

Women, Peace and Security

April 2019

Women, peace and security

At the heart of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda lies the principle of women's agency and the understanding that addressing the underlying causes of discrimination and inequality will result in more sustainable and inclusive peace. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) manifests on a continuum of multiple, interrelated and recurring forms, as a direct result of, and also contributing to, systematic discrimination and inequality. In any outcomes adopted by the Council, and in any statements delivered by Member States, the following recommendations should be reflected:

For April, in which Germany has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the DPRK, Haiti, Syria, Western Sahara, and the forthcoming open debate on women, peace and security.

- Justice and accountability efforts, including reparations processes, must be survivor-centered, victim-informed, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. They must be designed, implemented, and monitored in partnership with survivors and victims in order to avoid replicating harm, minimize risk, promote recovery and address drivers of SGBV, such as harmful social norms. Access to services and care to survivors and victims, as a central obligation of Member States, should be guaranteed without discrimination. Furthermore, civil society organization (CSOs), particularly women's groups that fill gaps in state-provided services, should be allowed to operate without restrictions.
- Prevention of conflict and violence, including SGBV, should be a priority. Prevention encompasses efforts to address the underlying causes of conflict and instability and ensure policymaking and programming is grounded in gender-sensitive conflict analysis. A key contributor to instability and violence is the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW); States must uphold their obligations to stem the illicit flow of SALW, including by implementing international commitments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
- Women civil society leaders, politicians, activists and human rights defenders play critical roles in advancing peace and security, yet they are often at particular risk or targeted for violence. They should be supported through financial and political means at national and local levels, to ensure they can continue their work.
- Given the complementary nature of related processes across the UN system, it is essential to embed and mainstream core WPS commitments across other relevant processes, including the reporting on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Universal Periodic Review, Voluntary National Reviews in the context of the 2030 Agenda, preventing violent extremism strategies, and action plans on SALW. It is also essential that national action plans and other frameworks on WPS, when adopted and implemented, include comprehensive, results-oriented and intersectional indicators to monitor progress, with allocated human and financial resources.
- In the context of humanitarian crisis, it is critical that all stakeholders support the meaningful participation of women and adolescent girls in all their diversity, in the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies and programs in humanitarian action. All stakeholders should be called on to engage with women's rights actors as expert frontline service providers who fill service gaps before, during and after crises.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

In the Security Council's discussion of the **situation** in the DPRK, the Council should ensure it mainstreams human rights and WPS across all discussions. The Council has typically discussed the situation in the DPRK with a narrow lens that ignores the human rights and gender dimensions of the situation. Reporting and discussion should be grounded in conflict-sensitive gender analysis, and further recognize the important role women and women's groups have in any future peace process. In the context of the sanctions regime, the Council should request the Panel of Experts include gender expertise and ensure parity in its composition ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#)). Further, the Council should call on the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict to brief the Committee. Additional steps the Council could take include requesting that Committee's discussions on humanitarian exemption are time-bound and members of the Committee meet more frequently to examine humanitarian issues with a view to expediting the process. The Committee should continue to seek feedback from Member States, UN agencies and humanitarian organizations applying for exemptions under the terms of the IAN No. 7 guidelines and work to streamline and simplify the application process, including by providing greater flexibility regarding the technical specifications of planned shipments, the parties involved, and the frequency of requests. Further, the Council could consider modifying sanctions in an effort to encourage more substantial diplomatic engagement with the DPRK. Finally, the Council should discuss the negative effects of sanctions on the humanitarian situation in the DPRK including by requesting more information on humanitarian exemptions from OCHA and adding a humanitarian expert to the panel of experts.

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/2410 \(2018\)](#), OP 17), and further include a new provision calling for MINUJUSTH and the Government to prioritize engagement with women's CSOs in all security and development processes. The Council should call for MINUJUSTH to support efforts which address gaps in accountability for SGBV, including the April 2017 criminal code reform; ensure gender-sensitive rule of law institution-building; and address ongoing human rights abuses. The Council should also call on MINUJUSTH to build the capacity of local organizations and urge the Government to ensure gender-sensitive services for survivors of SGBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers, and to establish transparent, survivor-centered, readily accessible mechanisms to hear claims for remedies. MINUJUSTH should further monitor the UN's compliance with the [Status of Forces Agreement](#), Haitian law, and UN's policies on the [facilitation of child support claims](#) arising out of SEA and on the [provision of material assistance](#) to victims and their children. The Council should call on MINUJUSTH to monitor the implementation of the UN's New Approach to Cholera ([A/71/620](#)) and ensure that the 'material assistance package' is gender-sensitive and developed with the full participation of women.

Syria

March 2019 marked the 9th anniversary of the Syrian conflict's beginning. Thousands of civilians are trapped in Idlib due to exchange of fire between Hay'et Tahrir al-Sham and the Government. This includes ground-based bombardment, airstrikes, and intensified shelling of Idlib, the "demilitarized buffer zone," and communities in Northern Hama. This has led to numerous civilian casualties and the displacement of thousands of residents. The Council should work to ensure that people are able to flee to safety, including by seeking asylum in neighboring countries. As a priority, the Council should focus on eliminating the root causes behind displacement and advancing a political solution that includes conditions that enable safe, dignified and voluntary return for refugees and international guarantees of their security. The Council must call for gender-responsive humanitarian action which recognizes that prevention and response to SGBV are life-saving interventions. With minimal health care available in most areas, it is critical that providers are equipped to offer survivor-centered, rights-based, non-discriminatory, quality health services for internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and all affected communities. This means providing specialized staff trained in providing first-line support, clinical management of sexual assault and rape, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), identification of SGBV cases, and safe referrals in a manner that guarantees the safety, confidentiality, and privacy of survivors. Civilians have been killed and injured as a result of anti-ISIS operations in eastern Syria, and over 70,000 people are now in Al-Hol camp after having endured a long and dangerous journey. The Council should ensure that unhindered aid can be provided to the camp, including meeting the need for safe spaces for the protection of women and children. The Council should also inquire about the concerning situation of detainees and the continued detentions in Syria. Council members should call for all actors to cease detentions of human rights defenders and peace activists, disclose the names, locations and fates of all political detainees and grant them immediate release. Gendered impacts of these detentions, one of which is the increase of female-headed households, are overlooked in current discussions. Relatedly, prisoner exchange agreements do not address the underlying structural issues and create an environment conducive to corruption and extortion of families whose members have been imprisoned. The Council should support all efforts to hold accountable the perpetrators of torture and mistreatment in Syria, including national efforts currently being undertaken in Europe and international efforts to establish a Special Tribunal for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria. The Council should call on all parties to ensure that women are fully represented and meaningfully participate in the constitutional committee, should it convene, and in the broader political process. The meaningful dialogue and inclusion of Syrian women human rights defenders should be prioritized in the work of the Office of the Special Envoy, as well as all other multilateral processes. As a means of ensuring accountability, reporting must include analysis and information on efforts to support women's meaningful participation ([S/RES/2139 \(2014\)](#)).

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, evaluating, and reporting on local developments through the appointment of personnel responsible for civil affairs who work systematically and directly with concerned communities. The Council should include new language which emphasizes the importance of women's participation and the protection and promotion of women's rights ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#); [CEDAW/C/GC/30](#); [CCPR/C/MAR/CO/6](#)).