

WILPF STATEMENT TO CEDAW COMMITTEE'S REVIEW OF SPAIN – 61ST SESSION – CREATING AN INTERNATIONAL GENDER AND PEACE AGENDA: TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES, WEAPONS AND VAW

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In this globalized world, human rights violations are cross-bordering and they cannot be successfully addressed if the response does not take into account this transnational nature. As a consequence, the States and their governments have today extraterritorial obligations.

IMPACT OF ARMS TRANSFERS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Spain is one of the major arms exporters in the world (it ranks seventh among the largest sellers of stockpiles) and Spanish arms exports have grown exponentially in the last decade as part of a policy of promotion for these types of sales by the Spanish Government. As for small and light weapons, weapons that have a particular impact on women, Spain ranks 11th among major exporters.

Spain has authorized small arms sales, among other elements – to countries with serious situations of violence, including high rates of femicide, such as Brazil, with an average of 15 murders of women every day-, and Guatemala -the country with the third highest rate of femicide in the world- and settings with a high prevalence of various forms of violence against women, as in the case of Egypt.

Arms sales in these and other cases would not only violate the provisions contained in the Spanish Law on Arms Trade, the criteria defined by the EU Common Position for the control of military exports and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) adopted in 2013, that acknowledges the link between gender based violence and the international arms trade. They would also undermine the commitments made under CEDAW and in general recommendations 12, 19 and 30.

Recently, the cancellation of arms sales from Sweden to Saudi Arabia -putting an end to a decade of military cooperation- amid human rights violations in the Arab country, particularly against women, has emerged as a benchmark for the type of measures that can be taken when the protection of human rights at the heart of political decision stands.

IMPACT OF SPANISH TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

In recent years Spanish companies have focused a great part of their efforts on internationalisation, these efforts has been accompanied by the Spanish government, which dedicated a large portion of its foreign policy on the promotion of Spanish companies abroad.

Many human rights organisations have expressed their great concern regarding the responsibility that different Spanish companies have had in serious violations of the human rights of women workers.

The local companies that supply products to Spanish companies, especially in the textiles and foods sectors, have maintained practices such as 72-hour work-weeks, failure to provide legal contracts to working women, or placing restrictions on their freedom of movement, as is the case with Eastman Exports Global Clothing, which supplies Spanish companies such as Cortefiel, El Corte Inglés and Inditex. Another example is the lack of guarantees with regards to obtaining a dignified salary for the working women who participate in the supply chain of companies such as Desigual, Mango and Inditex, which does not allow working women to keep themselves and their families afloat.

In Latin America, for example in Guatemala, sexual violence and gender-based violence has been used as a strategy to silence protests against mining and dams projects. More details on this case can be found in our report.

EVALUATING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

The Government of Spain approved the 2007 National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. However, implementation has been very inadequate.

The Action Plan lacks a specific budget allocation. Also, the deep cuts suffered in the Spanish cooperation for development have impacted this scope. Nor is there a timetable for implementation that would ensure proper compliance with the goals outlined in the NAP. No indicators have been used to evaluate the results achieved.

Even though Government of Spain commits itself to presenting an annual follow-up report on the degree of fulfilment of the objectives set forth, these reports have not been presented every year. As a result of this, it does not have quantitative or qualitative information about the achievements made including measuring actual impact on peace, the participation of women in DDR processes, women's access to decision-taking spaces or violence against women.

It is also remarkable the low profile the Spanish government has had in supporting the participation of women in the negotiations held between FARC and the Colombian government, despite Colombia has been, and continues to be, one of the priority countries for cooperation with Spain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ARMS TRANSFERS

Include the risk of gender-based violence in the country of destination as a relevant criterion when assessing arms sales authorisation and promote the adoption of policies, including in the field of

military cooperation and arms trade, to sanction countries with situations of discrimination and gender-based violence as established by the ATT.

TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES

The Government should condition its political and financial support to Spanish companies internationalising their means of production to full guarantees that they will respect the working rights of the women workers that participate in the production and supply chains of Spanish companies.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Establish an institutional framework adequate for the SCR 1325 NAP, defining the tasks and responsibilities of the governmental actors and the civil society, including indicators of evaluation, a route map and a budget to carry out the activities.