



**THE UK NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
FOCUS GROUP 2**

Sexual violence during and after conflict: Can the UK improve its support to international, national and local actors to better prevent and react to this security threat?

28 July 2011 • Map Room, Foreign and Commonwealth Office,

King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH

Conflict creates a climate for boundless sexual abuse. Societies in the aftermath of violent conflict struggle to protect citizens, particularly women, from sexual violence. DRC is a well-cited example of this, with its eastern provinces seriously blighted by this violence. Throughout the history of war, rape has long been dismissed as an unfortunate consequence of militarisation and armed violence. Only recently has it been recognised as a core security challenge and one that perpetuates long-term socio-economic instability. As UN Action against Sexual Violence stresses ‘mass rape is no more inevitable than mass murder’.

The Security Council led the way in 2008 by passing resolution 1820 (followed by 1888, 1889 and 1960), which demands “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians” and requires that it is excluded from all amnesty provisions. The resolution requests the Secretary General to submit a plan for tackling the pervasive lack of data and, amongst other things, calls on States to strengthen their judicial systems and healthcare systems to better support survivors and reverse trends of impunity.

This second focus group meeting, facilitated by GAPS in cooperation with International Alert, will consider how the UK Government can effectively support action against sexual violence through the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Discussions will focus on what can be learnt from experiences in specific countries, with special reference to the Democratic Republic of Congo. There will also be particular focus on expanding the discussion beyond security, judicial and healthcare system reform to ask questions about early intervention and prevention work.

Background

The UK Government published its revised National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security in November 2010. The NAP sets out the UK’s strategy to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 and its associated resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960, on Women, Peace and Security. The NAP is jointly owned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development and Ministry of Defence.

As part of the NAP’s annual review process (detailed in Annex 2 of the NAP), Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) will coordinate a series of focus groups to assess areas of the NAP which need further strengthening and make practical, relevant and meaningful recommendations for updates to the document. The aim of the focus groups is to provide a forum whereby civil society and government officials can engage in collaborative thinking of ways forward in strengthening the National Action Plan to ensure it has further impact for women living in areas affected by violent conflict. As a result of focus group discussions, GAPS, in consultation with other civil society bodies, will produce a report with recommendations for inclusion in the NAP annual review later this year.

Structure

The focus group will take place between 09:00 - 12:00 on **28 July 2011**. To allow for free and open discussion between officials and civil society, Chatham House rules will apply.

09:00-09:45

Civil society discussion, chaired by Dr. Ruth Jacobson

09:45-12:00

HMG officials arrive; provide a brief update of progress in terms of sexual violence; and participants engage discussion on and recommendations concerning how the National Action Plan can be strengthened around these issues. This will be chaired by Dr. Ruth Jacobson.

Considerations for the discussion

- How can we ensure that the sexual violence component UK NAP on 1325 is strengthened by provisions made in UN SCR 1820? What specific aspects could the UK prioritise?
- How can we coordinate more effectively with other national and multilateral interventions, such as UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict interventions? What mechanisms should the UK include in its NAP?
- Justice sector and police reform are important for reducing the impunity surrounding sexual violence; however, do we need a broader, prevention approach; one that looks at social, economic and political root causes? If so, what could be concrete areas for intervention?
- How can UK interventions around sexual violence in conflict be measured more effectively for impact? Are the current objectives targeted enough and if not can how can they be developed?

Other Focus Groups

GAPS is leading three focus groups between June and September 2011 in London. Each focus group will concentrate on different aspects of the NAP and the women, peace and security agenda. We will ensure lessons are learned and used for the planning of the subsequent focus groups.

	Topic	Lead	Date and venue
Focus group 1	Participation	Initiative on Quiet Diplomacy	1 June 2011, 12:00
Focus group 2	Sexual violence	International Alert	28 th July 2011, 09:00

We are also planning focus group sessions in Afghanistan, DRC and Nepal in August and September, countries which have country plans in the National Action Plan, in order that our final focus group on the bilateral section of the plan and our final report also reflect the voices, experiences and perspectives of civil society in the NAP focus countries.

Focus group 3	Bilateral action	Saferworld	September, to be decided
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Briefing Pack for participants

- UNSCR 1820
- UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
- Chris Dolan, *The War is Not Yet Over: Community Perceptions of Sexual Violence and its Underpinnings in Eastern DRC*, (International Alert, November 2010)
- UN Action on Sexual Violence in Conflict Strategic Framework 2011 – 2012
- UN Action on Sexual Violence in Conflict Annual Report 2010
- *Justice, Impunity, and Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*, Report of the International Parliamentary Expert Mission Addressing Impunity for Sexual Crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, organised by the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights in collaboration with the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, (November 2008)

Participants

Civil Society:

1. Ruth Jacobson, (chair)
2. Carole Velasquez, APPG Great Lakes
3. Alice Hutchinson, CARE
4. Marie-Claire Faray, Common Cause
5. Megan Bastick, DCAF
6. Judy El Bushra, International Alert
7. Charlotte Onslow, International Alert
8. Niki Kandirikirira, New Narratives
9. Shelagh Daley, GAPS
10. Chitra Nagarajan, GAPS

HMG officials:

1. Conrad Bailey, Head of Conflict Department, FCO
2. Kim Gould, FCO
3. Craig Morley, FCO
4. Emma Davis, FCO
5. Paul Green, FCO
6. Adam Drury, DFID
7. Joelle Jenny, DFID
8. Charlotte Morris, Stabilisation Unit
9. Jackie Upton, Stabilisation Unit
10. Mike Amsden, MOD
11. Katy Hancock, HO