

MONTHLY ACTION POINTS

ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL: APRIL 2012

NGO | WORKING GROUP
ON WOMEN, PEACE
AND SECURITY

PRESIDENCY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR APRIL: UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The United States' stated priorities for its permanent Security Council membership include the promotion of peace and development, the advancement of democracy, and the strengthened respect for human rights.

United States' relevant international obligations include: Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (*Signed 31 December 2000, but not yet ratified*); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (*Signed 17 July 1980, but not yet ratified*); National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (*19 December 2011*).

RECOMMENDED SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION POINTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Women, Peace and Security

UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Hervé Ladsous are expected to brief the Council in April on Women, Peace and Security. Given the challenges facing women in numerous situations, including the ongoing transitions in Libya, the violence in Syria, and the continuing calls for democratic change in Yemen, it would be useful for the Council to hear specific updates on these situations, particularly in regards to women's full and equal participation in these transitions and in the development of new political, economic, and social institutions. Emphasis should be placed on how the Council could build on previous good practice, and address the remaining gaps in implementation of Women, Peace and Security obligations, notably relating to women's empowerment and participation in peace talks. In addition, the Council should ensure that all country reports and mandate renewals evaluate the level of protection and promotion of women's human rights, as per SCRs 1325, 1820 (OP 9), 1888 (OP 11), 1889 (OP 5) 1960 (OP 6, 13). Member States should inquire about any lack of such reporting.

Liberia

In its discussion of the forthcoming Secretary-General's **report** on the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the Council should ensure the report provides information on progress in sensitizing and developing the capacity of Liberian institutions (including governmental branches, the army, and police) with regard to issues of gender, sexual and gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse. The report should also include UNMIL's assessment of its own initiatives to sensitize and develop the capacity of its personnel, including peacekeepers and UNMIL office staff, on these issues. The report should include the current status of human rights in Liberia, including weaknesses of rule of law institutions, economic insecurity, and the continuing limited access to social services, particularly for women. Finally, the report should address progress and challenges in ensuring that the Liberian National Police Gender Unit receives ongoing adequate gender training, and logistical and equipment support. Council members should review the document for information on education and vocational training for women and girls associated with fighting forces in reintegration efforts; full access to post-conflict relief and recovery programs for survivors of gender-based violence; and the prioritizing of women's participation in all post-conflict recovery programs, especially their representation in the constitution-drafting process, and in the electoral system, the police, and the judiciary. Special attention should be paid to guaranteeing the participation of women associated with fighting forces in the electoral process.

Myanmar

The Security Council should ensure it remains apprised of the **situation** in Myanmar, particularly regarding the April elections. While supporting these elections, the Council should ensure human rights abuses are not met with impunity, and should urge continued democratic reforms. Ongoing violence, including human rights abuses, between the Myanmar government and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) has resulted in the displacement of approximately 75,000 Kachin since June 2011. Given this situation, Council members should press all actors, including the Myanmar government and the KIA, to act in accordance with relevant international legal obligations, particularly with respect to humanitarian access. As part of that effort, international mechanisms should be utilized to investigate human rights abuses, including by ensuring that the UN country team expands support for local organizations, and conducts regular and systematic reporting on the human rights situation in Myanmar and its ethnic conflict areas, including the rights of women.

South Sudan

The Council is expected to discuss the Secretary-General's most recent **report** on the situation in Abyei. Given new attacks and counter-attacks in recent months, humanitarian concerns, particularly for women, should be central to the Council's review of the situation. Fact-finding investigations by the South Sudan Human Rights Commission and the human rights team of UNMISS must fulfill their commitment to investigate the inter-communal violence in Jonglei, and make their reports and recommendations publicly available.

Syria

In its continuing consideration of the **situation** in Syria, the Security Council should call on the Syrian government to halt indiscriminate attacks on cities and the use of antipersonnel landmines, and should demand access for humanitarian workers, human rights monitors, and journalists. Syrian forces have placed landmines near the borders with Lebanon and Turkey in recent weeks and months, reportedly resulting in civilian casualties. Armed opposition elements have carried out serious human rights abuses, including kidnapping, detention, and torture of security force members, government supporters, and people identified as members of pro-government militias. The Syrian military is applying the same methods of force seen in Homs against the citizens of al-Qusayr, including bombardment of residential areas by artillery and other heavy weapons. Contributing to the rising death toll is food, water, and medical assistance scarcity. Various security forces are routinely torturing and ill-treating detainees held in the context of the protests and unrest, apparently as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population by the Syrian government. The Security Council should impose an arms embargo on Syria; impose targeted sanctions against Syrian leaders implicated in human rights violations, following a fair and transparent process; and refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. In the immediate term, the Security Council should include a human-rights monitoring component in any mission it authorizes to supervise the implementation of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan's "Six-Point Plan" in Syria.

Western Sahara

In relation to its discussion of the forthcoming Secretary-General's **report** on the UN mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO), and in its expected renewal of the MINURSO **mandate**, the Council should ensure the new resolution includes a human rights monitoring mandate, which - unlike most other missions established under the authority of the Council - it currently does not have. A human rights component is critical to documenting human rights violations, including violations against women, in Western Sahara, and the Tindouf camps administered by the Polisario Front. In the past year, the Moroccan authorities have taken positive steps to ensure respect for human rights, including facilitating visits of UN Special Procedures, and the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice of February 2012. However, human rights violations have been regularly reported against Sahrawis advocating for the self-determination of Western Sahara. Pro-independence activists have been imprisoned and have reportedly been tortured or otherwise ill-treated during questioning. The absence of independent human rights organizations in the camps makes it difficult to report and verify human rights violations. A human rights monitoring mandate for MINURSO, to include both Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, would provide independent reporting on the current human rights situation, and be able to monitor violations against women. This mandate would strengthen the mission's support build trust between the parties and create an environment conducive for political negotiations, negotiations which must include the full and equal participation of women.

NGOWG ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY RESOURCES

- NGOWG member organization resources: <http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/rapid-response/> [[link](#)]
- PeaceWomen, *Security Council 1325 Monitor* [[link](#)]
- Human Rights Watch: *Burma: Reforms yet to reach Kachin State* [[link](#)]
- Human Rights Watch: *Syria: Armed Opposition Groups Committing Abuses* [[link](#)]
- Human Rights Watch: *Syria: Witnesses Describe Idlib Destruction, Killings* [[link](#)]
- Human Rights Watch: *Syria: Army Planting Banned Landmines* [[link](#)]
- Human Rights Watch: *South Sudan: Justice Needed to Stem Violence* [[link](#)]

TEL: (+1) 212.557.7298

777 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017

WWW.WOMENPEACESECURITY.ORG

NGOWG members are: *Amnesty International; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Femmes Africa Solidarité; Global Action to Prevent War; Global Justice Center; Human Rights Watch; The Institute for Inclusive Security; International Action Network on Small Arms; International Alert; International Rescue Committee; Refugees International; International Women's Program of the Open Society Foundations; Social Science Research Council; Women's Refugee Commission; Women's Action for New Directions; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.*