Meet Commander (CDR) Salimata Seye. With a distinguished career spanning 35 years in Senegal’s National Police from 1982 to 2017, CDR Seye embodies what it means to serve one’s country. Further, her experience is emblematic of the increased participation and representation of women in Senegal’s security sector.

CDR. Seye often vocalized her thoughts on increased inclusion of women in training, stating, “I always encouraged higher officers to involve more women in my training sessions and meetings.” Indeed, throughout her colorful career, she led various capacity building interventions attended by police chiefs and representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Given her seniority, CDR. Seye was aptly positioned to advocate for junior women officers to facilitate these sessions, conduct assessments, and organize follow up discussions. Given the opportunity to facilitate these often male-dominated forums give women officers confidence and practical experience early on in their careers.

In relating to that experience, CDR. Seye fondly recounts working with security and intelligence agencies at the airport and port of Dakar. She also briefly served with a special customs brigade that monitored small arms possessions, drug, pharmaceutical crimes, forestry crimes, investigating suspected violations committed in waters, human trafficking, and illegal drinking establishments. However, she is most proud of being the head of the International Criminal Police Organization’s (INTERPOL) National Central Bureau in Dakar, from November 1998 to December 2000. CDR. Seye notes “I regulated INTERPOL policies and standards, ensuring greater collaboration across law enforcement at the national level.” Unsurprisingly, she excelled in this position, which subsequently led to a promotion to INTERPOL’s General Secretariat in Lyon, France where she remained for ten years. The Commander finds joy in mentoring junior women officers to overcome societal stigmas and gender barriers and to establish a distinguished career in law enforcement.

Now retired, CDR. Seye remains a respected figure in the security sector and indefatigable in advocating for women’s inclusion. She currently serves as the Vice President of the Association of Female Pioneers of the National Police, as an advisor to the police and gendarmes, and as a critical regional liaison across various security sector stakeholders.