

Meital Ginzberg: **The women of the IDF**

The involvement of Israeli women in the IDF is not a recent development but has roots dating back to the early days of the nation's history. Women have been an integral part of Israel's defense efforts even before the establishment of the state. During pre-statehood times, women actively participated in various underground movements, showcasing their commitment to the cause of independence.

The continuity of their contribution is evident in the evolving roles and increasing responsibilities that women in the IDF have undertaken. Since 1995, there has been a notable surge in women holding high-ranking positions within IDF combat units. This shift marks a significant departure from traditional norms and attests to the recognition of women's capabilities in leadership roles within the military.

As of 2023, an impressive 90% of job opportunities within the IDF are available to women, reflecting a commitment to gender equality and recognizing the valuable skills and expertise that women bring to the armed forces. This inclusive approach not only strengthens the overall capabilities of the IDF but also enhances the diversity of perspectives within the military. IDF female soldiers have a lot of motivation, endless determination, desire to succeed in the task, and a lot of tolerance, and their vision is broader. They do everything like everyone else without assumptions, and naturally, they are being observed much more in the field. In recent years, the representation of women in combat roles has seen a substantial increase. Currently, women constitute approximately 17% of the combat force in the IDF. This rise signifies a growing acceptance of women in roles that were traditionally reserved for men, emphasizing the IDF's acknowledgment of the skills and abilities that both genders bring to the table.

The increasing participation of women in combat positions is a testament to the ongoing evolution of the IDF, adapting to the changing dynamics of modern warfare while fostering an environment of equality and inclusivity. The remarkable vision and courage exhibited by Israeli women within the IDF extend beyond shaping the military landscape; they significantly influence societal perceptions of gender roles, serving as a beacon of inspiration for future generations committed to contributing to their nation's defense and prosperity. The IDF's progressive approach recognizes the unique contributions of every individual, irrespective of gender, emphasizing that collective strength is derived from diverse talents. As women ascend through the ranks and excel in various roles, their achievements challenge societal norms, reinforcing the universal notion that excellence transcends gender boundaries in the pursuit of securing a nation's defense. The impact of Israeli women in the IDF is not confined to reshaping the military alone; it sets a global example for inclusivity and equal

opportunity in armed forces worldwide, showcasing a transformative narrative of courage, vision, and dedication that knows no gender constraints.

Allow me to conclude with my reflection on my transformative journey as an IDF medic, a chapter that indelibly shaped the essence of who I am today. At the age of 18, just stepping out of high school, I embarked on a profound odyssey within the Israeli Defense Forces. By the time I was released in my early 20s, I carried not only the weight of newfound values but also a broader perspective and an unwavering sense of true friendship.

Being a medic in the IDF was more than just a role; it was a calling to witness the resilience and fortitude of the human spirit amidst adversity. Providing care and support during moments of crisis was not merely a job but a profound duty. The bonds formed with my fellow soldiers evolved into a second family.

The IDF is more than an institution; it is a legacy, a shared expedition that shapes individuals and collectively, the very fabric of a nation. Through the highs and lows, the memories of my time as an IDF medic continue to influence my perspective, and the relationships forged endure as a testament to the enduring bonds shaped in service to a cause greater than oneself.

I am proud of every woman soldier in the IDF in every position, especially in this challenging time that the entire nation of Israel is going through when we are more exposed to the performance of our fighters in Gaza in the infantry, as combat squadrons in the Air Force, in special units, in the Navy, in the Engineering Corps, and the Medical Corps.

In dealing with the complexity of modern warfare, the IDF's embrace of diversity and equality has proven to be a strategic asset. The courage and abilities demonstrated by our female soldiers inspire us all, shaping not only the military landscape but also influencing social perceptions of gender roles.

In recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Israeli women in the IDF, we honor their sacrifice, professionalism, and the tireless spirit that drives them forward. Let us continue to support and support the achievements of all those who serve in the defense of Israel, regardless of gender or religion, to defend the State of Israel Because we have no other land.

Meital Ginzberg