



gender action for peace and security

Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2016

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About GAPS

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) is the UK’s only Women, Peace and Security civil society network. We are a membership organisation of 17 NGOs and experts in the fields of development, human rights, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding.

We were founded to promote the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Our role is to promote and hold the UK Government to account on its international commitments to women in conflict areas worldwide.

Introduction

GAPS welcomes the 2016 annual report to Parliament by the UK Government, which outlines progress in implementing the UK’s Women, Peace and Security priorities as framed under the current UK National Action Plan (2014-17) as well as other recent commitments. This Shadow Report outlines GAPS’ analysis of the UK’s Women, Peace and Security work over the past year as well as recommendations for the upcoming new UK National Action Plan (NAP).ⁱ

Along with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Women, Peace and Security, GAPS has worked closely with Ministers and officials during the lifetime of the current NAP, including in 2016, to encourage UK progress in meeting its commitments and contributing to a more peaceful, inclusive world where women and girls have improved fulfilment of their rights. GAPS has continued to build a strong relationship with the Government and is collaborating on the design of the new NAP, including coordinating consultations with local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in some of the NAP’s focus countries (funded by the UK Government). We value this ongoing dialogue and welcome the Government’s support for these important consultations.

The Government’s latest progress report highlights welcome, positive developments on multiple fronts including specific targets in the NAP implementation plan and several specific commitments made in 2015 coinciding with the UN High-level Review. These include: increased training and awareness of women’s and girls’ rights in conflict as well as women’s representation in the Armed Forces; funding to local women’s organisations responding to a range of conflict-related issues; and support for women’s participation in peace processes (such as those related to Syria and Yemen). The inclusion of Women, Peace and Security as a key theme at the UK-hosted Defence Ministerial on Peacekeeping (September 2016) as well as the UK role in promoting issues around women and girls at the World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016) are commendable actions. There have also been positive efforts to promote better policy coherence on Women, Peace and Security across Whitehall.

However, there remains significant room for improvement - both in terms of activities as well as how they are reported. A more systematic approach is required to ensure that women's participation in UK-hosted peace, security and aid events is adequate and meaningful.ⁱⁱ For example, only 13% of participants at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial were women (40 out of 302 attendees) and, whilst welcome, the inclusion of women civil society representatives at the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference came late in the process and hence missed the opportunity to have maximum impact.

Moreover, in comparison with previous reports, the 2016 progress report is very much a light touch review. For example, the report excludes key information, such as the breakdown of gender equality funding through the CSSF as well as new initiatives such as Participation Priority Countries. These are key delivery units of the Government's NAP and High Level Review commitments and should be included in any such report.

Similarly, the progress report excludes actions taken to protect and support the crucial work done by the women human rights defenders and woman and girls' refugees, who are both affected by conflict disproportionately and active advocates for gender equality and conflict resolution. Although the Government is working towards delivering for these groups, the report does not refer to that work, or allow for an assessment of how comprehensive this work and its progress is.

The lack of detail on progress against the UK's Women, Peace and Security plans, as well the selection of examples in the report, means it is difficult to effectively track and assess how well the UK has progressed against the objectives and activities in its NAP and Implementation Plan. It is particularly difficult to assess where progress has been slow – or where priorities have changed.

The 2016 progress report also includes some unhelpfully vague statements, such as attributing responsibility to the UN Security Council for the lack of gender and Women, Peace and Security considerations in UN mandates. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK is well placed to ensure the development of strong UN mandates and should accept its share of responsibility for any failure by the UN Security Council.

Whilst GAPS appreciates the need for the annual report to be manageable, it encourages the Government to develop a NAP and reporting format which provides trackable information on progress against its plans and more analysis of the challenges and lessons being encountered.

The report is also overly reliant on the Government's work on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Violence Against Women and Girls. These issues are, of course, essential elements of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. However, the report – as well as the NAP – should better outline policy and programming across the pillars of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

Building on the positive results to date and learning from the challenges, GAPS looks forward to continuing constructive collaboration with Ministers and officials to help ensure that progress in achieving Women, Peace and Security goals is made, gains are consolidated, and the results of UK efforts are better understood.

1. Comprehensive approach: ensuring consistency

The opening paragraph of the 2014-17 NAP states a cross-governmental intention to “*put women and girls at the centre of all our efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, to promote peace and stability, and to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls*”. For its ambition to be realised, the Government should adopt a more integrated and comprehensive approach to Women, Peace and Security, in both policy and practice, in all areas related to peace and security.

Over the past 12 months, we have seen positive signs of the Government's efforts to promote better policy coherence around Women, Peace and Security. Evidence of this includes highlighting Women, Peace and Security priorities within key policy documents - including the UK Aid Strategy, the National Security Strategy (NSS), the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and the Multilateral Aid

Review. As well as championing the protection and empowerment of women and girls in emergencies and peacebuilding efforts at the global level, such as at the World Humanitarian Summit and the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial (see case studies in this report).

Although these public pledges of support for Women, Peace and Security are welcome, the Government should step-up efforts to turn positive rhetoric into reality with a comprehensive and more integrated approach in practice - both at the domestic and international levels. The midline report of an external evaluation of the 2014-17 NAP called for strengthening the whole of government approach, including in the Home Office, to support the delivery of the Women, Peace and Security aims. The lack of a strong domestic agenda - exemplified by the delay in ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (known as the Istanbul Convention) as well as the inconsistent response to the so called 'refugee crisis' - threatens the credibility of the UK's positive role internationally.ⁱⁱⁱ

A critical step towards achieving this comprehensive approach can be taken by ensuring that sound gender analyses, resources and expertise underpin the Government's strategies related to peace and security - including the work of the National Security Council (NSC), DFID country plans, and Home Office responses to women and girl refugees and asylum seekers. Similarly, a gender lens should be applied when using relevant tools, such as the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Security. Gender Advisors and staff trained in Women, Peace and Security should also be readily available and either stationed at or deployed to UK field offices to support the implementation and mainstreaming of Women, Peace and Security activities across all of the UK's work on and within fragile and conflict affected countries.

The past year has also seen many challenges and changes within the UK political sphere, largely influenced by the UK referendum on EU membership in June 2016. The Government itself has seen changes to personnel and mandates at the highest levels, including the MOD, DFID and FCO. In this period of change and adjustment, it is vital that the Government demonstrates its continued commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, both in terms of programme delivery as well as funding and how it is situated within the UK's national interests and global leadership.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Women, Peace and Security in the NSC:** All NSC strategies should be underpinned by a gendered conflict analysis. Gender should be integrated across the pillars of the NSC country and regional strategies and at least one gender-specific outcome included in each pillar. The Prime Minister should appoint a Women, Peace and Security or Women and Girls champion to the NSC. This could be included in the existing brief of one of the Secretaries of State on the NSC.
2. **Gender advisors:** The Government should commit to the development of a sound policy for the establishment of Gender Advisors within lead NAP departments. This should include: a commitment to 50 Gender Advisors across the military; Gender Advisors in all focus country DFID Offices; and an expansion of Gender Advisors within the CSSF.
3. **Refugees and asylum seekers:** Protections under the UK's Women, Peace and Security commitments should be extended to women and girls affected by conflict within the UK's borders, specifically within the refugee and asylum system.
4. **Build departmental capacity:** The Government should include Women, Peace and Security objectives in the job descriptions of at least one member of staff in each of the lead NAP department representatives in all focus countries. These staff should be adequately trained by attending the gender training run by the Stabilisation Unit.

In focus: Refugees and migrants

The number of refugees and internally displaced persons reached a record 65.3 million people worldwide in 2015 according to the UNHCR, with more people fleeing their homes in 2016. The vast

majority are hosted by countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. More than one million sought asylum in the European Union last year, many of them women and girls fleeing violence, including sexual violence in conflict, or other forms of persecution and human rights abuses.

More than 7,200 refugees and migrants were reported dead or missing in 2016: a tragic record high.^{iv} Most of these - approximately 5,000 - were lost in the Mediterranean Sea. With almost no legal avenues for safe and legal travel to Europe available, women and girls take great risks to seek safety and protection. As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Dubravka Simonovic: *“They flee to escape arbitrary killings, rape, torture, inhumane or degrading treatment, forced recruitment or starvation, but too often, they encounter the same level of insecurity, violence, and threats of violence, reinforced by impunity, at their destinations.”*^v

The prevention of abuse, including violence, and the protection of the human rights of women refugees and asylum seekers are integral parts of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and recognised by the NAPs of several countries.^{vi} However, no specific commitments on these issues have yet been included in the UK NAP, nor in the FCO’s flagship Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative.

Moreover, organisations working with refugees have accused the UK of ‘double standards’ whereby it actively champions the rights of women and girls internationally, while those who come to the UK to seek asylum are often met with scepticism by the Home Office,^{vii} are at times detained,^{viii} and at risk of being returned to the unsafe countries.

The midline report of an external evaluation of the 2014-17 NAP recommended that much more needed to be done to ensure consistency between the Government’s domestic and foreign policy, and that relevant commitments at the domestic level should be incorporated, particularly with respect to the UK’s duty of care to women refugees and asylum seekers.^{ix} It is critical that such recommendations are taken into consideration in the development and implementation of the next NAP, particularly in light of the world’s current refugee ‘crisis’ and for the credibility of the UK’s role as an international champion for women and girls.

2. Participation

The Government has made numerous commitments to support the participation of women affected by conflict in relevant peace, security and aid-related decision-making processes, including through the adoption of UNSCR 2242 (2015) as well as its own commitments and policies. At the UN Security Council in October 2015, for example, the UK promised to *“provide support, including lobbying at the highest levels, to ensure women’s voices are represented in wider peace processes, negotiations, and state-building”* as well as *“support at local levels to build the capacity of women to participate effectively.”* The Government also pledged that *“in arranging all future UK-hosted peace-building events”* the UK would identify women affected by conflict and *“make sure their voices are heard.”*

Such commitments are very welcome and, if effectively and consistently implemented, could make a vital difference not only to current peace building efforts but also to evolving international norms and expectations around women’s participation. When the UK subsequently hosted the Supporting Syria and the Region conference in February 2016, it was the first time that women from Syrian civil society were enabled to express their concerns at an international summit on the Syria conflict. A prominent space was also given to two civil society women to address delegates at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in London in September 2016, including one from the Democratic Republic of Congo (see case study on page 10).

Yet GAPS is concerned that, at UK-hosted events, the Government has failed to ensure systematic meaningful, diverse and adequate participation. For example, no women were included at a meeting of Foreign Ministers hosted by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 16th October 2016. Similarly, shortly after the commitments of October 2015 were made, the UK hosted a UNSMIL^x meeting where only four of 17 Libyan civil society representatives were women (23.5%) and

36 of the meeting's 150 overall delegates were women (24%) from "countries, UN Agencies, and international bodies."^{xi} Similarly, the involvement of women's rights organisations and human rights defenders in planning for the Supporting Syria conference was almost non-existent, rendering participation on the day significantly limited and threatening to undermine potential support for the agenda.

Although the UK's efforts to ensure women's inclusion in peace, security and aid processes are most welcome, the Government should ensure a more systematic, diverse, inclusive and earlier engagement with civil society organisations working on women and girls' rights. This should include local women's rights groups and women human rights defenders, as well as lobbying other governments and agencies to include women delegates. Furthermore, effective participation is not a one-off occurrence but should be systematic, with women playing an integral part in discussions conducted before (consultation) and after (follow-up) any event, and supported through capacity building and funding when necessary.

GAPS was disappointed to read in the progress report to Parliament that the Government attributed responsibility for the lack of representation of women "*in peace or post-conflict processes; [and] excluded from negotiations or neglected by UN peacekeeping operations*" to the UN Security Council. As a Permanent Member of that body, the UK has significant influence on the work of the UN Security Council as well as a share of responsibility for its successes and failures. Additionally, as one of the world's leading donors and diplomatic actors, the UK has wider influence in peace processes where the UN is not engaged, including those hosted by the UK, where it is a leading partner, or where the UK is supporting other countries to develop a NAP or other Women, Peace and Security policies.

GAPS welcomes the generous support provided by the Government to support in-country consultations in some of the current NAP focus countries to inform the next NAP. This builds on previous consultations run by GAPS and marks a positive step towards ensuring that the ultimate beneficiaries of the UK's Women, Peace and Security efforts are heard in the design of Women, Peace and Security policy. GAPS believes that this sets an important precedent for ongoing dialogue with CSOs and women's groups and facilitates transparency and accountability in the practical implementation of UK policy.

Recommendations

1. **Increase women's representation:** In the new NAP, the Government should commit to ensuring (including through providing funding and appropriate facilitation) that at least a 30% of participants at UK-hosted peace, security and aid events are women.
2. **Meaningful participation:** The Government should immediately pledge to speak out against international peace, security and aid processes and negotiations that exclude women and girls by design or practice and increasingly insist upon their meaningful inclusion as a condition of its support for such processes. To help achieve this, the UK should strengthen diplomatic support and advocacy for the role of women's and girls' rights organisations and women human rights defenders from crisis contexts.
3. **Systematise consultations:** Consultation with women in NAP focus countries should be: a) imbedded into monitoring for the UK's new NAP; b) standard practice for any future international events hosted (jointly or solely) by the UK; c) part of any support the UK provides to other governments to develop their own NAPs. Such consultation should deliberately include girls and young women, a range of ethnicities, and representatives from urban and rural areas.
4. **Standardise meetings on ministerial visits:** Ministers from the FCO, DFID and MOD should meet with women's and girls' groups, women's rights and other civil society organisations, and women human rights defenders when visiting fragile and conflict affected states.

Case Study: Supporting Syria and the Region conference

In February 2016, the UK co-hosted the Supporting Syria and the Region conference with Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the UN. The conference aimed to raise significant new funding for the Syria crisis response, identify long-term funding solutions, and address longer term needs of people

affected by the conflict. This was a significant opportunity for the Government to uphold its stated commitment to “*shine a torch*” on women affected by conflict and make sure their voices were heard during UK-hosted events.

GAPS welcomed the participation of Rouba Mhaissen and Samah Bassas in the plenary programme, the first women from Syrian civil society to speak at an international summit on the Syrian conflict. We also welcomed Salma Kahale’s role in the session on ‘inside Syria’ (although we noted that no women presented in the session on jobs and economic development). The UK’s delivery on its commitment to “*shine a torch*” on women’s participation could have been strengthened if Syrian women had been included in all sessions of the conference. It could also have been made more meaningful if Syrian women’s representatives and women human rights defenders had been involved from the outset, including a voice in shaping the conference agenda.

The communiqué of the conference committed to “*abide fully by the terms of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325*”, and support activities for the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG). It also included a recognition that “*women and girls must participate fully in all aspects of building peace and be protected, particularly from sexual violence*”. Although these inclusions were positive, no plan to implement these commitments has since been published. Only a few donors used the conference to specify funding for the prevention of VAWG and no donors committed to a minimum amount. As of Summer 2016, data from the International Labour Organisation indicated that of the 200,000 work permits pledged at that conference by the Jordanian government for Syrian refugees, only 20,000 (10%) had been accessed and only 2% accessed by women.^{xii}

See also GAPS and GADN’s Joint Position Paper ahead of the conference from February 2016.^{xiii}

3. Funding

Although the Government has designated some human resources to help deliver the 2014-17 NAP (notably the expansion of staff in the cross-Whitehall working group on Women, Peace and Security and an external evaluation) no other significant resources have been directly allocated. Although there are clear benefits to mainstreaming, the lack of a specific budget complicates the task of tracking and evaluating the outcomes, impact and cost effectiveness of the NAP, as well as hindering attempts to give credit where it is due.

Such a budget is not a panacea and should complement adequate human resources dedicated to the delivery of Women, Peace and Security goals. In that context, and consistent with the findings of the UN Global Study (2015), GAPS remains of the view that earmarked financial resources are needed (in addition to a mainstreamed approach). The absence of a specific budget places even more importance on the need to scale up dedicated human resources to implement the NAP as well as a broader, coherent whole of government approach.

Numerous sources, including the Global Study, have found that the historic lack of overall funding for driving the Women, Peace and Security agenda has limited the positive impacts for women and girls globally. The decision to allocate 50% of DFID’s budget to fragile and conflict-affected states increases opportunities for the UK to play its part. However, this requires adequate funding is allocated to furthering Women, Peace and Security aims in ways that are informed by local experience and can be tracked and assessed effectively, including by systematic use of standardised gender markers.

The scarcity of reliable, accessible and flexible funding for local women’s rights organisations on the frontline of crises as well as efforts to tackle underlying causes of gender equality has been a particular obstacle. Of the \$35.5 billion of aid from DAC donors targeting gender equality, only \$192 million was given to such organisations.^{xiv} With that in mind, GAPS welcomes the Government’s decision to follow its start-up funding of \$1 million for the new Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security (GAI-WPS) in 2015 with a similar sum in 2016. However, ensuring women’s rights organisations receive adequate funding through the GAI-WPS, in addition to other channels and mechanisms, is essential.

Some initial challenges are inevitable as the new fund is rolled out globally. Appropriate scrutiny and support will therefore be crucial to ensure the GAI-WPS fulfils its purpose of providing accessible funding to local women's rights organisations quickly and effectively. At the same time, the Government should explore and maintain a diverse set of direct funding streams to ensure that the flow of flexible, reliable funding to local organisations and women's human rights defenders pursuing Women, Peace and Security objectives is strengthened.

The Government's report outlines various funding allocations relevant to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. For example, it notes that the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) increased direct funding on Women, Peace and Security in 2016 by 50% compared with the previous year. This is undoubtedly welcome although the lack of detail in the light summary provided in the UK's 2016 Women, Peace and Security report prevents deeper analysis especially of any challenges.

Elsewhere, the £500,000 set aside by the FCO in 2016-17 to ensure that programme activity and research are focused on a better understanding of women as victims, perpetrators and preventers of violent extremism is a welcome step towards ensuring commitments around addressing the risks to women and girls arising from countering violent extremism strategies are met.

Recommendations

1. **Dedicated budget:** Commit earmarked funding to UK Women, Peace and Security activities, including a clear and transparent budget for all pillars or strategic objectives of the next NAP, and resources to ensure that the new NAP is effectively disseminated and implemented, including through assigning gender advisors and training.
2. **Track Women, Peace and Security spends:** Commit to the use of gender markers (building on OECD and IASC markers) to enable better tracking and reporting of Women, Peace and Security spending.
3. **Minimum spend:** Consider spending a minimum of 15% of UK development aid in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States on Women, Peace and Security and related gender equality aims as recommended by the UN Global Study.^{xv} Such spending should enable genuine and meaningful involvement of women and girls on programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, meet the UN target of a minimum of 15% of peacebuilding spending dedicated to furthering women's empowerment and gender equality.
4. **Accessible funding:** Increase funding for women's rights organisations pursuing Women, Peace and Security activities that is long-term, flexible and supports core costs (as recommended by the Global Study), while ensuring that funding mechanisms such as the GAI-WPS are effective and accessible to local organisations.

4. Violence Against Women and Girls

Progress has been made under each of the five core pillars identified in UK's the NAP (2014-17), with a specific focus on tackling impunity around sexual violence in conflict. In addressing all forms of VAWG, the Government should ensure it tackles root causes, such as addressing inequalities experienced by women and girls in conflict-affected contexts and support protective measures for women human rights defenders. This could be achieved by integrating DFID's Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG and maximising efforts in prevention and protection. A long-term and comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to VAWG should include working with women and girls' rights organisations and women human rights defenders in the design, implementation and monitoring of global and national strategies.

As highlighted earlier in this report, the Government should also take steps to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Effective implementation of the Convention could bring about real change in the way that women are protected from violence by providing a binding legal framework and common standards for prevention, protection and prosecution of perpetrators. It also sends a strong signal of zero tolerance

for all forms of VAWG. The Convention seeks to improve data collection, particularly documenting comparable and longitudinal data, on the scale of violence experienced by women throughout their life. It would also require the Government to introduce practical safety and support measures for unaccompanied women asylum seekers, alongside preventing, prosecuting and eliminating all forms of physical, psychological and sexual forms of VAWG. This would include not only more familiar forms of abuse, such as rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment, as well as currently less recognised forms, such as so-called 'honour crimes', female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, and violence in the context of widowhood (especially in conflict-related settings).

GAPS welcomes the MOD's increased commitments to the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) and Women, Peace and Security, including the positive commitment to train UK troops, government officials and peacekeepers on both those themes. Such training provides personnel with crucial principles, tools and protection measures to prevent conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls and also progress towards addressing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. It is imperative that the Government, as a champion of women's participation and action against conflict-related sexual violence, makes strong efforts to increase the deployment of women in a range of roles in military and UN peacekeeping operations and strong progress on Gender Advisors and Focal Points.

GAPS welcomes the UK's continued commitment to ending sexual violence in conflict, including through the translations and revision of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflicts. However, the Government should consider a more comprehensive and strategic approach to ending sexual violence, including through providing long-term and systematic funding for preventing and responding to VAWG in conflict-affected contexts. This should include engagement with survivors and women human rights defenders (where it is safe for them to do so). Furthermore, this approach should ensure that PSVI is integrated with the UK's wider efforts to promote to gender equality, including the NAP. GAPS hopes to see funding decisions being driven by local women's rights organisations, who have the knowledge and expertise to support the delivery of effective VAWG programming.

Recommendations

1. **Ratify the Istanbul Convention:** This has been open to signatures since May 2011. Ratifying the Convention would demonstrate a strong commitment and leadership towards gender equality and the elimination of VAWG.
2. **Comprehensive approach to addressing VAWG:** The Government should take an effective and comprehensive approach to service provision (including provision of shelters, sexual reproductive health services and training) for women survivors.
3. **Gender Analysis:** Integrate a strong gender analysis into the new UK NAP to support a more comprehensive and consistent approach to all forms of VAWG (including different forms of sexual violence in conflict). This should include strong accountability and protection steps for attacks on women human rights defenders. Such analysis needs to work at different levels (local norm changes to international efforts), across different actors (individuals; groups; women human rights defenders) and understand how different vulnerabilities intersect.
4. **Strengthen policy consistency:** Demonstrate consistency in the new UK NAP across relevant policies and initiatives, particularly aligning DFID's Theory of Change on ending VAWG into programme objectives, and include strong coherence with the Building Stability Overseas Strategy, CSSF, Call to Action, PSVI, and Stability Strategy. The IASC Gender-based Violence guidelines should be mandatory for all UK implementing partners in fragile and conflict-affected states by the end of the new NAP.

5. Security Sector Reform

GAPS welcomes the concrete steps taken by the UK Government towards implementing a gender sensitive approach to their engagement in the security and justice sectors. We recognise that ensuring

meaningful shifts in gender norms, especially in the security sector, is a challenging and long-term project. However, this is critical part of implementing a meaningful Women, Peace and Security agenda, including the prevention of VAWG.

The increased investments by the MOD in improving the representation of women in the armed forces, pre-deployment gender training to all its staff, deployment of a Gender Advisor to CSSF in MENA and North Africa, and commitments to gender sensitise military doctrine are significant and welcome steps. The comprehensive Tri-Service Training Needs Analysis (which identifies options for Women, Peace and Security training and includes the availability of a pool of Gender Advisors and Focal Points in the MOD ready for deployment) demonstrates the Government's commitment to carrying forward the recommendations of the UN Global Study. To ensure long-term progress, a transformation of militarised structures is needed, towards which the inclusion and retaining of women in the military is an essential step.

Increases in CSSF funding for Women, Peace and Security, and increased gender inclusion in conflict analyses is important progress. It should be consolidated through increasing gender sensitivity in the full range of CSSF programmes beyond those on Women, Peace and Security or PSVI, to include those focussing on security sector reform. GAPS recognises that this is a significant challenge given the complexity of the sector due to its multiple constituents, the culture of secrecy and the masculinised narrative that are often entrenched within security sector institutions. However, this is an area that the Government is well positioned to champion given its significant engagement in training members of the police, military and paramilitary organisations in partner countries.

GAPS is encouraged by the steps taken by the Government to reaching out to local groups, particularly women's organisations, and promoting increased participation of women within the security sector. Given the risks that such engagement may bring to local people and woman human rights defenders, it is important that a thorough risk assessment is implemented in consultation with the local population where the security sector personnel (civil and military) directly engage with the local communities.

Impunity for human rights violations, including VAWG, is a major impediment to promoting women's rights and justice within security sector reform frameworks. UK support to facilitating the legal processes that led to the International Criminal Court's conviction of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo for war crimes and crimes against humanity is commendable. The PSVI International Protocol points to a multi-sector approach to securing justice for survivors of sexual violence yet, in practice, ensuring accountability for human rights violations, including sexual violence in conflict continues to be hard to achieve in post-conflict institution building processes. In countries where the UK is supporting these efforts, GAPS encourages the Government to take measures to ensure that peace and transitional justice settlements are gender sensitive and do not promote impunity for VAWG, violence against women human rights defenders, and other violations.

Recommendations

1. **Embed gender sensitive analyses:** In the new NAP, provide explicit details of gender sensitive approaches implemented by the three NAP departments and highlight good practice. GAPS would also welcome further information on the nature of programming that is supported through CSSF and how gender-sensitive conflict analysis informs programming across the range of interventions.
2. **Support gender sensitivity in practice:** The lead NAP departments of the Government strengthen their investment in delivering gender sensitive training by dedicating time and resources to measuring the impact, building good practice and promoting gender champions within military leadership. Ensure that the MOD training content delivered to its own staff and international partners explain the linkages between sexual violence in conflict and gender norms that perpetuate such violations.
3. **Strengthen policy coherence and accountability:** The UK Government takes leadership in offering greater coherence on accountability and justice as part of Security Sector Reform and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration processes, where there is a significant risk of impunity for past abuses. NAPs may be a tool used for mobilisation and monitoring this.

4. **Rules Based International Order:** Recognise the importance of the Rules Based International Order, with the UN at its heart, in promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The NAP should specifically reference the NSS and SDRS which identified the importance of work to protect the Rules Based International Order and the global institutional system, and should address how work on Women, Peace and Security can be integrated into this strategy. Paragraphs (5.112-114) of the NSS provide a strong statement of intent in this regard, but an implementation strategy is required.

Case study: UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial

At the UN/US-hosted Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in New York in September 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron committed to the deployment of British military personnel in support of UNMISS^{xvi} and AMISOM^{xvii}. This marked the first major deployment of UK troops to international peacekeeping missions in over a generation and a welcome return of such support. As part of this new investment in peacekeeping, on 8 September 2016, the UK hosted the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference with over 70 countries represented.

Early on in the formulation of the conference, there was a welcome emphasis on Women, Peace and Security. One of the three conference objectives addressed the theme specifically, highlighting the need to increase the representation of women in peacekeeping including in senior roles, and gender mainstreaming. Not only was one of the four sections of the conference focused on women and peacekeeping, but the importance of women's participation strongly supported by a range of member states.

Following advocacy by GAPS members and other agencies, the UK held a civil society briefing in July 2016. Although the event was more of a briefing than a consultation, the Government agreed to support a rapid consultation with civil society in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UK invited two civil society representatives to participate in the event, including a colleague from GAPS member Oxfam, and Solange Lwashiga Furaha, of the DRC Women's caucus Rien Sans Les Femmes (Nothing Without Women). However, only 13% of participants were women (40 out of 302 attendees).

The final communiqué was strong. Staying close to the commitments laid out the previous year in UNSCR 2242, it reiterated the 'indispensable role' of women in peacekeeping and conflict resolution as a whole and focused on participation. The text restated the goal of doubling the number of women involved in military and police contingents by 2020 (from 3% to 6%) and a new goal of 15% was set for women taking up posts of officers, military observers and participants on the associated UN training courses. The communiqué stressed the importance of missions being able to engage effectively with women as well as men including at a community level, and called for more women mediators and gender advisors to be deployed.

The FCO held a follow-up civil society roundtable in November where UK CSOs continued to advocate for improving the representation of women and ensuring that UK missions and posts support the women they are meant to protect. CSO representatives also made a wider point on the need for independent judicial mechanisms for sexual exploitation and abuse cases.

All of this is very positive and the UK is a strong champion of it. How meaningfully this is pursued and effectively implemented needs to be followed closely. In its deployment to UNMISS, the UK needs to display its commitment to ensuring women are adequately represented, including in leadership positions, and show the impact of women acting in these roles.

6. Humanitarian

The past year has seen the Government make important commitments at ministerial level to take new steps to better protect, assist and empower women and girls in UK humanitarian assistance and protection. The opportunity and challenge is now how to translate these into practice. Most notably, DFID prioritised the theme of women and girls ahead of the UN World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 (see case study on page 12).

The UK's engagement (led by DFID) towards the World Humanitarian Summit represented an important development of UK policy and practice in responding to the issues facing women and girls in times of crisis. Between 2013 and 2016, DFID had taken steps to bring greater attention to VAWG in emergency contexts. A key step in this regard was the Government's role in launching the global '*Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies*', which is an ongoing multi-stakeholder process involving states, UN agencies and NGOs to catalyse more effective efforts on VAWG prevention and response. Following the launch of the Call to Action, DFID announced new funding to support both research on VAWG and increased funding for humanitarian efforts to address such abuse in emergencies including Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and the Syrian regional crisis. The development and dissemination of a DFID guidance note on VAWG is one example of an important initiative undertaken to translate policy commitment into action by supporting DFID staff who make decisions on funding and programming in different contexts.

From a more critical perspective, and following the launch of the Call to Action, a number of evaluations have emerged that highlight how increased funding to specialised VAWG response programming in humanitarian contexts is important, but inadequate on its own.^{xviii} In the absence of wider efforts to promote accountability for gender across all sectors of a humanitarian response, aid efforts often face gaps and challenges in terms of mitigating risks of VAWG (e.g. in the design of refugee camps, and in relation to female-headed households including displaced widows) or to establish functioning referral systems for survivors to access the support they need.

The agenda promoted by the Government towards the World Humanitarian Summit and the commitments endorsed at the Summit build on that agenda. They include increased attention to women not just as victims or survivors, but also to women as 'agents' in humanitarian action (in particular the role of local women's groups), sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ensuring accountability for the wider gender sensitivity of humanitarian funding. Over the past year, DFID also supported the inclusion of more explicit attention to gender equality within the Call to Action in particular including indicators on gender equality issues within a new Call to Action Roadmap through to 2020.

Gender equality and VAWG cannot be addressed in isolation from the wider humanitarian response. All humanitarian funding needs to be held accountable for ensuring that women and girls can access the assistance and protection they require, and that addressing risks of gender-based violence is factored systematically into how aid is delivered. As such, the Government should follow-up on the high-level indicators in the UK NAP 2014-17 with more specific indicators to ensure that all humanitarian funding addresses the specific needs of women and girls, and that the proportion of humanitarian funding to civil society allocated to address gender equality issues increases.

GAPS welcomes HMG's support over the past year, which has helped secure commitments to reform the global humanitarian system to protect, assist and empower women and girls in times of crisis. As the Government itself affirmed at the World Humanitarian Summit, women are not just victims or survivors, they are also often organising themselves, their families and communities to cope with and respond to crises. GAPS looks forward to the UK translating these commitments into specific policy and practice.

Recommendations

1. **Promote women's empowerment:** The Government should prioritise the commitments it made alongside other states, UN agencies and NGO partners, to promote women's empowerment in

humanitarian action into policy and practice including refugee livelihoods, education in emergencies, human trafficking and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

2. **Strengthen implementation:** DFID should develop a guidance note to support DFID staff and implementing partners on the design, monitoring and evaluation of specialised and mainstreamed programmes to address women's empowerment and gender equality in humanitarian action. The guidance note should support the strengthening of women's coping strategies, including the role of local women's groups, highlighted at the World Humanitarian Summit.
3. **Accountability for gender equality and VAWG efforts:** Building on recommendations by women activists and efforts by ECHO (the European Commission's humanitarian donor institution) and UN Agencies, the Government should conduct a review to identify recommendations on strengthening its approaches to accountability for gender equality and VAWG across all sectors of humanitarian response in different crises. Specifically, it should include organisational 'gender audits' to address attitudes and practices of their staff, which are key to ensuring that women's protection and agency are appropriately addressed.
4. **Champion the Grand Bargain:** The UK should step-up to become a 'gender champion' in the context of both global and bilateral efforts to follow-up on the so-called 'Grand Bargain' agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit, which addresses issues relating to the 'localisation' of aid, cash programming and participation by affected people in aid accountability efforts. DFID should ensure that this process, including proposals that DFID support 'Grand Bargain' pilots in a select number of countries, factors in the Gender 'Core Commitments' and gender implications of localisation, cash assistance and participation get addressed.

Case Study: World Humanitarian Summit – championing transformative change for women's empowerment

During initial outreach to stakeholders involved in the World Humanitarian process in 2014 gender was not considered a priority by the international community. Two years later, at the Summit, GAPS welcomes four key achievements:

1. Five 'Core Commitments' on gender were launched;
2. One of the five 'High Level Leaders Roundtables' at the Summit focused on gender issues and implementation of the 'Core Commitments';
3. Women from local civil society played a prominent and vocal role in most of the sessions;
4. Local women's groups from crisis-affected contexts played a key role in bringing gender onto the agenda, supported by INGOs including GAPS members: CARE International, Action Aid and Oxfam.

At the World Humanitarian Summit High Level Leaders' Roundtable on "*Women and girls: Catalysing action to achieve gender equality*", the UK committed to championing the Summit's outcomes on gender. A delegation of British parliamentarians and peers were also present at the Summit and met with women activists from Syria, Iraq and other contexts to hear their testimonies and recommendations on ways forward. The 'Core Commitments' on Gender include comprehensive commitments which we look forward to being reflected in the upcoming UK NAP.

See also GAPS and GADN's Joint Position Paper ahead of the Summit: <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Position-Paper-on-the-World-Humanitarian-Summit.pdf>

ⁱ Also see GAPS Recommendations for the new NAP in response to the midline report of an external evaluation (September 2016) <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Next-Steps-for-the-New-Forward-Looking-NAP-2018-NAP-Midline-Feedback-13092016.pdf>

ⁱⁱ GAPS considers adequate and meaningful participation to mean (inter alia) that such participation a) will influence on decision-making (i.e. is not tokenistic); b) is open to women's own responses (i.e. is not directive); c) ensures women are fully informed and consent to engaging; d) provides capacity building support to facilitate their engagement if needed (i.e. it is accessible); e) is part of an ongoing process (i.e. is not a one-off exercise); f) is inclusive of marginalised and disadvantaged women; g) includes women in sufficient numbers that they can visibly contribute (i.e. a minimum of 30% of total participants).

ⁱⁱⁱ [National Action Plan on women, peace and security: midline report](#), Sustainable Development Direct, April 2016

^{iv} Source: International Organisation for Migration, Missing Migrants Project, 31 December 2016

- ^v [Eliminate Violence against Internally Displaced Women and Girls, Say UN Experts](#),” United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, November 25, 2014. Quoted after Global Study
- ^{vi} [National Action Plan on women, peace and security: midline report](#), Sustainable Development Direct, April 2016
- ^{vii} <http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/time-act-double-standards-sexual-violence/>
- ^{viii} <https://detentioninquiry.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/immigration-detention-inquiry-report.pdf>
- ^{ix} [National Action Plan on women, peace and security: midline report](#), Sustainable Development Direct, April 2016
- ^x United Nations Support Mission in Libya
- ^{xi} [National Action Plan on women, peace and security: midline report](#), Sustainable Development Direct, April 2016
- ^{xii} <http://insights.careinternational.org.uk/development-blog/humanitarian-emergencies/will-the-un-refugee-and-migrant-summits-make-things-better-for-refugee-women-and-girls>
- ^{xiii} <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/GAPS-GADN-Syria-Conf-paper-FINAL.pdf>
- ^{xiv} *Donor Support to Southern Women’s Rights Organisations*: briefing by OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, November 2016
- ^{xv} http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf
- ^{xvi} United Nations Mission in South Sudan
- ^{xvii} African Union Mission to Somalia
- ^{xviii} See “*Evaluation of Implementation of 2005 IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings in the Syria Crisis Response*” by [UN Population Fund](#), [UN Children’s Fund](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [International Medical Corps](#), [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) and <http://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/18-policy-brief-responding-to-typhoon-haiyan/file> and “*Responding to Typhoon Haiyan: women and girls left behind - a policy brief*” by Mairi MacRae Director of DFID-funded ‘What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Conflict and Humanitarian Crises’ consortium “*Women’s participation in humanitarian action - Experience from the Philippines and Jordan*”, CARE International (forthcoming 2017).

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