

Friday, 21 October 2022

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## Security Sector Institutions in Montenegro Enhance Their Knowledge on Protecting Women and Girls in Conflict Zones

At the request of the Ministry of Defence of Montenegro, UNDP SEESAC organised a training on the importance of protecting women and girls in conflict zones' on Thursday, 20 October 2022. The training took place in the capital of Montenegro and gathered nineteen participants from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the National Security Agency.

In his opening remarks, Colonel Velibor Bakrač, Acting General Director of the HR Directorate, said that it should be emphasised that women and even girls become victims of sexual offenses in conflict situations, which, unfortunately, has become one of the main weapons of war. He added that for this reason it is necessary to work on increasing the awareness of male and female members of armed forces who are sent to missions that one of their tasks is to protect these categories of the population in areas affected by conflicts.

During the training, its participants learned about the protection of civilians, including the concepts of gender-based violence and sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflicts. The training also enabled group work and discussions on the negative impact of conflict-related sexual violence and increased understanding of the importance of prevention activities and response-planning in the area.

To enable cross-regional experience and knowledge sharing, the training was delivered by a gender military trainer from the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and gender military trainer from the Armed Forces of Montenegro with mission experience.

This activity was implemented within the Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans project and is financed by the Governments of Norway and the Slovak Republic. With the support of SEESAC, the project provides the Ministries of Defence and the Armed Forces from the Western Balkans a platform where, over the period of three years, they work together to ensure long-term and sustainable inclusion of the gender perspective in defence policies and practices, contributing to accountable and responsive institutions and inclusive societies (SDG 16) and gender equality (SDG 5).



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