

## Top 10 Gender and Security Developments of 2016

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### Just Security

These developments and issues are not in any hierarchical order. They represent a broad swath of gender-related practices, actions, opportunities and setbacks that emerged in 2016.

**1. Guatemala's Historic Sexual Violence Trial** — On February 26, a Guatemalan court found that two former military officials committed sexual violence against Q'eqchi indigenous women and that those crimes constituted crimes against humanity. The victims of sexual violence were granted reparations. It was the first national court trial of soldiers where sexual violence was charged as a crime against humanity.

**2. Hissène Habré Conviction, including Sexual Violence** — On May 30, the Extraordinary African Chambers (EAC) convicted Hissène Habré of crimes against humanity, summary execution, torture and rape. Although the initial indictment did not include charges of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), numerous witness testimonies throughout the trial allowed the court to find Habré personally guilty of rape. The judgment is currently on appeal. On July 29, the EAC granted reparations to the civil party victims of rape and sexual violence.

**3. The Gender Dimensions of Colombia's Peace Agreement** — In August, the government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) agreed to a bilateral ceasefire agreement. Despite predictions of strong political support, the peace deal was rejected by Colombian voters with 50.2% voting against ratification. Throughout the negotiations 16 women served as gender experts to the peace process and women were actively involved in civil society agitation for the peace deal. Despite voters' rejection of the peace deal, the involvement of women throughout the peace process is widely regarded as a success for women.

**4. Pakistan's Anti-Honor Killing and Anti-Rape Bills** — The Pakistani Parliament passed legislation closing existing loopholes allowing individuals who committed honor killings to escape legal punishment. The parliament also passed legislation mandating that individuals convicted of rape be sentenced to 25 years in jail. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, has reiterated his government's pledge to end discrimination and violence against women. Enforcement remains the practical challenge ahead.

**5. The Adoption of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security: Timor-Leste and Tunisia Elections** — Timor-Leste became the third country in Southeast Asia, joining the Philippines and Indonesia, to adopt a national action plan pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325. The plan aims to increase and cement women's participation in government and solidify women's rights. In the 2016 elections, 21 women were elected as

Village Chiefs, nearly doubling the number of women elected. Tunisia's Parliament passed legislation providing for "horizontal and vertical" gender parity in Article 49 of the electoral law following the Prime Minister's pledge to expand women's participation in governmental affairs.

**6. The Vulnerability of Prominent Female Political Figures: Berta Cáceres, Lesbia Yaneth Urquía, Jo Cox,** — In 2016, three prominent female politicians were murdered. In March, Berta Cáceres, a Honduran environmental activist and founder of the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras that fought to stop the construction of a hydroelectric dam on indigenous territory, was murdered. Four months later, another Honduran environmental activist and member of Cáceres' organization, Lesbia Janeth Urquía, was murdered. Global Witness estimates that over 100 environmental activists have been murdered in Honduras between 2010 and 2015. In June, one week before the Brexit vote, Jo Cox, a member of the British Parliament was murdered by a man with connections to neo-Nazi organizations.

**7. Gender Data to Better Enable Security and Rights for Women** — In May, a group of governments, nonprofits, and philanthropic organizations released a joint statement announcing their collective commitment to advancing gender equality and gathering comprehensive gender data. Australia, Global Affairs Canada, the UK, USAID, the U.S. Department of State, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Data2X, the UN Foundation, UN Women, and the World Bank Group all committed to completing the implementation of Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals.

**8. UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment – Linking Security and Development** — As a part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. The panel is tasked with exposing and addressing economic issues that affect women. The High-Level Panel has met in Costa Rica and South Africa. On September 22, the panel released its first report.

**9. ISIS and Sexual Violence** — Reports emerged in March that Islamic State fighters were using multiple forms of contraception to facilitate the sexual slavery of Yazidi and other women captured during their domination of sizable territory in Iraq and Syria. The organized and widespread use of contraceptive methods (to meet the dictates of an obscure provision of Islamic law) underscores the ever-modifying dimensions of sexual violence in warfare.

**10. Gender and U.S. Foreign Policy** — Following a turbulent and misogynistic presidential election in the United States, defined by its sexually explicit language and actions of candidate Donald Trump, the capacity of a gender-aware U.S. foreign policy seems under sizeable threat. In December, the Trump transition team asked for names of persons working on gender equality and violence against women. *The New York Times* reported the view

from some officials that the information was sought in part to identify programs that involve issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.