



UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

Bilateral Section: Afghanistan

Workshop Report

British Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan

The NAP workshop was organised by Women for Women International – Afghanistan (WfWI-A), the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) and Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) and hosted at the British Embassy in Kabul. GAPS, AWN and WfWI-A worked with civil society and government in Afghanistan as well as the British Government in the UK and Kabul to plan the Workshop. GAPS members also contributed to the organization of the Workshop.

The Workshop included presentations by Mr. Mohammad Shafiq Nikzad, Acting Country Director of WfWI-A, Ms. Hasina Safi, Executive Director, AWN, Mr Saeedullah Reshteen, Afghan MoFA, and Emily Parkington, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights Secretary, British Embassy Kabul.

Ms. Hasina Safi introduced the current status of the Government of Afghanistan's (GoA) NAP and the importance of coordinating the UK's Government's NAP and the GoA's NAP. The Workshop provided a sound opportunity for such coordination as members of the GoA's NAP Technical and Leadership committees were present.

After introducing GAPS, Mr. Shafiq Nikzad outlined the UK's NAP and aims of the Workshop. The UK is currently reviewing its second NAP (2010 – 2013) and developing its new NAP (2014 – 2017). The Workshop in Kabul is one of four currently planned workshops which will support the development of the UK NAP. The Workshops aimed to:

1. Maximise Afghan civil society and British Government expertise on women, peace and security and outline what the new NAP should include in the 2014 – 2017 NAP;
2. Outline what the Afghanistan Bilateral Section of the NAP should focus on;
3. Outline where HMG can make the most impact add value in the 2014 – 2017 NAP;
4. Highlight areas where HMG and CSO can partner and collaborate; and
5. Outline areas of best practice where expertise could be shared.

According to agenda after that Emily Parkington, outlined the UK's work on UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan through the pillars of UNSCR 1325. These include:

- Prevention:
 - Securing the needs and priorities of women in Afghan Security Policy and peace-building efforts
- Participation:
 - Increase the number, influence, and capacity of female Afghans in public life
 - Strengthen the capacity and visibility of Afghan women's CSOs

- Increase female participation in security and justice structures
- Protection:
 - Strengthen and protect women's rights and promote effective mechanisms for women's access to justice
- Relief and Recovery:
 - Ensure that Afghan women benefit from economic opportunities and donor funding

Saeedullah Reshteen, Program Coordinator, Women, Peace and Security Directorate, Human Rights and Women's International Affairs Department, MoFA outlined the GoA's work on Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan. This includes the development of the GoA's NAP. To date, the MoFA have conducted NAP awareness raising workshops with member of the High Peace Council, Haj and Awqaf. These will be expanded to provincial level. The Group agreed that sound coordination between the GoA, international donors and Afghan women's rights organisations and civil society was essential.

Strategic Recommendation 1: The GoA and International Donors should work closely together and with Afghan women's rights organisations and civil society in Afghanistan in the development, monitoring and evaluation of International government NAPs (such as the UK NAP) and the GoA's NAP.

- The GoA should ensure that it consults with International Donors and civil society, particularly women's rights organisations in the development, review and evaluation of its NAP. Commitments to this should be outlined in the NAP and be budgeted for.
- The UK Government should continue to consult with the GoA and women's rights organisations and civil society in Afghanistan in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the UK's NAP to ensure that it maximises in-country expertise, needs and is effectively coordinated. A plan for this should be outlined in the NAP and should be budgeted for.
- In the development of its programming, the UK Government should ensure close coordination with afghan civil society given the expertise of the causes of and solutions for challenges to Women, Peace and Security. Such consultation would also support the reduction in duplication of efforts from the International Community.
- A formal mechanism for a periodic review of both the Afghan NAP (once developed) and UK NAP should be put into place such as annual or twice a year workshops. Without a formal system, independent monitoring will not deliver results. Formal review reports should be delivered out of these workshops and shared with participants, as with this workshop.

Strategic Recommendation 2: The UK needs to approach Women, Peace and Security in a holistic manner. It is essential that the UK values and priorities women's participation, protection and prevention. The UK NAP should outline the UK Government's commitments across these pillars in its Bilateral Section on Afghanistan.

- For example, protection services such as shelters are vital, however, women's participation in the legal and justice systems are also key to ensuring that VAWG is prevented and women are protected.
- The UK should ensure it targets and invests in agents of social change in the country across the pillars of the NAP. The NAP and UK work currently misses these key targets. Religious leaders are key agents of change and are widely listened. They can become good partners for change in Afghanistan, particularly on issues such forced marriage, baddal (exchanging women in marriage), non-payment of dowry, domestic violence. Others change agents can be identified and relationships built with them to contribute to women's empowerment and rights.

The Group discussed recommendations for the new UK NAP under the following themes: prevention, protection, participation and legislation, security and justice. The recommendations included:

1. Prevention and Protection:

Strategic Recommendation 3: In its new NAP, the UK should commit more resources to the protection of women who have experienced VAWG.

- To avoid resource duplication and ensure that VAWG programming is founded in the needs of Afghan women, the UK NAP and UK-funded VAWG programmes should be based on consultation with civil society in the development, mid-term and review of the NAP.
- Through funding to Afghanistan's healthcare system, the UK should fund special hospitals for those women who are affected by any kind of violence. They should also increase funding to shelters and to specific hospital facilities for women survivors of VAWG.
- In its new NAP, the UK should commit to funding more shelters for women who have experienced VAWG. This should be part of a holistic approach, which includes immediate protection of women, in addition to rehabilitation and reintegration of women, based on their individual needs.
- There is a gap between national VAWG legislation and how that is implemented. The UK, through the FCO and DFID, should use its influence, diplomatic efforts and development funding to increase pressure on the Afghan government to ensure that women's rights legislation is effectively implemented in the.
- In addition, as part of programming, UK NAP should fund research to identify trends in violence against women, identify root causes and responses to VAWG.
- The UK NAP has not considered investing in media for promotion and protection of women rights. In its new NAP should fund a programme for investigative journalism for women rights' protection.

Strategic Recommendation 4: In the NAP, UK Government should make commitments to plans for the protection of Women Human Rights Defenders.

- There should be more protection for women who are working for women rights at all levels.
- The British government should request the Government of Afghanistan to prioritise security of women's rights activist. Currently there is very little/no commitment to security of women rights' activists and these women are operating at their own risk.
- In the new NAP, the British government should offer funding for and/or directly train women's rights organizations to dealing with security challenges. As local organisations, CSOs that women human rights defenders work for, have limited capacity to deal with security threats and as such are very vulnerable to any security threat or attack.
- There should be easy visa issuance policy for women activists in order to help them have escape routes available as and when the security situation changes and there are threats to women human rights defender's lives.
- Women human rights defenders should be provided with exposure to working environments where they can learn from the security and protection mechanisms used by other organisations. Such exposure, such as exchange visits will help Afghan women human rights defenders to learn from the experiences of other countries.
- The UK, in its new NAP should facilitate establishment of network of women activists both within Afghanistan and at regional level to connect women activists in fora where people can share experiences and contribute to each other's work.
- In its new NAP, the UK should offer both short (workshops, seminars, trainings) and long term (Bachelor degrees, Masters programmes, Phds) for women activists in the areas which

include protection of women human rights defenders. This will help enhance academic base of women activists.

Strategic Recommendation 5: The UK Government should use its development expertise and diplomatic pressure to ensure that women's rights is effectively incorporated into the education system

- The UK should maximise its expertise to support the development of an Afghan educational curriculum that incorporates changing social norms towards women's rights, such as ending violence against women and girls, women's civil rights, and women rights in Islam (for example inheritance, divorce, women's education rights).
- NAP does not have enough of a focus on investing in girls' education, particularly in higher education. Education is an important tool for women's empowerment and can only be ensured by educating them through formal systems.

2. Women's Participation:

Strategic Recommendation 6: The UK Government should ensure that women's participation in the political process and institutions is invested in and planned for.

- The UK should ensure that in the 2014, and future elections that community mobilisation of female voters takes place timely. The UK should commit to this in its new NAP.
- The UK should use diplomatic pressure to ensure that there are more female candidates at each level future elections.
- The UK should increase funding for training of female candidates in the 2014 and future elections.
- Through funding for capacity building to Afghan civil service, the UK should ensure that requirements for a percentage of female civil servants is maintained. It should monitor the programme to ensure the women are in decision-making positions and are able to influence the discussions.

Strategic Recommendation 7: The UK should support women's representation on the High Peace Council and increase the capacity of women in civil society on peacebuilding programmes.

- In the new UK NAP, there should be close coordination with women who are involved in High Peace Council, such as capacity building support at provincial and district level.
- The UK should support the development of a programme which works on attitudinal change of male and female High Peace Council Members to increase their awareness of women's rights and women's roles in the High Peace Council.
- The UK should ensure it continuously reviews and where necessary, calls into question women's low participation in the High Peace Council and other peace process-related meetings.
- In the UK NAP, the British Government should consider programming for building the capacity of women activists on peace building, conflict resolution and peacemaking. Currently, women's role in these areas is often informal. Increasing women's capacity and knowledge in this area will better enable them to active advocate for women's inclusion.

Strategic Recommendation 8: The UK should ensure that in addition to political participation, that it also priorities socio-economic participation.

- In Afghanistan, social norms which underpin women's disempower, rights and political and socio-economic participation prevail. There is a vicious cycle of participation: women's participation at community, district and national level political, social and economic levels is low; this has an impact on women's participation. It is important that DFID approaches its

funding to Afghanistan in a holistic manner and acknowledges the need for socio-norm change to women's role in society, politics and the economic. DFID in the new NAP should ensure that it approaches its funding in a holistic manner for example education funding should include components on the importance of women's rights and women's public participation.

- Afghan women have been establishing small businesses but have little to no access to financial resources. The UK should fund a system which provides small grants or micro credit to support women's small businesses and enable them to access funding. This is important for women's economic empowerment.

3. Legislation and Security and Justice:

Strategic Recommendation 9: In the New NAP the UK should ensure that women's role in security and justice mechanisms is prioritised. The NAP should also prioritise the need for Afghan security and justice mechanisms to provide protection for women and women's rights.

- Women's role in security and justice mechanisms is essential in Afghanistan. Through the NAP and DFID funding, the UK Government should have a holistic approach to women's role in the police and armed forces. This should include attitudinal change at community and police and army levels to hiring and promoting women. It should also include protection mechanisms for women in the police force and should include training for the media on their portrayal of women in the police.
- Through its funding to the Afghan security and justice sector, the UK Government should include components on women's recruitment and retention into the police, army and justice sectors. This should include commitments to women's meaningful and operational roles in both those sectors.
- Importantly, operational bases and offices for women police officers and for women-targeted police services should be located in the most accessible areas in police stations where women can easily access them. Currently, women who need to access police services find it difficult to approach police stations for their policing needs.
- The UK should work with the Afghan police and army to ensure that it develops and has funding to implement a protection policy female police officers and armed services.
- The UK Government should fund the formal justice system and ensure that in doing so, it includes training and capacity building on women's rights.

Strategic Recommendation 10: The UK, in its new NAP, should ensure it priorities support to the implementation and review of the EVAW law.

- The UK should support an increase in the number of courts that are trained to implement the EVAW Law.
- Localisation of justice mechanisms are not functioning effectively across Afghanistan in terms of provision of women's rights. Whilst much of the population use Shurras/Jirgas, they do not support women's rights. The UK should invest in building the capacity of Jirgas to ensure that they are aware of the EVAW law. Programming to build the capacity of Jirgas should be monitored to ensure they are supporting women's rights.
- The UK should provide funding to build the capacity of the Police Department to build the capacity of the way in which the police respond to VAWG, using the EVAW Law as a foundation.