FEMINIST
SECURITY COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

INCLUSIVE GENDER POWER ANALYSIS

DISARMAMENT

MEANINGFUL CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

TOWARDS A FEMINIST SECURITY COUNCIL

A Guidance Note For
Security Council Members

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR
PEACE & FREEDOM

Table of Contents

Towards a Feminist Security Council: Guidance Note for Security Council Members

Cover photo: The "Feminist Security Council" infographic describes how the Security Council mandate could work for women, and push the international community to change from business as usual toward feminist peace.

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Introduction

Overview

This Guidance Note provides concrete recommendations for the Members of the Security Council on how to implement the Security Council's mandate consistent with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. It builds on emerging good practice and civil society recommendations, and it provides a useful tool to guide experts working at diplomatic missions to the United Nations on how to advance a Security Council Agenda that works for all.

Three years after the 2015 Global Review on Women, Peace and Security, key gaps remain on realising the Security Council's UN Charter mandate in a way consistent with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. These gaps include: women's meaningful participation, local engagement, disarmament, gender power analysis, and structural and democratic reform.

Using this Guidance Note, Security Council Members can leverage existing working methods to address these key gaps. In doing so, they can support a shift from crisis response towards upstream conflict prevention and sustaining peace based on women's participation, protection and rights.

Background

On 31 October 2000, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 in response to concerted advocacy by women civil society. For the first time, the highest international decision-making body on peace and security recognised women's and gender issues as relevant to peace and security.

Today, eight resolutions on Women, Peace and Security affirm the Security Council's responsibility and commitment to strengthening women's participation, protection and rights across the conflict spectrum. The Women, Peace and Security Agenda builds on the UN Charter, which mandates the Security Council to maintain international peace and security (Article 24.1) while respecting 'human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion' (Article 55 c).

In recent years, a number of working methods have been developed – often through the leadership of Elected Members of the Security Council working with women civil society – to innovate and move forward accountability on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The normalisation of civil society briefers to the Security Council on geographic agenda items, the creation of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security and the Women, Peace and Security Focal Point Network are all opportunities to accelerate action.

Yet it is commonly recognised that the Security Council still has far to go to live up to its mandate and engage in effective action.

To deliver on its mandate in a way that works for women – and all people – the Security Council must support actions which do not just end active conflict but also build sustainable and democratic peace, with local women's leadership and rights at the core.

Strengthening Partnerships with Women Civil Society

> At the Security Council, I have spoken, and everybody claps. But then it does not go anywhere. We are not there to be wallpaper!
>
> Julienne Lusenge
> Fund for Congolese Women, the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Context

Civil society was at the founding of the United Nations and is recognised in the UN Charter (Preamble and Article 71). There is also a strong connection between the inclusion of women and civil society in peace processes for the durability of peace.

According to the 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, including civil society in the development of peace agreements makes them 64 per cent less likely to fail (p.42).

The Security Council has recognised that civil society provides 'specialised knowledge, capabilities, experience, links with key constituencies, influence and resources to support peaceful solutions to disputes' (S/PRST/2005/42, para. 4) and facilitates 'community leadership, help shape public opinion, and facilitate as well as contribute to reconciliation between conflicting communities [while also] providing a bridge to dialogue and other confidence-building measures between parties in conflict' (S/PRST/2005/42, para. 5). The Security Council has also affirmed civil society briefings as a way to strengthen integration of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into its work (UNSCR 2242 (2015), OP 5 (c)).

However, women peace leaders are often prevented from formal leadership due to the discriminatory character of existing social structures. When women civil society are included at the Security Council, it is too often as tokens, in the form of 'sad stories' or 'illustrations' rather than as key sources of analysis and recommendation. When women peace leaders bring analysis and recommendations to the Security Council or in peace processes, these recommendations are often sidelined or not followed up on. Gender blindness by international actors also often means there is an assumption that any woman can speak for all women. Yet – like men – women vary widely, based on ethnicity, race, class, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, rural/urban background and other experiences.

Meaningful participation of women in peace work requires prioritising action around local women's analysis of root causes of violence. It means engaging with women from their own experiences and removing obstacles to participation so that women can speak for themselves, rather than be spoken for.

Key Opportunity: Civil Society Briefings

Engaging civil society as briefers and across cycles of work in the Security Council provides a key opportunity for building strong partnerships for change. Following recommendations from the 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security and commitments in Resolution 2242 (2015), the first civil society briefer to the Security Council on a geographic agenda item addressed the Security Council on 2 December 2016 upon the invitation of Spain as the Security Council President. Victoria Wollie, National Coordinator in Liberia for the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, briefed the Security Council, including on women's representation in national legislature and local districts, the impact of harmful traditional practices and the need for increased financial support for women civil society. Spain's initiative spearheaded action by other Security Council Members. As of October 2018, Member States had invited 19 civil society briefers (including 15 local women civil society briefers) on thematic and geographic agenda items. Participation by women civil society has contributed to strengthening gendered root cause analysis and increasing the visibility and recognition of women's leadership for peace in local, national and international fora.

GOOD PRACTICE

The 2017 Security Council Lake Chad Mission

The March 2017 five-day Security Council Mission to Lake Chad, including Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, demonstrated good practice and exemplified the generative cycle of women civil society engagement. The UK as penholder on the Lake Chad Region invited input from women leaders early on in the design of the Security Council Mission. The 27 February Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security meeting on Lake Chad then called for the Members of the Mission to meet with women civil society and address gender issues with all interlocutors. In response, Security Council Members met with local women civil society early on and multiple times, which positively influenced subsequent meetings and discussions. Afterward, Resolution 2349 (2017) affirmed the need to address root causes (OPs 22, 27), including through gender expertise and gender-sensitive data (OPs 5, 8, 14), and called for greater dialogue and support between civil society and governments (OP 27). The Security Council continued to engage women in following up, including inviting a civil society representative to brief the Security Council later in the year.

The Security Council's engagement with women civil society before and during its mission to Lake Chad showed a cycle that invited input from women leaders early in the mission design, engaged them during the mission, and continued to work with them during the follow-up. This cycle strengthened a holistic analysis and has contributed to the emerging work of the Network of African Women Mediators, known as FemWise-Africa, which is starting to explore action that links formal Track 1 with Track 2 and grassroots Track 3 women peace mediators.

Commitment

"The Security Council encourages Security Council missions to hold meetings with local civil society and other interested parties."
(S/2010/507, para. 68)

Mechanisms

- Security Council briefings, debates, formal and informal consultations.

- Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security.

- Arria Formula Meetings, Expert Group Meetings.

- Mandates of Security Council Missions and peace operations.

- Strategic frameworks and reviews (i.e. Peacebuilding Commission, Working Groups,Panels of Experts).

- Terms of Reference for mediators, Special Envoys, Special-Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Deputy SRSGs.

- Donor conferences and civil society funds (i.e. Peacebuilding Fund's Gender Promotion Initiative, Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, women's funds).

How-To

Overall
- Invite a cross-representation of local and international women civil society to provide regular briefings to the Security Council.

- Integrate analysis, expertise and recommendations of women civil society into Security Council decisions, consultations and briefings.

- Encourage communication, coordination and collaboration between pen-holders, expert groups and committees, and women civil society, as well as capitals and embassies in-country.

- Meet with women civil society early on during Security Council Missions to inform discussions and follow-up afterward.

- Request the UN Secretary-General to include in relevant Terms of Reference the specific responsibility to actively engage women civil society.

- Call on peace operations to actively engage with diverse women civil society; support their inclusion in peace processes and donor conferences; and protect and document violations against women's human rights defenders.

- Increase core, ongoing, political and financial support to women civil society.

Focus: Women Civil Society Briefers
- Support independent feminist voices and the independence of civil society to propose briefers on their behalf. Do not block speakers or hand-pick government-friendly groups.

- Ensure all briefers invited by the Security Council have access by supporting briefer visas, supporting briefers via video if needed, and advocating for consistent, non-discriminatory, transparent visa and accreditation procedures.

- Plan for, mitigate and follow-up on briefer security risks, including intimidation and reprisals,including through consultations on specific civil society concerns.

- Support a cycle of civil society engagement: Invite women in advance, ensure responsiveness to input, share information on action taken afterwards, and provide opportunities for redress and remedy of any gaps.

Supporting Local, National and Regional Leadership

> The United Nations has the financial and political resources, so they have the opportunity to make a difference on the ground. But to make that change on the ground they have to include the civil society organisations on the ground in the designing and implementation of that support.
>
> Hajer Sharief
> Together We Build It, Libya

Context

The UN Charter calls for disputes to be addressed regionally before involving the Security Council (Articles 33, 52). People in communities working for non-violence and justice are often best placed to analyse and take action for peace.

As the 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security recognised, investing locally rather than parachuting in and out has more potential for impact (ps. 125, 394).

The 2015 Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations ('HIPPO report') affirmed that the UN does best when it facilitates more and does less (p. 5). UNSCR 2151 (2014) also encourages Member States undertaking Security Sector Reform to 'take the lead in defining an inclusive national vision [...] informed by the needs and aspirations of the population' (OP 3), including around women's equal and effective participation (OP 19). Resolution 2122 (2013) also urges regional and sub-regional bodies to strengthen policies, activities and advocacy for the benefit of women and girls, including around mediation and decision-making (OP 7(c)), and to review existing plans and targets to accelerate action, including with participation of women civil society (OP 11).

In some situations, the UN has identified and amplified local work. However, there is a tendency to 'parachute in' solutions that ignore local contexts. This approach can duplicate, undermine and divide local peacemaking efforts. In addition, even when the UN is supporting localised approaches, efforts often focus on national governments and traditional leaders, which systematically exclude women's experiences, rather than focusing on inclusive and democratic grassroots leadership.

An inclusive, bottom-up approach requires local and national ownership, but particularly the facilitation of democratic, grassroots participation for nonviolence and justice. A bottom-up approach must include local women leaders.

Key Opportunity: The Presence of the United Nations in-Country

The direct engagement of the UN provides a key opportunity for strengthening locally driven approaches. UN Country Teams and some peace operations, including in Afghanistan (S/RES/1401, OP 1), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/RES/1925, OP 1) and Mali (S/RES/2100, OP 7) are tasked with regularly engaging local stakeholders, including civil society and human rights defenders, in order to strengthen the quality and legitimacy of action for society-wide impact. Supporting such an approach requires making space for women's leadership. It requires building partnerships with local peace activists in a way that recognises and amplifies their work.

GOOD PRACTICE

The Peace Process in Colombia

The Colombian Peace Process demonstrated the good practice of the UN taking a bottom-up approach. UN Women identified grassroots women early on and supported their work for a feminist agenda that addressed women's participation and rights. In 2013, the National Summit on Women and Peace 'Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz' provided space for activists to develop recommendations on the six points of the peace negotiation agenda. In 2013, the government appointed two women as formal negotiators. In 2014, a Gender Sub-Commission comprised of members from both FARC-EP and government negotiation parties was created to include a gender perspective into the peace agreement. The Gender Sub-Commission promoted the participation of women leaders at the peace negotiation table in Havana to discuss women's rights violations and sexual violence in the context of armed conflict, and promoted women's participation at all levels of the negotiation and implementation of the agreement. The Security Council then supported local leadership for peace by adopting Resolution 2261 (2016), which established the political mission requested by the 19 January Joint Communiqué to monitor and jointly verify a definitive ceasefire and confirm decommissioning of weapons. As a result of the high pressure from women's organisations and supported by national and international actors, the 24 November 2016 Peace Agreement was historic in its recognition of women's rights and gender perspective. It included over 100 provisions on gender issues, including demanding zero tolerance and justice on sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, the Peace Agreement led to one of the most successful weapon laydowns in history, with nearly 9,000 arms laid down.

The UN Women engagement in Colombia showed the importance of identifying and supporting local leadership – especially local women's leadership – for peace. By acting as a facilitator rather than taking the lead, the United Nations was able to support strengthened contextual analysis of root causes, including on gender issues. This led to a richer and more comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Mandate

"Parties to any dispute threatening international peace or security shall, first of all, seek a solution [and] resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice." (UN Charter, Art.33)

Mechanisms

- Mandates of Peacekeeping and Political Missions.

- Mandates of Resident Coordinators, Secretary-General Special Representatives, and Special Envoys.

- UN Country Teams, local strategies of the Peacebuilding Support Office and political andpeacekeeping missions.

- Joint consultative meetings and informal dialogues with regional and sub-regional organisations (i.e. African Union, European Union, Organisation of American States, Organisation of Arab States).

- Good offices of the Secretary-General.

- National and Regional Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security.

- UN Gender Parity Plan.

How-To

Overall

- Prevent undermining of local civil society by requesting UN Women, Department of Political Affairs and UN Country Teams develop and report on strategies that identify, support and do not duplicate inclusive, local leadership on peace and security.

- Invite the Peacebuilding Support Office to develop local strategies that map impact and prioritise action that is locally relevant, conflict sensitive and empowering to women.

- Require all peace operations to actively work with, and report on, their substantive and ongoing relationships with local civil society as part of mandated responsibilities.

- Call for Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and/or Special Envoys and donors to support inclusive convenings with national stakeholders to define a political roadmap for peace.

- Revitalise and reinforce regionally focused dialogues.

- Support development, financing, implementation and monitoring of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security in conflict-affected countries through partnerships, bilateral and multilateral support.

Focus: Women's Leadership From the Bottom Up

- Invite countries and regional organisations to appoint high-level women, peace and security representatives, leadership and advisory bodies to spearhead strategic action; do not limit support for women's contributions solely to advisory roles.

- Call on the UN Secretary-General to strengthen good offices on cultivating women's national leadership and push all parties to support women's inclusion before peace talks.

- Require negotiating bodies and mediating teams to include at least 30 per cent of women in formal, substantive roles as a precondition of participation in peace processes.

- Call for increased support for women's participation in Track !, II and III processes.

- Support the Secretary-General's Gender Parity Plan and model parity nationally.

Prioritising Gender Conflict Analysis

> Just as individual men need to choose masculinities defined by care over violence, if we are to build a world of partnerships and peace, so, too, Member States, international financial institutions and multilateral organisations need to build political economies of care and justice rather than exploitation and war.
>
> Ilot Muthaka
> Congo Men's Network (COMEN), Democratic Republic of the Congo

Context

The UN Charter affirms the equal rights of men and women (Preamble) and notes that the UN shall not restrict women from participating in its organs (Article 8). This requires a transparent and inclusive approach.

The 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security affirms that inclusive and transformative peacebuilding requires addressing systemic gender inequality, which is among the root causes of conflict (p.169, see also: 169, 184, 197, 318).

With the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, the Security Council affirmed the need for a gender perspective, including the collection of better data to address the impact of armed conflict on women and girls (UNSCR 1325 (2000), OPs 5, 7, 8). The Security Council has also begun to address masculinities by affirming the importance of engaging men and boys as partners in promoting women's participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict situations (UNSCR 2242 (2015), PP 12, OP 4), as well as in preventing sexual violence and combating all forms of violence against women (UNSCR 2106 (2013), PP 5).

In a world where 'the rights of man' have been assumed to be the same as 'human rights', assuming men's experiences as standard continues to be the norm. Yet people's experiences of security, justice and participation vary substantially depending on their privileges and risks. There are systematic challenges that prevent gender analysis from informing peace work. A narrow focus on protection concerns, specifically prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, also ignores broader issues related to gender equality.

Holistic gender analysis must look at the broader relationships between gender and crisis, including how gender roles, norms and identities shape and are shaped by conflict. This must also take into account masculinities, femininities, patriarchy and militarism.

Key Opportunity: The Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security and Women, Peace and Security Focal Point Network

Mainstreaming gender conflict analysis outside of the Women, Peace and Security work provides a key opportunity to translate relevant commitments outside of gender silos and accelerate impact. Following recommendations from the 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security and commitment in Resolution 2242 (2015), the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security held its first meeting on 29 February 2016. As of September 2018, it has discussed Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, the Lake Chad Region, Libya, Mali and Yemen, as well as Women Protection Advisers. This has 'provide[d] space for transparent, regular, systematic and timely consultation' between country experts and Women, Peace and Security experts for more systematic coordination, operationalisation and implementation (UNSCR 2242 (2015), OP5 (a)).

The Women, Peace and Security Focal Point Network provides another opportunity. Launched 23 September 2016 by Spain, together with Canada, Chile, Japan, Namibia and the United Arab Emirates, it meets bi-annually to strengthen national Women, Peace and Security action through exchanging good practices and lessons learned.

GOOD PRACTICE

Commission on Inquiry on Syria

While gender mainstreaming is critical, it must be based on strong gender conflict analysis. Following Resolution 2122 (2013) (OP 2(e))'s invitation for gender-differentiated impact analysis, the 2018 report by the Syrian Independent International Commission of Inquiry on sexual and gender-based violence in Syria between March 2011 and December 2017 entitled 'I lost my dignity' is a strong example. Building on a process that interviewed diverse local stakeholders, including women, the report shows how the assertion of power through sexualised violence is used against women, girls, men and boys to instil fear, humiliate, punish and reinforce a particular social order. It shows how sexual and gender-based violence is shaped by structural inequalities of the political economy and exacerbated by violence and conflict. It finds that violations of civilian populations have amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On 19 March 2018, the Security Council held an Arria Formula Meeting on the human rights situation in Syria, organised by France, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the UK, and the US, where the findings from the Commission of Inquiry on Syria's report on human rights violations, sexual violence and accountability were stressed as important and essential work that requires international support. Following the Meeting, the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism on Syria on accountability affirmed it would not only include specialists in sexual and gender-based crimes in its work but also ensure its work addresses the full range of gender-based crimes and properly hears the voices of women in the accountability process.

The Syrian Independent International Commission of Inquiry report shows how having strong gender conflict analysis is critical for holistic action on and mainstreaming of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Commitment

The Security Council "decides to integrate women, peace and security concerns across all country-specific situations on the Security Council's agenda […] and reiterates its intention to ensure Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women." (2242 (2015), OP 5(b)).

Mechanisms

Gender Expertise
- Gender Advisors (i.e. peace operations, UN Women, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations).

- Human Rights Bodies (i.e. CEDAW Committee, Human Rights Council and its special procedures, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, African Commission on Human and People's Rights).

- Office of the Secretary-General (i.e. Secretary-General's Special Rapporteurs and Special Representatives).

- Relevant Experts (i.e. Commissions of Inquiry, Fact-finding Missions and Panels of Experts).

Gender Mainstreaming
- Thematic and geographic experts (i.e. in-country Peace and Development Advisors, disarmament experts, Protection Advisors).

- Expert groups and committees (i.e. Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ad-Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention in Africa, Sanctions Committee, Military Staff Committee).

- Security Council debates, resolutions, reports and other procedures.

- Mission mandates, visiting missions' terms of reference, strategic reviews.

- Gender trainings (i.e. by Police and Troop Contributing Countries, peace operations and programmes).

- Budgeting mechanisms (i.e. Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), UN General Assembly Fifth Committee).

- International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice.

How-To

Gender Expertise

- Request appointment of and prioritise timely hiring for senior-level Gender Advisors; ensure they report directly to senior leadership and have broad UN institutional support.

- Invite UN Women to train thematic advisors and experts on gender conflict analysis as a central responsibility, addressing masculinity and concentration of power.

- Protect funding for senior gender advisor posts and support funding of gender posts as part of regular UN contributions.

Gender Mainstreaming

- Request regular briefings and reporting on thematic and geographic agenda items from gender and women's human rights experts.

- Include a gender perspective in all mandates, mission and expert body terms of reference, and strategic reviews.

- Systematically integrate recommendations of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security into the Security Council work; invite gender experts to assist other groups and committees.

- Call for regular gender trainings by UN staff and peacekeepers.

- Support gender budgeting by the UN Fifth Committee.

- Call on Member States to address gender impacts of sanctions to prevent humanitarian harm, and include sexual and gender-based violence as a basis for individual, targeted sanctions for perpetrators.

- Support International Criminal Court referral to prosecute gender-based violence and ensure redress.

- Call on Member States to review and accelerate action on National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security as part of implementing the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, especially on gender equality (SDG 5) and peace (SDG 16).

- Inquire with the UN Secretary General or Executive Committee on Peace and Security about steps taken to ensure gender expertise in Needs Assessment Missions, Technical Assessment Missions, and strategic reviews.

- Inquire with UN senior leadership about steps taken to address Women, Peace and Security issues, particularly when insufficient information exists in UN Secretary General reports.

Ensuring Action on Disarmament

> It is hypocritical to condemn the human rights violations and express horror at the new violence, while then also selling arms to Myanmar and seeking explorative licenses to mine its natural resources.
>
> Razia Sultana
> Founder of Rohingya Women Welfare

Context

The UN Charter demands the settlement of disputes by peaceful means (Articles 1 and 2). It affirms that the Security Council should maintain international peace and security 'with the least diversion for armaments', including by establishing a system for regulation of arms (Article 26).

All three reviews of peace and security in 2015 – on peace operations, peacebuilding, and Women, Peace and Security – affirm that militarised responses are an obstacle to lasting peace.

The Security Council has recognised the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons on women, called for women's participation in the prevention for armed violence and disarmament (UNSCR 2220 (2015), OPs 18, 26) and encouraged risk mitigation of women becoming players in illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons (UNSCR 2242, OPs 2, 15). It has affirmed that a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy should include non-proliferation (S/PRST/2018/1, para. 12), recognised that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is a risk for protection of civilians (S/PRST/2015/23, paras. 13-14) and called for gender in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes (UNSCR 1325, OP 13)).

However, disarmament remains a key gap. Funding for the security sector increased by nearly 50 per cent between 2000 and 2017. Meanwhile, funding for gender and human rights has been increasingly at risk. Militarisation and arms proliferation pose a hazard, especially in the context of reduced institutional support for human rights (including participation, livelihoods and justice). It also increases the vulnerability of women and other at-risk populations. Military responses popularise violent masculinities, reinforce gendered and unequal power relationships and fuel violence. Militarised counterterrorism can instrumentalise women, while undermining community resilience and increasing risks for women. Within a context of structural discrimination and inequality, arms proliferation increases a climate of fear due to increased risks of torture, sexual and gender-based violence, among others. It also restricts women's freedom of movement and political participation.

Action on peace and security that works for women – and men – requires that the Security Council takes concrete action on disarmament. This must widen the discourse beyond conversations about non-proliferation and counterterrorism to include disarmament, arms transfers and the reduction of military expenditure and to support people-centred security that prevents humanitarian harm.

Key Opportunity: Gender Perspective on Arms Transfers

Preventing transfer of small arms and light weapons provides a key opportunity for preventing sexual, gender-based and other forms of violence. In 2013, in response to concerted women civil society advocacy, Member States adopted the first-ever Arms Trade Treaty with Australia chairing the final conference session. The Arms Trade Treaty included a legally binding criterion for exporting states to assess the risk of weapons, ammunition, parts or components being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or violence against women and children as part of the mandatory export assessment process (Article 7). In its role as an elected member of the Security Council, Australia then followed up by championing Resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons, which addressed the disproportionate impact of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence and child recruitment (OP 12). This was followed by a second resolution on small arms and light weapons. Resolution 2220 (2015) led by Lithuania, encourages better data and women's meaningful participation in combat and eradication of illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (OPs 18, 26).

Moving the agenda on disarmament forward has been in part due to non-permanent Security Council Members who leveraged their role in the Security Council to strengthen coherence across the United Nations system. Security Council Members should continue to promote an integrated approach with a gender perspective on arms control and security to enable sustainable development and peace.

GOOD PRACTICE

Preventing Arms Transfer to Conflict Zones

Since the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013, all countries are now bound in principle to conducting risk assessments of arms transfers, preventing transfers if there is a risk that the weapons will be used to facilitate gender based violence (article 7(4), and reporting annually on action taken on these assessments. The Beijing Platform for Action, Programme of Action on Small Arms, and Sustainable Development Goal 16.4 affirm the need to take action on this issue. Civil society has drawn attention to how transfers of arms have contributed to increased risks of gender-based violence, while also reducing women's access to livelihoods and shrinking spaces for participation in public life in Yemen.

In Sweden, mobilisation around this issue resulted in a law (which entered into force April 2018) that aims to restrict arms exports to authoritarian states. In the Security Council, the 23 October 2018 briefing by Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock called for a cessation of hostilities and reigniting support for political solutions, as well as protection of food supply and humanitarian funding.

Mandate

Conflicts or dispute need to 'first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice' (UN Charter, Art. 33).

Mechanisms

- Security Council Committees (i.e. 1540 Committee on non-proliferation, country-specific sanctions committees) and Working Groups (i.e. on joint arms embargoes).

- Experts on gender and disarmament (Department of Political Affairs, Office for Disarmament Affairs, CEDAW Committee, Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures, Commissions of Inquiry, Fact-finding Missions, panels of experts).

- Security Council thematic briefings and debates (i.e. Protection of Civilians, Small Arms and Light Weapons, Non-Proliferation).

- Arms Embargoes.

- Mandates of Peace Operations and Terms of Reference of Visiting Missions.

- Mission-supported in-country programmes (i.e. Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Programmes; Security Sector Reform; and Mine Action).

How-To

Overall

- Strengthen prevention efforts by revitalising horizon scanning and broadening the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention in Africa to have a global focus.

- Invite relevant committees, working groups and panels of experts to request briefings and reporting on gender and disarmament.

- Call for implementation of Article 26 of the UN Charter, which calls on the Security Council to formulate plans for the regulation of armaments and support disarmament and arms control initiatives on weapons possession, use, development and acquisition.

- Call for and model gender-responsive budgeting to strengthen justice, social protection and peacebuilding while mitigating military budgets; call for 15 per cent of the Peacebuilding Fund to promote gender equality; and increase financial support so the fund meets its 100 million USD goal.

In focus: Small Arms

- Invite the Department of Political Affairs, Office of Disarmament Affairs, Human Rights Bodies and civil society to support Member States in assessing the gendered impact of arms.

- Inquire about the steps taken to ensure the meaningful participation of women civil society in design, implementation and follow up of efforts to prevent manufacturing of and trafficking of weapons.

- Support arms embargoes, especially if there is evidence of gendered impacts of arms, including those raised in recommendations from human rights bodies and disarmament experts.

Promoting Transparent and Democratic Governance

> Yemen was a defining moment. The Security Council is tasked with preventing war between Member States, but voted to enable one state to attack another. It has become the 'Unsecurity Council' and there is a crisis of its legitimacy.
>
> Sanam Anderlini
> Co-Founder and Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

Context

Although the UN Charter mandates the Security Council to lead on international peace and security (Article 24), this is historically juxtaposed with a frozen power structure of the elite veto (Articles 27, 48).

The 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security suggested that increasing the leadership of elected members and creating informal co-leadership roles on Women, Peace and Security and sexual violence in armed could promote more effective action and accountability (p. 338).

In Note 507 (2017), the members of the Security Council encourage Security Council missions to hold meetings with local civil society leaders (para. 123). Security Council Members also agree to consider using Arria-Formula meetings 'to enhance their contact with civil society and non-governmental organisations, including local non-governmental organisations suggested by United Nations field offices', encourage lengthened lead times and permit participation by video teleconference (para. 98).

However, despite some progress on affirmation of civil society engagement, the veto and the lack of accountability have posed a fundamental obstacle to the realisation of the Security Council's mandate. As of October 2018, the Permanent Members of the Security Council have used the veto over 249 times. This has blocked action from addressing humanitarian catastrophes and limited effective action in situations such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Because of the power dynamics within the UN more globally, there is a lack of accountability for implementation of the Security Council's resolutions. This ineffective and undemocratic decision-making enables the abuse of power. It lacks transparency and flies in the face of commitments such as in Rwanda for humanity to 'never again' have such horrors happen.

Substantive reform requires preventing the abuse of power, addressing the impact of the Security Council's actions on people and challenging the Security Council's increasingly expanded mandate to ensure both effective prioritisation of rights and also promotion of economic justice and peace.

Key Opportunity: The Leadership of Elected Members

The Elected Members of the Security Council have played critical leadership roles in strengthening action on Women, Peace and Security. This can be seen in in Bangladesh's role in initiating Resolution 1325 (2000), in Sweden's role in leveraging its Feminist Foreign Policy by consistently asking about women and gender issues across diverse spaces and areas of work, and in the role of states such as Peru and Bolivia who have raised the profile of geographic agenda items otherwise not prioritised and pushed for stronger action to address root causes of violence.

Elected Members of the Security Council have become increasingly organised and impactful. In 2017, they met regularly as a group and also with the Secretary-General. In the face of divides among the Permanent Five Members on situations such as North Korea, Syria and Ukraine, the Elected Members (Egypt, Japan and Sweden) continue taking the lead in breaking humanitarian impasses. In general, Elected Members have been particularly active on humanitarian issues, often exerting pressure on the pen-holder to attend to these issues, such as with Myanmar and Yemen.

GOOD PRACTICE

Reforming the Council through the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Initiative

The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Initiative was launched in 2013, building on a previous 'Small Five (S5) initiative' by Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Singapore on strengthening the transparency of the use of the veto. In 2015, the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Initiative launched a Code of Conduct, which commits signatories to support Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes and to not vote against credible draft resolutions aimed at preventing these crimes. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Code of Conduct has been supported by over 117 Member States, including France and the UK. In 2016, the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Initiative also supported the most transparent process of the Secretary-General selection ever, with 12 individuals taking part in informal dialogues where they shared their experience and vision for the role and responded to questions, including from 'Time for a Woman' and 'Feminist United Nations' campaigns.

The ACT Initiative shows how leadership by elected Security Council Members in partnership with civil society can begin to shift cultural assumptions and diplomatic protocol to promote democratic accountability and reform. Member States running to be Elected Members of the Security Council should commit to leveraging their position as a leader on Women, Peace and Security, including by working with women civil society.

Commitment

The Security Council must strive towards conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes on the basis of 'universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion' (UN Charter, Article 55 c.)

Mechanisms

- Non-permanent Security Council Member leadership.

- Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Initiative.

- France-Mexico Initiative.

- Informal Group on Documentation and Other Proceedings.

- Note 507, by the President of the Security Council.

- Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security and other working groups.

- Group of Friends of Resolution 1325 and Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network.

- Gender Compacts for Member State Missions to the United Nations.

How-To

Overall: Democratic Reform
- Integrate good practice Women, Peace and Security methods of the Security Council as part of clear Security Council rules of procedure and support strengthened institutional memory of elected members.

- Sign on to the ACT Initiative and refrain from using the veto, including when sexual and gender-based violence amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

- Promote continued relevance of the Security Council by working with the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform (IGN) to develop and implement a strategy to progressively restrain and abolish the use of the veto.

- Encourage communication, coordination and collaboration among Security Council Members, Member States outside of the Council, including by strengthening links between the Group of Friends of Resolution 1325 in New York and Geneva.

- Adopt gender compacts in the missions of Member States to the UN (i.e. promote integration of gender training in terms of reference, promote senior leadership of women, ensure gender balance, decline to speak at all male panels).

In Focus: Elected Member Leadership
- Support election of Security Council Elected Members who commit to taking a leadership role on Women, Peace and Security as a priority area.

- Expand ownership in the Security Council beyond one 'penholder' by continuing co-chair roles in the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security and building on this in other working groups.

- Support open and public discussion, especially in early stages, to increase transparency with the UN System, including around the appointment of the Secretary-General.

- Engage with Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network and the Group of Friends of Resolution 1325 to build consensus for holistic implementation and accountability, including when drafting resolutions, presidential statements and press statements.

Key Recommendations

Strengthening Partnerships with Women Civil Society

Overall:

- Invite women civil society to provide regular briefings to the Security Council.
- Integrate analysis, expertise and recommendations from women civil society.
- Encourage partnership between pen-holders, expert groups and committees, and women civil society.
- Meet with women civil society early on during Security Council Missions and then follow up.
- Include in relevant ToRs specific responsibility to engage women civil society.
- Call on peace operations to actively engage with diverse women civil society; support their inclusion in peace processes and donor conferences; and protect and document violations.

Focus: Civil Society Briefers:

- Support independent feminist voices and the independence of civil society.
- Ensure all briefers invited by the Security Council have necessary access.
- Plan for, mitigate and follow-up on briefer security risks.
- Invite women in advance, ensure responsiveness to input, share information on action taken afterwards, and provide opportunities for redress and remedy of any gaps.

Supporting Local, National and Regional Leadership

Overall:

- Request UN Women, DPA and UNCTs develop and report on strategies that identify, support, and do not duplicate local leadership.
- Invite PBSO to develop local strategies that map impact and prioritise action that is locally relevant, conflict sensitive and empowering to women.
- Require all peace operations to actively engage with local civil society.
- Call for UNSG and donors to support inclusive national convenings and roadmaps for peace
- Revitalise and reinforce regionally focused dialogues.
- Support development, financing, implementation and monitoring of UNSCR1325 NAPs.

Focus: Women's Leadership:

- Invite countries and regional organisations to appoint high-level WPS representatives, leadership and advisory bodies.
- Call on the UNSG to strengthen good offices on cultivating women's national leadership.
- Require negotiating bodies and mediating teams to include at least 30 % of women in formal, substantive roles as a precondition of participation in peace processes.
- Call for increased support for women's participation in Track I, II and III processes.
- Support the UNSG's Gender Parity Plan and model parity nationally.

Prioritising Gender Conflict Analysis

Gender Expertise:

- Request appointment of and prioritise timely hiring for senior-level Gender Advisors.
- Inquire with the UNSG about steps taken to ensure gender expertise in Needs Assessment Missions, Technical Assessment Missions, and strategic reviews.
- Invite UN Women to train thematic advisors and experts on gender conflict analysis.
- Protect funding for senior Gender Advisors and support as part of regular UN contributions.

Gender Mainstreaming:

- Request regular briefings and reporting from gender and women's human rights experts.
- Inquire with UN senior leadership on action to address gaps in UNSG reports.
- Integrate gender in all mandates, mission and expert body ToRs, and strategic reviews.
- Systematically integrate recommendations of the Informal Expert Group on WPS into the Security Council work; invite gender experts to assist other groups and committees.
- Call for regular gender trainings by UN staff and peacekeepers.
- Support gender budgeting by the UN Fifth Committee.
- Address gender impacts of sanctions and include sexual and gender-based violence as a basis for individual, targeted sanctions.
- Support ICC referral to prosecute gender-based violence and ensure redress.
- Call on Member States to review and accelerate action on UNSCR1325 NAPs as part of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Ensuring Action on Disarmament

Overall:

- Broaden the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention in Africa to have a global focus.
- Call for implementation of Article 26 of the UN Charter.
- Call for and model gender budgeting, and increase PBF funding promoting gender.

In Focus: Small Arms:

- Support Member States in assessing the gendered impact of arms.
- Support arms embargoes.
- Request briefings and reporting on gender and disarmament.
- Ensure the meaningful participation of women civil society in disarmament work.

Democratic Reform:

- Integrate good practice WPS methods as part of Security Council rules of procedure and support strengthened institutional memory of elected members.
- Sign on to the ACT Initiative and refrain from using the veto.
- Develop and implement a strategy to progressively restrain and abolish the use of the veto .
- Encourage communication, coordination and collaboration among Security Council Members and Member States outside of the Council.
- Adopt gender compacts in the missions of Member States to the UN.

Elected Member Leadership:

- Support Elected Members who commit to taking a leadership role on WPS as a priority area.
- Expand ownership in the Security Council beyond one 'penholder'.
- Support open and public discussion to increase transparency with the UN System.
- Engage with WPS Focal Points Network and the Group of Friends UNSCR1325.

Key Resources

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The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a worldwide non-governmental organisation (NGO) with national sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and an office in New York focused on the work of the United Nations (UN).

Since our establishment, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace. Our approach is always nonviolent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

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