

# Session 5: The Right to Freedom of Speech of a Soldier

Mariette Hughes, Ombudsman

*Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces, UK*



## Article 10 of the Human Rights Act: Freedom of expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary



Moral courage is the characteristic on which the other Values and Standards depend. It provides the resolve to do what is right even when it may be unpopular, risk ridicule or appear dangerous by insisting on the maintenance of the highest standards of decency and behaviour at all times. Every soldier and officer must have the moral courage to challenge any behaviour which threatens our Values and Standards, irrespective of rank, environment or circumstance.....

The British Army provides opportunity for all. Respect for Others reflects our belief that everyone is born free and equal in dignity. It follows that everyone must be treated fairly and with dignity and respect regardless of: gender; ethnicity (including nationality); sexual orientation; age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion; belief or non-belief; rank and position. There is no place in the British Army for prejudice or discrimination, whether in person or online. Only by treating each other fairly and with respect, can we ensure that every officer and soldier in the Army fulfils their potential.



# Free speech vs hate speech?

Top British Army commander admits 'bullying' of gay soldiers 'STILL exists in the ranks'

**Top military leaders remind troops of limits of free speech**

**The Telegraph**

News Sport Business Money Opinion Ukraine US election Travel Health L

UK news Tory leadership Politics World Health news Defence Science Education Environment Investigations

**Colonel 'forced out of Army' after stating 'men cannot be women'**



# Speaking up on systemic issues

**Army members allowed to give evidence to living standards inquiry**

**Defence Committee issues call for written evidence on Women in the Armed Forces**



# Mission

To provide independent and impartial oversight of the Service Complaints system for all members of the UK Armed Forces.

# Vision

That all Service personnel have access to and confidence in a Service Complaints system that is efficient, effective and fair.

# Values

Independence

Impartiality

Integrity



# Why do Army personnel raise a Service Complaint?

Career management

33%

Bullying, harassment  
& discrimination

24%

Other

15%



# Why do personnel not raise a Service Complaint?

Didn't believe anything would be done

58%

Thought it might hurt their career

45%

Did not want to go through the process

30%





# Challenging inappropriate behaviours

- **Scale of the issue**
- **Fear of speaking out**
- **Perception of acceptance**
- **Role of the Chain of Command**

