

MONTHLY ACTION POINTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY SECURITY COUNCIL: MARCH 2012

NGO | WORKING GROUP
ON WOMEN, PEACE
AND SECURITY

PRESIDENCY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR MARCH: UNITED KINGDOM

UNITED KINGDOM'S SUPPORT FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The United Kingdom's stated priorities for its presidency include the protection of civilians and respect for human rights, and the challenges and opportunities for peace in the Middle East and North Africa. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK has stated its commitment to the women, peace and security agenda, including women's participation in political and peace processes, protection of women and girls, and women's access to justice.

United Kingdom's relevant international obligations include: Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (*Ratified 4 October 2001*); National Action Plan on the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (*Launched 8th March 2006, current version published 25 November 2010*); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): (*Ratified 7 April 1986*) and its Optional Protocol (*17 December 2004*).

RECOMMENDED SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION POINTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Women, Peace and Security

In its regular work, the Council should ensure that all country reports and mandate renewals evaluate the level of protection and promotion of women's human rights, as per SCRs 1325, 1820 (OP 9), 1888 (OP 11), 1889 (OP 5) and 1960 (OP 6, 13).

Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East

In its discussions related to recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, the Council should urge state authorities to: respect human rights, particularly the rights of women; bring to justice perpetrators suspected of crimes; and take necessary measures to secure the participation of women in political and electoral processes. With political reforms underway in, *inter alia*, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, women's right to participate equally should be supported and upheld.

Afghanistan

Security Council discussions regarding the Secretary-General's **report** and mandate **renewal** of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in March must identify challenges and remedies regarding national and international efforts to advance women's integration into the political, economic, and social life of Afghanistan. Given preparations for international forces to disengage militarily by 2014, all relevant international actors must ensure women's rights are not sacrificed in the preparations for this withdrawal, and should ensure that women's security and ability to move freely throughout the country are indicators of the transition's success. The Council is therefore urged to:

- Invite an Afghan woman leader to speak at the Council's March debate on Afghanistan, as per SCR 1325 (OP1);
- Ensure consultation with women, particularly rural women and women outside of Kabul, is at the core of all national and international peace and reconciliation efforts;
- Request that the Afghan authorities, the UN, and member states engaged in Afghanistan account for measures taken in Afghanistan to include women and women's priorities in high-level discussions on peace, reintegration and reconciliation processes. Any Afghan and international agreements with the Taliban and other insurgent groups must conform with Afghanistan's obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law;
- Ensure political agreements between the Afghan government and insurgent groups include verifiable benchmarks to evaluate the parties' conformity with human rights obligations, and that all benchmarks/reporting/monitoring efforts have explicit and robust gender components and disaggregated data;
- Strengthen responses to violence against women and women's rights defenders;
- Ensure justice and security sector reform efforts respect women's rights equally under the law, including in current recourse to "informal" legal processes;
- Reiterate the importance of full cooperation with the AIHRC by all relevant actors, and call on the Afghan authorities not to restrict the independence of the AIHRC;
- Support additional UN capacity to address humanitarian needs, including an increase in UNHCR and OCHA protection and humanitarian affairs officers in regional offices; and
- Emphasize UNAMA's zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse.

Haiti

In the Council's discussion of the expected **report** on the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), empowerment of women and protection of women and girls should be prioritized. Women and girls in Haiti, particularly those in displacement camps, continue to be vulnerable to violence, including sexual violence, and victims of this violence are often unable to access services. The Council should inquire into greater security measures in the camps, and initiatives for the empowerment and protection of women and girls. The Council should also inquire as to measures being taken to enforce the UN zero-tolerance policy on SEA, and on all abuses committed against the civilian population by MINUSTAH personnel.

Libya

The Council is expected to review the most recent Secretary-General's **report** on Libya, and to renew the **mandate** of the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL). These discussions present the Council with the opportunity to support and enhance the work of UNSMIL in the development of a consultative and inclusive political process. With elections scheduled for June 2012, and the imminent selection of a constitutional drafting committee, time is short to ensure that women's participation as candidates and voters is guaranteed and their voices heard in these processes. In addition, there are ongoing concerns about the safety and security of Libyan women, including harassment, intimidation, and threats of sexual violence. In its discussions regarding the UN mission's future role in Libya, the Council should:

- Give strong support for and urge the National Transitional Council (NTC) to enshrine women's rights in the new constitution, and in the development of new, democratic political institutions, and to measures to increase women's political participation, including through supporting the capacity-building of a strong and independent civil society;
- Hold the NTC accountable for respecting international law and for addressing the ongoing protection concerns faced by women and girls, including displaced populations;
- Urge continued attention to the situation of women who have been displaced, including from Sub-Saharan Africa; and of the women among the estimated 7,000 detainees under the control of militias;
- Support the NTC in ensuring clear procedures for policing, arrests, prosecution, and detention;
- Urge the NTC to hold accountable perpetrators of violence against women and girls; and
- As the mandate of UNSMIL continues to be discussed, the Council should empower UNSMIL to monitor and report on the human rights situation.

Sierra Leone

The Council is expected to discuss the most recent **report** on the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). Given recent political unrest and tensions surrounding the upcoming elections later in 2012, the Council should enquire into plans to ensure women's participation and safety in these elections. Suggestions in this regard have included the establishment of a "Women's Commission" to promote advancement of women in Sierra Leone by developing innovations intended to eliminate political and economic inequality and violence against women and girls. The Council could also request information on suggestions for the Parliament to review the 1991 Constitution, and consider implementing the proposed minimum 30% quota for women in governance and leadership. With the transition of the mission to a UN Country Team, the Council should request information on plans to train women for employment in emerging financial areas, and increasing their access to financial capital.

Sudan

The Council is expected to review the SG **report** on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) as per SCR 1990 (2011) and 2032 (2011). Security Council members should request information on current efforts to monitor human rights, as per SCR 1990 (OP10), and should particularly inquire into information on women's human rights. The Council should ensure UNISFA has the necessary resources to ensure effective protection of civilians, to disrupt possible attacks against local communities in line with UNISFA's mandate, and to ensure that security is restored to facilitate the return of the displaced population. All relevant parties should account for individuals still missing since the start of the violence, including women and children. Given the growing challenge of humanitarian access the Council should inquire as to contingency plans to protect women and girls, especially displaced and disabled populations.

Syria

The Syrian government continues to violate the 19 December 2011 agreement brokered with the Arab League. Among other human rights violations, human rights organizations have documented the shooting of peaceful protesters by security forces and the arbitrary detention of protesters and activists. In its **discussions** on Syria, the Council should: impose an arms embargo on Syria; following a fair and transparent process, impose targeted sanctions against the individuals responsible for grave violations; demand unhindered access for humanitarian missions, journalists, and independent human rights organizations; call on the Syrian government to cooperate with the OHCHR in establishing a human rights monitoring presence; and refer the situation in Syria to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

NGOWG ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY RESOURCES

- NGOWG member organization resources: <http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/rapid-response/> [link]
- PeaceWomen, *Security Council 1325 Monitor* [link]