



CHAPTER 8

Peace building and conflict resolution

Article 28



Interviewing Andrew Bosilong Station Commander for Kweneng District Council for Gender Links Summit Molepolole Botswana on gender based violence.

Photo: Vincent Onthusitse

KEY POINTS

- The police force is still male-dominated, 76% male compared to 24% female.
- The Department of Police Services has introduced gender awareness training as a component of their in-service training programme at the Police Training College.
- In 2008, for the first time the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) recruited female soldiers. In 2011, the BDF recruited another group of women who are currently in training, bringing the total number of women to about 59.

Table 8.1: Women and men's perception of the peace building and conflict resolution sector

	SGDI	CSC
Scores	N/A	66%
Ranks	N/A	6

There is no SDGI score for this sector as information is currently limited. Botswana citizens gave a score of 66% in 2013 compared to 60% in 2012, ranking the country sixth out of the 15 countries in the region. Male citizens scored their government 65% compared to 67% scored by women. Scoring on this sector could have been influenced by various factors including the low representation of women in the peace and security forces.



The Protocol calls on State Parties to ensure that, by 2015, women have equal representation and participation in key decision-making positions in conflict resolution and peace building processes by 2015 in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Representation

Table 8.2: Representation of women in the defence sector in Southern Africa

Country	Male %	Female %
Angola		
Botswana	99	1 ¹⁸
DRC	93	7
Lesotho		
Madagascar	99.9	0.1
Malawi	95	5
Mauritius	No defence force	
Mozambique	95	5
Namibia	74	26
Seychelles	80	20
South Africa	73	27
Swaziland		
Tanzania		
Zambia	90	10
Zimbabwe	80	20

Source: ISS and country reports.

Table 8.2 reflects the proportion of women in the defence forces of ten SADC countries for which this data could be obtained. In some instances these percentages are still estimates. When the SADC Defence Forces begin to populate the newly adopted template for tracking the mainstreaming of gender into the Defence Forces more accurate data will be available. The table shows that four countries have achieved a representation of women of 20% or above: Zimbabwe, South Africa, Seychelles and Namibia, with South Africa (27%) having the highest proportion of women in the defence force.

¹⁸ Since 2008 Botswana has trained a 100 women recruits.

¹⁹ This is a 2009 figure.

²⁰ This is a figure for 2008. From the Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit.

²¹ <http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=53329>

²² <http://www.nampol.gov.na/Pages/DOCUMENTARY.asp>

Police services

Table 8.3: Women's representation in SADC Police Services

Country	Male %	Female %
Angola	n/a	n/a
Botswana	76	24
DRC	94	6
Lesotho	83	17
Madagascar	88	12
Malawi	79	21
Mauritius	94	6
Mozambique	93	7
Namibia	69	31 ¹⁹
Seychelles	62	38
South Africa	67.5	32.5
Swaziland	n/a	n/a
Tanzania	81	19
Zambia	83	17 ²⁰
Zimbabwe	75	25 ²¹

Source: Seminar report, *Women in Peacekeeping Operations, Zambia 12-13 October 2009*; Government of Botswana, *Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, 2008*; Country barometer reports; Namibian government²²; SAPS Annual Report: SAPS profile 31 March 2010; Tanzania Police Force Annual Report 2010. Seychelles country barometer report (calculated from the stats in the graph).

Table 8.3 reflects data for 13 of the 15 Southern African countries Police Services. This data remains the same as in the previous year. Six countries have 20% or more representation of women in their police services (Zimbabwe, South Africa, Seychelles, Namibia, Malawi and Angola). Three of these - Namibia, South Africa and the Seychelles - have a representation of more than 30%. Three countries for which data could be obtained (DRC, Mauritius and Mozambique) have less than 10% women in their police forces.

Representation of women in the Botswana Police Services

The Department of Police has developed partnerships with women's rights organisations and the Department of Women's Affairs to develop strategies to combat GBV-related crimes. One such strategy is to have more women in the Botswana Police Services. Although women's representation has increased significantly over the years, they dominate lower level positions; the majority are constables.

Figure 8.1 demonstrates that currently the police force is still male dominated, 76% male as compared to 24% female.

Figure 8.1: Proportion of women and men in Botswana Police Force

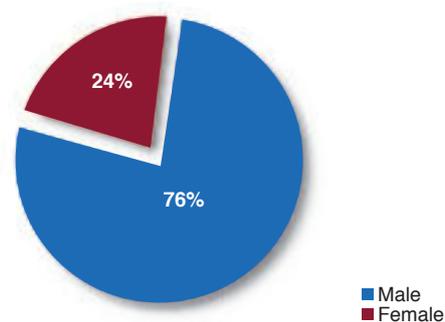


Table 8.4: Women and men in decision-making positions in the Botswana Police Service

Position	Male	% Male	Female	% female	Total
Commissioner	1	100	0	0	1
Deputy Commissioner	-				
Senior Assist Commissioner	13	81.2	3	18.8	16
Assistant Commissioner	34	85	6	15	40
Senior Superintendent	68	70.8	28	29.2	96
Superintendent	189	86.3	30	13.7	219
Inspector	442	86	72	14	514
Sub-Inspector	618	85	109	15	727
Sergeant	1279	78.4	353	21.6	1632
Constable	3486	71.7	1377	28.3	4863

Source: Department of Botswana Police Service - Headquarters 2011.

Table 8.2 shows that men occupy the senior positions in the police force. For example, there are 13 men in senior assistant commission posts compared to three women. In terms of absolute numbers, most women are senior constables, making up just over 28% of the posts.

The Police Services Department collaborates with NGOs, such as, Emang Basadi and the Kagisano Shelter Women's Project when it needs to refer abused women for counselling. The police also participate in gender violence programmes, including workshops, advocacy initiatives and education marches especially during the 16 Days of activism on gender violence. They include crime statistics in their weekly media reports, pertinent data that improves the monitoring of GBV cases.

Further, the Department of Police Services has introduced gender awareness training as a component of their in-service training programme at the Police Training College.

Botswana Defence Force

Parliament established the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) in 1977. The main goal of the BDF is to provide

responsive and decisive force for the protection of the country contributing to a peaceful environment for economic investment and national stability. The BDF has grown significantly in the last three decades and has performed its mandate both internationally and nationally, earning itself international and national trust.

Representation of women in the defence force

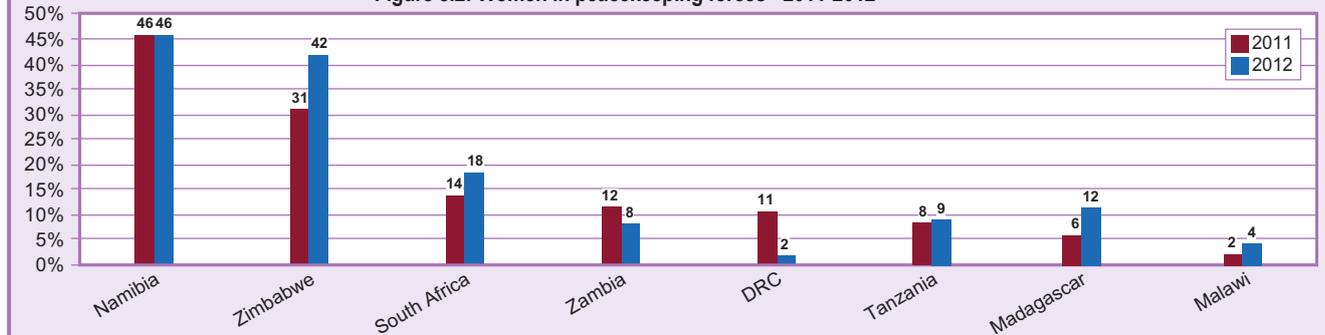
Although the women's movement in Botswana advocated for the recruitment of women into armed forces since the 1980s, it was only in 2008 that for the first time the Botswana Defence Force recruited female soldiers. They are now fully integrated into BDF. In 2011, the BDF recruited another group of women who are currently in training, bringing the total number of women to about 59.

While it is difficult to get exact number of the total BDF, the researchers in their discussions with senior officer heard the female soldiers are performing well and as a result have been promoted to senior positions.

They also participate in all BDF's activities and are trained for combat activities to participate in front line duties.

Peacekeeping

Figure 8.2: Women in peacekeeping forces - 2011-2012



Source: Calculated from 2011 and 2012 UNDPKO Monthly Statistics for Peace missions.

Although there is more global awareness of the need to include women in peace negotiations and to produce gender sensitive peace agreements, the region is still lagging behind in realising this ideal. Of the 14 peace processes mediated by the UN in 2011, only four of the

negotiating parties included women in their delegations. Of the nine peace agreements signed in 2011 only two contained women, peace and security provisions.²³ The UN has now developed guidelines for gender-sensitive mediation that SADC countries should take heed of.

Letsomo making her mark in the defence force



She was separated from her mother at age six, stayed in boarding school for the next 16 years, worked as a helper thereafter and posted from Tsokatshaa to Gaborone like an application letter, Lieutenant Apelo Letsomo is a true embodiment of courage married to dedication. Listening to her life narrative is like paging through a catalogue of adversity, her deficiency and

fortitude to extinguish all the discriminations bestowed on her kind.

In all respects, she remains RADP's outstanding national heroine. The fact that, at a young age she used to think of RADP as a well-stocked wholesale shop in Tutume is immaterial today.

That was then. Today, Lieutenant Letsomo is the best target shooter among the few female soldiers. She is the only woman among the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) Firing Team. Her name appears among the BDF Top 10 crack shots (marksperson). The BDF would surely have lost an asset, had the 'mail' failed to arrive in Gaborone on time. The year was 2002 when Apelo had just completed her Form Five, awaiting the results and was working as a helper for a local police officer. "I used to ask him about how to apply so that I could obtain a social work qualification," she says.

The local police officer embarked on a somewhat risky, yet noble expedition to see the teenager achieve her dreams. And the 'post' was dispatched. Like a letter, the police officer posted her from Tsokatshaa to his friend in Sowa who then addressed her to Francistown where she was to be placed on a Gaborone bound bus, with strict instructions to the bus conductor to hand her over to some nurse who was to receive the mail at the bus rank. For a teenager whose closest encounter with civilisation was only the inside of Mater-Spei College, the neon lights of the big city presented quite an alien future. With all the patience in the world, the nurse, a local police officer's wife, assisted her to apply for different institutions and was admitted at the University of Botswana.

Apelo, at least by her own admission, was never an academically bright student but rather an average girl next-door. However, with determination and the courage as well as the resolve to succeed, she managed to graduate from UB with a Degree in Social Work and subsequently worked at Kuru Development Trust in D'Kar in the peripheries of Ghanzi township.

It was while at D'Kar that she learnt of the first intake of women recruits into the BDF and tried her luck. "I was seven months pregnant at the time but I didn't let that demoralise me," she recalls. Two months into maternity, she left for Tanzania Military Training, leaving behind her newborn daughter to become part of a history in the existence of the BDF; the first batch of women cadets in the army.

²³ UN Report of the Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security, October 2012. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/732

This is the woman, who had never flown in an aeroplane nor had ever seen a hill before she went to Mater Spei in Francistown. The woman who had difficulties writing a composition about the nicest journey she has ever embarked on while at Primary School. Narrating the ordeal like a comic story, Lt Letsomo tells of an incident at primary school when they were implored to compose an article about their journeys during school vacations. She had never had any other journey except from the cattle-post and back to boarding school at Tsokatshaa Primary on the back of RADP trucks.

She did not know what to write. The one thing she remembers was that the truck drivers used to propose love to them and the girl who usually rode in the front seat had to know that she would be the driver's 'mince meat'. Nonetheless, the sacrifices she made, and the example she and her peers set, constituted an integral part of the ethos that determine the sense and definition of the programme, defining relevant factors in the context of empowering remote area dwellers to realise the objective of equal opportunities for remote area communities.

A classical example of RADP and affirmative action, Lt Letsomo was selected among the first batch of female soldiers despite her pregnancy. Her selection and the subsequent indelible mark she made in the BDF makes hers a success story whose sacrifices would communicate the message that what the RADP seeks to achieve is a practically realisable objective, provided that, at all times and in all circumstances, officers remain loyal to principles.

Major Collen Seema of the BDF cannot help blowing his junior's trumpet. Lt Letsomo's achievement, he says,

is a source of education and inspiration to many other remote area dwellers and the beneficiaries as government strives to address the challenge of fundamental social transformation, focused especially on the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment and the elimination of the inherited cultural imbalances.

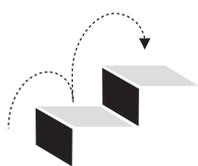
"We need people like Lt Letsomo to help us further advance the objectives of the Remote Area Development Programme and inspire the masses of the people to take ownership of these programmes of fundamental social transformation," he emphasises.

As a lieutenant, Major Seema says, Lt Letsomo supervises 400 - 500 troops at the battlefield. Couple that with the reality that she is one of the best target shooters in the BDF and you get the grind of what Major Seema talks about. The woman who used to think of RADP as a shop has kept her eyes on the ball and benefitted from the 'imagined shop'.

And for people like Lt Letsomo and other remote area dwellers, the future looks brighter thanks to the Affirmative Action policy, a ten-year blueprint that seeks to close imbalances by accelerating living standards of remote area dwellers.

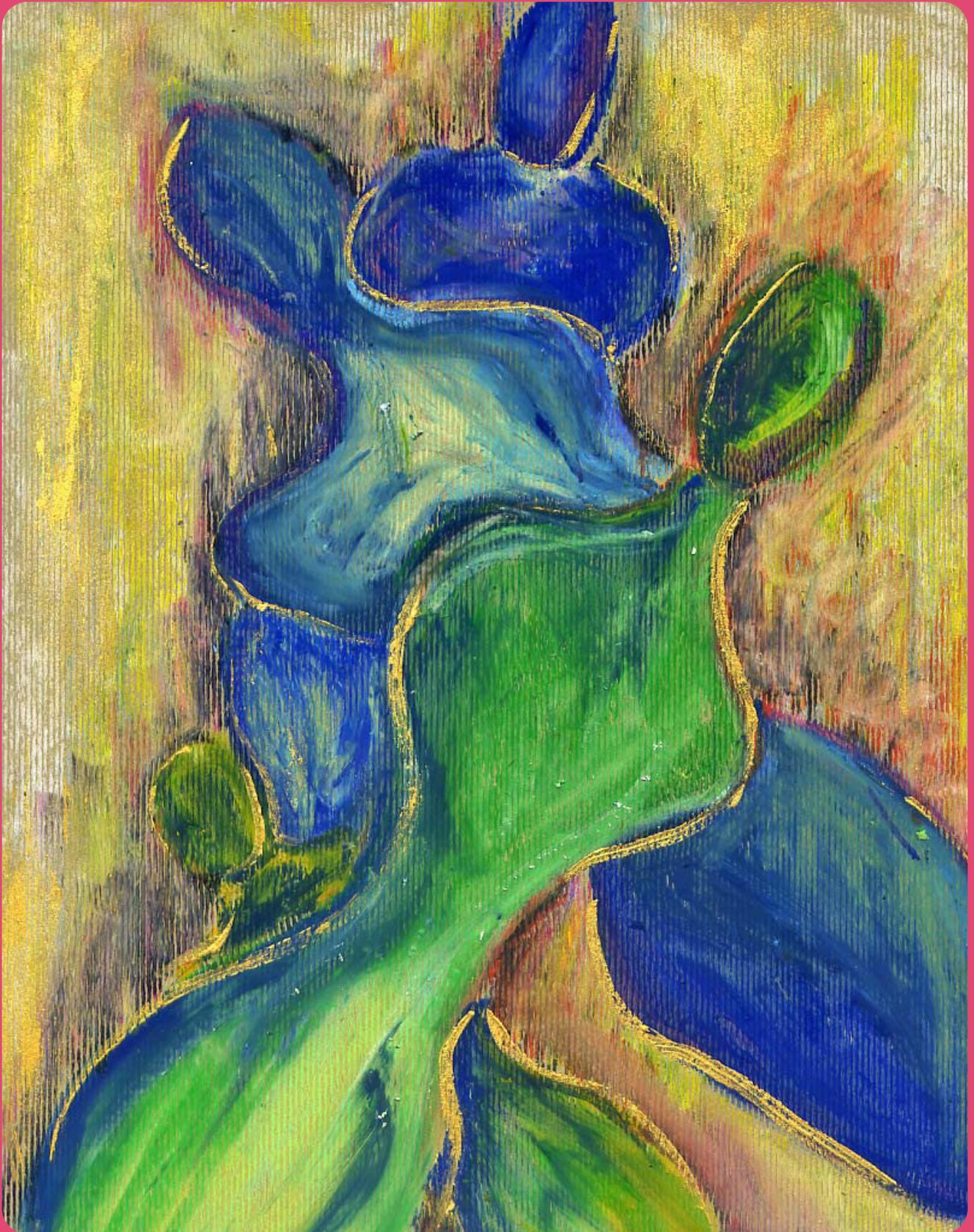
All that needed, she says, is for parents to encourage their children to study hard and achieve the best they could become. She emphasises that remote area dwellers are not far from the services but instead, services are just too far from them. Because services could be moved, she implores the authorities to move the services nearer to the people rather than vice-versa.

Source: <http://www.kutlwano.gov.bw/kut-article-detail.php?aid=348&mid=36>



Next steps

- **The laws must be accompanied by special measures and incentives to attract women to join the security services sector:** Unless there are incentives and retention packages for women to join and stay the course, this sector will remain male dominated. To achieve this, an enabling environment has to be created. For example, women should be able to balance time spent on peace missions or combat roles with family responsibilities, particularly where young children are involved.
- **Record keeping should be gender disaggregated:** While there has been some progress on this front, all SADC States should be mandated to keep gender disaggregated data for the sector. If this is achieved it will be easier to monitor whether progress is made towards equal representation and participation in key decision making positions in conflict resolution and peace building processes by 2015. Currently data is scarce or officials are reluctant to release the information.
- **Women should be regarded as part of the solution in peace building processes and be appointed as mediators:** The population is affected differently by conflict and there are differences between the way men and women experience and cope with conflict. It is therefore important for member states to ensure equal representation of women and men in key decision-making positions during peace building. More women should be trained and appointed as mediators as they bring a different perspective to the table.
- **Women's role in peace keeping at all levels needs to be increased:** Women have an important role to play at all levels of peace support operations and more should be trained and sent to these missions.



"Growing up"

Anushka Virahsawmy