

Women, Peace and Security

October 2019

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For October, in which South Africa has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on **Burundi, Sudan (Darfur), Yemen, and Women, peace and security.**

Gender equality and the protection of women's human rights are essential for conflict prevention, inclusive sustainable development, and peace. Women's meaningful participation is at the heart of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, including through recognition of women's and girls' agency and the vital roles they play in local communities, as well as their inclusion in political and peace processes and peacebuilding. The Security Council's engagement with civil society has continued to increase in 2019. So far, 14 women have been invited to brief on country-specific situations. As the Council holds its **annual open debate** on WPS, it is incumbent upon all speakers to articulate concrete achievements, identify barriers, and put forward bold proposals for ways to holistically implement the WPS agenda across different thematic areas.

- The Security Council must recognize that gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity are central to international peace and security, and that the full scope of the rights of women and girls, including sexual and reproductive rights, must be protected in crisis.
- The Security Council must concretely support a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to women's and girl's meaningful participation in all peace and security processes (including peacebuilding, constitution-building, peace agreement negotiations, reconciliation, elections, etc.) at all stages (development, planning, implementation, and monitoring) in all countries and regions on the agenda of the Security Council. This requires inclusion of: explicit language that calls for women's meaningful participation in outcome documents; specific provisions in the mandates of peace operations; specific analysis of barriers to women's participation in each process, and follow-up on any briefings regarding lack of information and analysis on the extent to which women's participation translates into their ability to influence decision-making.
- The Security Council should defend the legitimacy of the work of all human rights defenders (WHRDs) and recognize their vital role in promoting peace and security in all country-specific situations. This implies enabling all WHRDs to carry out their work safely and free of reprisals, including when cooperating with any UN bodies. The Council should also recognize, prevent and respond to the particular risks encountered by WHRDs. The Security Council must also refrain from the increasingly standard practice of using counter-terrorism and national security policies to target WHRDs.
- Women civil society leaders, activists, and human rights defenders should be invited to speak at all country-specific meetings of the Security Council; information provided by civil society, including women's rights groups, should be considered and integrated into all mission reports and in all decision-making by the Council.
- The gendered impact of arms must be recognized, and national-level action should be called for by Member States to identify and regulate the influx of arms that exacerbate the risk to the rights, safety, and security, of women, girls, and individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Full implementation of arms embargos mandated by the Sanctions Committees should be prioritized and accountability should be attached to States who fail to effectively implement them.
- Planning, implementation, and review of all peace and security programs and interventions at the field level must start with gendered and intersectional conflict analysis that takes into account masculinities, femininities, gender roles, age, and diverse SOGIESC, accompanied by sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD).
- The structures supporting the implementation of the WPS agenda within the UN system and the Security Council must have adequate capacity, expertise, and funding. All recommendations of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS should be implemented and systematically integrated into the Council's deliberations and further reflected in decisions related to gender expertise made by the Fifth Committee.

Burundi

As the Security Council discusses the **situation** in Burundi, it should prioritize advancing high-level diplomatic efforts and providing necessary support for mediation, given the critical importance of the dialogue process in the country. The Council must ensure the full and meaningful participation of a diversity of women and inclusion of a gender perspective throughout the dialogue processes. Burundi faces persistent human rights violations, repression and ongoing violence characterized by impunity. Any dialogue must result in concrete actions by all stakeholders in the context of a fifth and potentially final inclusive inter-Burundi dialogue. It is imperative that the Council put contingency planning back at the center of its discussions to ensure the timely, unfettered, and appropriate protection of the civilian population. Such protection should include planning for and support to the specific needs of women and girls. 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 and girls are reported to be amongst the first victims of SGBV perpetrated with extreme cruelty alongside gender-based, political or ethnic hate speech. In addition, the number of individuals with acute humanitarian needs has tripled in one year (OCHA). Some of the most affected refugees are young women and girls; their lack of access to education impacts opportunities to develop viable skills, resulting in increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The provision of holistic and survivor-centered responses that include access to sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial services for women and girls should be included in any discussions. Host countries should be supported, and the Council should strongly advocate against any coerced or forceful returns and for transparent Refugee Determination Status procedures.

Sudan (Darfur)

As implementation of the political agreement signed in July 2019 moves forward, there continues to be violence and insecurity, as well as human rights violations, including killings, unlawful detention, torture, and the tactical and weaponized use of sexual violence (AI). Relatedly, new evidence from the country shows that “war crimes and other serious human rights violations” continue to be committed by armed forces in Darfur and now in Khartoum, including the destruction of at least 45 villages, unlawful killings, and SGBV. Despite weaknesses in the implementation of its mandate to protect civilians in Darfur, not least owing to access restrictions imposed by the previous Government, there is support amongst Sudanese civil society for the continued presence of UNAMID with a strong **mandate** on protection of civilians that prioritizes women and girls, including those living as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The mandate should also continue to call for full accountability for all war crimes and violations of humanitarian and human rights law, including SGBV. As these violations continue, the security situation in Darfur remains concerning; armed groups continue to operate, civilians continue to be at extreme risk of violence, and although there has been some success with regards to disarmament, those processes remain gender-blind, and the flow of arms fueling the conflict continues unabated, which particularly increases insecurity for women and girls. Further, as UNAMID has begun to withdraw, the Rapid Support Forces, whom have a track record of committing human rights violations, including the June attacks, have reportedly taken over the remaining bases. Additionally, recent intercommunal clashes in Port Sudan have led to declaration of a state of emergency there. In this fragile context of continuing internal discord and a lack of a consensus on the constitutional agreement, the Council must proceed with utmost caution when considering any further drawdown. The current dynamics constitute an unprecedented situation that has the potential to reverse progress, therefore it requires extraordinary measures and response by the international community. It is important that the Council consider halting the drawdown during the current transitional period and undertaking ongoing, gender-sensitive conflict and situation analysis to inform any decisions.

Yemen

The Council must emphasize women’s meaningful participation in all aspects of the political and peace process in all discussions of the **situation** in Yemen, put more pressure on the UN Special Envoy to include women in all present and future peace consultations and negotiations, and call for the release of the findings from all review processes related to the peace process. The Council must call on parties to release civilian detainees, including women detainees and exert pressure to end the recruitment of children into armed groups. The Council must continue to pressure all parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement and comply with their obligation under international humanitarian law (IHL) to allow and facilitate impartial, rapid and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance that is gender-sensitive and developed in partnership with local civil society organizations (CSOs), and include a full range of medical services, including psychosocial and sexual and reproductive health services, as well as access to legal assistance, education and employment, before, during, and after armed conflict (S/RES/2122 (2013), CEDAW/C/YEM/Q/7-8). The Council must pressure the conflict parties to agree to a nationwide ceasefire that includes a gender perspective and an explicit call to cease all acts of SGBV, and refrain from opening new fronts or renew fighting in previous fronts. The Council and UN offices in Yemen must support civil society efforts to establish emergency plans and humanitarian operation room teams. UN entities in Yemen should adopt a sustainable approach for gender-focused interventions, such as establishing SGBV response structures and services and effective protection programs for WHRDs. Further, Council members should ask senior UN officials to provide updates regarding efforts to protect WHRDs and civil society activists, and their access to legal support and essential services. Council members should support the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) and request all UN agencies to fully collaborate with the GEE. The international community should provide continued support to the national human rights monitoring and reporting mechanism, including capacity-building support around women’s rights and gender-sensitive documentation of violations and abuses. Moreover, the Council should ensure the participation of CSOs, women leaders, women’s groups, and youth representatives that reflect the ethnic, geographic, and political diversity of Yemen’s population, in the design, implementation and review of all conflict resolution, conflict management, and countering violent extremism processes and efforts (S/RES/2122 (2013), OP 13; S/RES/2242 (2015), OP 13; CEDAW/C/YEM/Q/7-8).