

April 2018

Sexual violence in conflict

For April, in which Peru has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on **Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, Syria, Western Sahara, and Sexual violence in conflict.**

It is imperative that in its consideration of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict, the Security Council recognizes the structural and root causes of SGBV, including economic, political, social, and gender inequalities and discrimination, militarization, and the political economy of war (i.e. trafficking and exploitation of persons, natural resources, and small arms and light weapons (SALW)) which manifest on a continuum of multiple, interrelated and recurring forms, before, during and after conflict ([S/2015/716](#); [S/2017/249](#); [S/2017/1025](#)). The normalization of SGBV during conflict leads to continued entrenchment of violence, often in the form of intimate partner violence ([S/2017/249](#)). In the context of the new sustaining peace agenda ([S/RES/2282 \(2016\)](#)), the Council should shift its approach to SGBV by concretely addressing the gender dynamics of the root causes of conflict in the information and analysis requested, and also in action taken. Further, ethnic and other minorities, including sexual and gender minorities, are often particularly targeted, and thus there should be additional efforts to ensure policymaking and programming is intersectional. The Council should:

- Promote gender equality and women and girls' empowerment as fundamental to all efforts to prevent and address SGBV and support women's organizations working on the front lines.
- Call for all actors to prioritize transforming gender norms as part of peacebuilding efforts in order to address entrenched institutional and structural inequalities by adopting gender-responsive budgeting practices.
- Ensure accountability for SGBV, including acts amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and call for vetting mechanisms to ensure members of security forces who have committed crimes under international law are excluded from service until independent and impartial investigations occur. Further, international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law should be adapted and integrated within national laws, particularly through legislation focused on intimate partner violence and other forms of SGBV.
- Include targeting of women human rights defenders and SGBV as designation criteria in sanctions regimes; require gender analysis in all reporting on the illicit trafficking of humans, drugs, SALW, and natural resources; and call for gender expertise in all associated experts groups ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#), OP 6; [S/2017/249](#)).
- Call for survivors of SGBV to have access to the full range of livelihood, legal, psychosocial and non-discriminatory medical services, including sexual and reproductive health services, in line with IHL and not subject to any donor restrictions to ensure comprehensive medical care, including safe abortion ([S/2017/249](#)).
- Call for all humanitarian actors in conflict affected states to comply with the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence](#), and for bilateral donors and pooled funding mechanisms to make funding to all humanitarian sectors contingent upon implementation of these guidelines from the outset of an emergency, which includes recognition of prevention and response to SGBV as lifesaving activities; and call for humanitarian actors operating in conflict affected states to implement the [Roadmap \(2016-2020\) of the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies](#).
- Call for the integration of sex and age disaggregated data in all reports of the Secretary-General on country-specific situations, including in the context of elections, mediation efforts, political processes, and humanitarian assistance, in line with UN policy guidance ([PK/G/2018.01](#)).

Burundi

According to the UN Commission of Inquiry for Burundi, since April 2015, there is "reasonable ground to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed" ([A/HRC/36/54](#)). The Commission also confirmed the "persistence of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and cruel inhuman or degrading treatment and [sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)]" ([A/HRC/36/54](#)). Women are reported to be amongst the first victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) perpetrated with extreme cruelty often accompanied by gender-based, political or ethnic hate speech. In addition to reported continued abuses and violence, acute needs in Burundi and the region are on the rise; the number of individuals with acute humanitarian needs has tripled in one year ([OCHA](#)), and the number of Burundian refugees has increased to over 400,000 persons. The upcoming referendum to extend presidential terms has further contributed to an already tense situation which could unleash a new spiral of violence and sociopolitical crisis in the country, as in 2015. There has been a generalized environment of repression and harassment vis-a-vis the referendum, and "voluntary" contributions to finance the upcoming 2020 elections are being demanded from the population on a monthly basis. In its discussion of the **situation**, it is urgent that the Council address how it has expanded high-level diplomatic efforts and support for mediation to move the dialogue process forward. Any dialogue must be accompanied by concrete actions by the Council, African Union, and East African Community

members to push for an immediate end to violence, human rights violations, and impunity. Due to the high volatility of the situation, it is urgent that the Council put contingency planning back at the center of its discussions to ensure a timely, unfettered, and appropriate protection of the civilian population in case of a brutal increase of violence. Council members should jointly call donors to urgently increase and coordinate support to Burundian population, both in Burundi and regionally. The efforts of countries hosting Burundian refugees should be supported and commended. The Council should also strongly advocate against any coerced or forceful returns and for transparent Refugee Determination Status procedures.

Haiti

In its renewal of the **mandate** for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) the Security Council should maintain the existing provision mainstreaming gender across the mandate ([S/RES/2350 \(2017\)](#), OP 15), and further include a new provision calling for MINUJUSTH to prioritize engagement with women's CSOs and support the Government's efforts to engage with women, women leaders, and women's organizations in all security and development processes. In its discussion of MINUJUSTH's progress, the Council should ask for updates regarding the mission's efforts to provide technical support to the police and judiciary on the prevention and prosecution of cases involving SGBV, capacity-building for women's organizations, and support for women's participation in political processes ([A/72/560](#)). Positively, the work of the previous mission on issues related to discrimination against LGBTI-persons has continued; these efforts should receive full resourcing and support. Finally, the Council should call for the proper investigation of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and report on measures taken to combat the pervasive culture of impunity and hold perpetrators accountable ([S/RES/2272 \(2016\)](#)).

Liberia

The Council is expected to consider the **situation** in Liberia in the context of the drawdown of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and recent elections. It is imperative that, over the course of the transition, gender equality and women's empowerment efforts are prioritized, including in the context of electoral and political processes, justice and security sector reform, and efforts to strengthen the rule of law, and any entities which take on transferred responsibilities have the necessary capacity and resources. The efforts undertaken by UNMIL in the lead up to the election ([S/2017/510](#)) should also be followed-up on in order to support ongoing engagement of women in civic processes. Finally, the Council should inquire about implementation of the 2015 National Action Plan (NAP) on Resolution 1325 (2000) ([CEDAW/C/LBR/CO/7-8](#)).

Syria

Nearly 600 people have been reported killed and more than 2,000 injured since mid-February in air and ground-based strikes in Eastern Ghouta. There is an urgent need to end the ongoing violence, including in particular those committed using weapons prohibited by IHL. Since 11 March, over 50,000 have left Eastern Ghouta to IDP camps in rural Damascus and 167,000 people have left Afrin for camps in northern Aleppo; there is particular concern for the protection of women and children in these locations. The Security Council should put pressure on all parties to implement the provisions of [resolution 2401 \(2018\)](#), particularly the demand for a 30 day "humanitarian pause." In future action taken by the Council on the **situation**, the particular concerns of women and girls living in the besieged area must be emphasized. It is imperative that gender is mainstreamed across humanitarian efforts and women have access to the full range of medical, legal and psychosocial services ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#), OP 16). Council members facilitating the Astana peace process must ensure women's full and meaningful participation in the negotiations and operation of the de-escalation zones. They must also exert pressure to discourage warring parties from adopting a militaristic approach to the issue of detainees and those who were forcibly disappeared, and instead address as a humanitarian emergency. Ahead of April's Brussels aid conference on Supporting Syria and the Region, to be co-chaired by the UN, women from Syrian civil society should be supported to participate meaningfully in preparatory discussions, and further, gender considerations should be reflected in the design and outcomes of the conference ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#), OP 1).

Western Sahara

In its renewal of the **mandate** for the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the Council should include a new provision calling on gender to be mainstreamed as a crosscutting issue ([PK/G/2018.01](#)). The establishment of this function will ensure that MINURSO can fulfill the standard functions of peacekeeping, including monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on local developments through the appointment of personnel responsible for civil affairs to work systematically and directly with concerned communities. Due to the failure of previous resolutions on Western Sahara to include language recognizing core WPS issues; the Council should include new language which emphasizes the importance of women's participation and the protection and promotion of women's rights, including through the implementation of CEDAW ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#); [CEDAW/C/GC/30](#); [CCPR/C/MAR/CO/6](#)).