ Men

Source: 'Still Behind the Curve,' UNIDIR, 2019

WHY IT MATTERS

- Women and men have the right to participate in international security discussions and shape the outcomes of decisions that will affect their lives.
- Evidence suggests that greater women's participation can increase prospects for peace, reduce the likelihood of conflict and lead to more sustainable outcomes.
- Unlocking professional opportunities for women can lead to greater stability, inclusiveness, development, and economic growth.

ARAB WOMEN IN...

Disarmament



(Photo: IAEA)

Peacekeeping



(Photo: UN Peacekeeping)

Conflict Resolution



(Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim)

WHAT HAS WORKED?

In roundtables organized by UNIDIR with Arab women working in international security and disarmament, participants shared their views on progress achieved, as well as obstacles hindering women's equal participation in the region, and ideas on how to bridge the gap.

Emphasizing that diversity leads to better results and that gender equality brings gains for both men and women.

Highlighting the intersection between gender equality and other relevant policy priorities, such as countering extremism.

Political commitments and actions taken by decision-makers and leaders towards gender equality, including through the creation of national policies.

Addressing the importance of women's participation in specific domains, for example, by demonstrating how it contributes to achieving national security priorities, economic development and social cohesion.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLES?



Gender stereotypes

Women are often unjustifiably viewed as weak negotiators, vulnerable victims, and unsuited for hardship posts.



Institutional culture

The field of international security and disarmament tends to promote people from national security institutions (e.g. the military), where women have been traditionally excluded. Once women eventually join these institutions, the onus has been placed on them to adapt rather than have the institutional culture adjusted to new and more diverse realities.



Work-life balance and socio-cultural expectations

The nature of the work in international security involves frequent travel, work in remote areas and frequent relocation, which can represent additional barriers for women, as they tend to shoulder more household responsibilities than men.



Lack of role models

The limited numbers of women in senior positions in this field makes it difficult for women to consider it as a career path.

HOW TO CLOSE THE GENDER GAP



BUILD

educational programmes and mentorship initiatives for the next generation



HIGHLIGHT

women's participation and experiences in the field of security.



LOCALIZE

communication strategies on the importance of women's participation.



CHAMPION

gender equality and diversity in institutional and organizational cultures.



SET

specific targets to achieve gender parity at all levels including leadership positions.