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gender action for peace and security

International Commitments and Priorities for 2019 UK-Hosted International Conference on Gender-Based Violence and the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2020: Libya consultation

February 2019

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Libya consultation, February 2019

Introduction

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) and Together we Build It (TWBI) worked with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)'s Ante Raeda programme to hold a consultation with Libyan civil society organisations. The consultation focused on developing recommendations for the 2019 UK-hosted International Conference which will focus on forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in November 2019 and the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2020. Ahead of the consultation, IWPR collected responses to a set of UK Government questions on the topics discussed at the consultation. GAPS and TWBI also used a recent Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) policy brief on Libya¹, which was based on national consultation. This report is part of a series of consultation reports on which GAPS is working with the UK Government.

Recommendations

Recommendations – Women, Peace and Security

1. **National Action Plan:** International donors should fund and support the development of a Libyan Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP) that is funded, implemented, monitored and inclusive of civil society.
2. **Long-term civil society funding:** The international community should fund Libyan civil society organisations – particularly Women's Rights Organisations – with accessible, flexible, long-term funding for them to implement their self-defined priorities. Commitments to this funding should extend to public support and diplomatic advocacy for civil society space.
3. **Meaningful participation:** The international community should support the meaningful participation of women, and where appropriate girls, in all peace, security and justice processes and sectors in Libya, including at all levels of peace processes, from grassroots to international.
4. **International community implementation:** The international community should ensure it implements the Women, Peace and Security agenda in its own projects, programmes and policies for Libya, including women's roles in: the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL); international peacebuilding processes relating to Libya; and advocacy to the Libyan Government. The International Community should also better consider the gendered impact of arms in the Libyan conflict at present and in the future and ensure it funds disarmament, arms control and investigation into the illegal circulation and proliferation of arms through an inclusive process that ensures grassroots involvement and a gendered perspective to planning, implementation and monitoring.
5. **Civil society and public awareness raising:** The international community should fund and support targeted public, civil society awareness raising and community-based programmes on Women, Peace and Security and gender equality.
6. **Libyan Government:** The international community should better support the internal capacity of the Libyan Government to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This includes: legislation, such as GBV legislation; the inclusion of UNSCR 1325 in Presidential Council discussions; and increased awareness of the Women, Peace and Security agenda among Government officials and Ministers.

Recommendations – Gender-Based Violence

1. **Funding survivor-centred approaches and social norm change:** The international community should commit to increase funding for the prevention of and protection from GBV and must address harmful social norms.
2. **Civil society and Women's Rights Organisations:** The international community should establish a fund to support civil society, specifically and Women's Rights Organisation which funds holistic approaches to ending GBV).
3. **Survivor-centred protection services:** The international community should support an increase in holistic survivor-centred protection services, including refuges.

¹ WILPF Libya Policy Report (2019) https://www.wilpf.org/wilpf_statements/policy-brief-a-roadmap-to-sustainable-peace-in-libya-a-feminist-approach-towards-achieving-peace-and-security-in-the-face-of-patriarchy-militarism-and-fundamentalism/

4. **Legislation:** The international community should use diplomatic efforts and technical support to ensure the Libya Government passes and implements GBV and associated legislation to protect survivors/victims and to prevent GBV.
5. **Capacity strengthening of the security and justice sector:** The international community should fund the systematic and long-term capacity strengthening of the police, judiciary and victim/survivor support centres.
6. **Accountability:** The international community should support existing work to strengthen the accountability of perpetrators of GBV – including armed groups and state actors – and should ensure that commitments made to ending GBV include implementation and accountability plans.

Discussion

Discussion – Women, Peace and Security

1. **National Action Plan:** International donors should fund and support the development of a Libyan Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP) that is funded, implemented, monitored and inclusive of civil society.

Consultation participants considered a Women, Peace and Security NAP essential for progress on UNSCR 1325 in Libya. The NAP should be based on good practice, including: funding for its development and implementation; robust monitoring and evaluation processes; and the meaningful inclusion of civil society in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NAP. The NAP could encompass many of the recommendations included in the consultation. Considering the low local levels of awareness of UNSCR 1325 and NAPs within the Libyan Government, the development of a NAP requires support and advocacy from the international community. It is essential that advocacy for a NAP focuses not only on wider benefits of Women, Peace and Security to Libya, but also on the rights of women and girls that should be delivered by a NAP.

2. **Long-term civil society funding:** The international community should fund Libyan civil society organisations – particularly Women’s Rights Organisations – with accessible, flexible, long-term funding for them to implement their self-defined priorities. Commitments to this funding should extend to public support and diplomatic advocacy for civil society space.

Civil society funding for national and grassroots organisations, specifically Women’s Rights Organisations, is difficult to access, short-term and based around donor priorities. It is essential to address this with a long-term, flexible, accessible fund in which civil society can identify their own priorities. Such funding should be combined with long-term capacity strengthening support to civil society organisations. Furthermore, there are restrictions on civil society space in Libya. It is important that donors use their position to advocate for civil society space in Libya to enable national and grassroots organisations to continue their essential work. Participants flagged the IPWR Ante Raeda programme as a good example of programmatic and long-term capacity strengthening support. Funding to networks enables them to coordinate training, advocacy and policy, which would also support the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

3. **Meaningful participation:** The international community should support the meaningful participation of women, and where appropriate girls, in all peace, security and justice processes and sectors in Libya, including at all levels of peace processes, from grassroots to international.

Women’s participation in peace, security and justice sectors and processes is low. This is as a result of: harmful social norms; gender inequality; and lack of commitment of and lack of pressure on the Libyan Government (see 1 iv for further information on advocacy and support required from the international community). It is important that the meaningful participation of women and girls is prioritised. This includes meaningful and systematic consultation with women and girls in the design of policies and programmes within or targeted at Libya. It also extends to the inclusion of women in leadership roles in Libyan Government departments and delegations (*see recommendation 4.4*). Quotas of at least 30% of women in decision-making positions and delegations were recommended to increase women’s participation and create a critical mass of women who can influence decision-making. Furthermore, the international community should consider supporting women who were active in the security forces before 2011 to join the new security services and rebuild their skills to enable them to participate actively. This could include supporting the Women’s Military Academy that closed in 2011.

- 4. International community implementation: International community implementation:** The international community should ensure it implements the Women, Peace and Security agenda in its own projects, programmes and policies for Libya, including women's roles in: the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL); international peacebuilding processes relating to Libya; and advocacy to the Libyan Government. The International Community should also better consider the gendered impact of arms in the Libyan conflict at present and in the future and ensure it funds disarmament, arms control and investigation into the illegal circulation and proliferation of arms through an inclusive process that ensures grassroots involvement and a gendered perspective to planning, implementation and monitoring.

The international community has not systematically implemented the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in its policy, programmes and diplomatic operations in Libya. It is essential for the international community to implement its commitments to women and girls' rights in all its work in Libya. UNSMIL, which focuses on state rebuilding, should include Libyan and non-Libyan women in its decision-making positions. This is important for both the inclusion of gender in UNSMIL's work, and for the visibility of women in leadership roles. Furthermore, peace, security and justice programmes and events relating to Libya should systematically include women. The international community should ensure it systematically raises the need for a Women, Peace and Security NAP in its advocacy and diplomatic work in Libya. This is essential if the Libyan Government is to develop and implement a Women, Peace and Security NAP. The internationally organised High-Level Meetings on Libya in 2018 excluded women; no women were invited to the May 2018 High-Level Meeting in Paris and only three were invited to the November 2018 High-Level Meeting in Palermo. The three women were included in the Palermo meeting because of an advocacy campaign for women's inclusion in the formal peace process. Such campaigns should not be necessary; women's inclusion should be at the centre of the international community's priorities. Women's exclusion demonstrates a lack of commitment to women and girls' rights, models the wrong behaviour to the Libyan Government, and means it is almost impossible for gender to be included meaningfully and effectively in the discussions and resulting actions and commitments. Furthermore, the international community should better acknowledge the role of arms in the Libyan conflict, in addition to their gendered impacts. The international community should increase its disarmament and arms control policies and programmes in Libya, as well as investigating illegal online arms trading.

- 5. Civil society and public awareness raising:** The international community should fund and support targeted public, civil society awareness raising and community-based programmes on Women, Peace and Security and gender equality.

Gender inequality and lack of awareness on Women, Peace and Security are pervasive in Libya. This permeates every area of life, including civil society organisations. Two types of awareness raising are necessary: public awareness raising on gender equality; and Women, Peace and Security training for civil society organisations. Public awareness raising should be designed and targeted to ensure it includes community-based programmes that addresses social norms. The role of the media in entrenching gender inequality should be acknowledged and addressed throughout training and public awareness raising of gender equality. Civil society training should increase awareness of Women, Peace and Security, including ways in which civil society can integrate Women, Peace and Security into their programmes on service delivery, advocacy, training, peacebuilding and community-based work. All training should be long term and should be accredited by the Libyan Government to increase interest in and improve perceptions of the training.

- 6. Libyan Government:** The international community should better support the internal capacity of the Libyan Government to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This includes: legislation, such as GBV legislation; the inclusion of UNSCR 1325 in Presidential Council discussions; and increased awareness of the Women, Peace and Security agenda among Government officials and Ministers.

Awareness and the capacity of the Libyan Government on UNSCR 1325 remains low, including for policy- and decision-makers with gender responsibilities. It is essential that the international community supports the Libyan Government to ensure it is better able to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Areas of support should include: legislation to support Women, Peace and Security, such as GBV legislation, and references to gender equality and UNSCR 1325 in the constitution; directives from the Presidential Council to Government departments to require the inclusion of UNSCR 1325 in all Government work; and regional outreach to Government offices to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The development and implementation of such legislation and policies would

require long-term training for Women, Peace and Security leads and Gender Advisors in each department. Programmes with the Libyan Government should also include support to encourage the Government to increase its connections to women and girls, perhaps through a National Women and Girls Rights and Gender Conference to agree priorities and raise awareness. Diplomatic efforts should also include commitments to publicly encouraging the Libyan Government to recruit, retain and promote women within leadership roles and to include women in decision-making roles in their delegations.

Discussion – Gender-Based Violence

1. Funding survivor-centred approaches and social norm change: The international community should commit to increase funding for the prevention of and protection from GBV and must address harmful social norms.

Funding for GBV should address harmful social norms that perpetuate GBV. These harmful social norms further embed gender inequality and are based on stereotypes of masculinities and femininities. To address gendered harmful social norms, the international community should fund community-based programmes that promote women and girls' rights. This should extend to peace education which integrates gender equality systematically. Effective programming should include long-term funding, work with national partners and be based on meaningful consultation to ensure it is contextualised. This requires a significant increase in funding for GBV programming. To prevent GBV and protect all survivors and victims, funding is urgently required for all the recommendations discussed in the consultation. Without funding, international commitments will not be implemented meaningfully.

2. Civil society and Women's Rights Organisations: The international community should establish a fund to support civil society, specifically and Women's Rights Organisation which funds holistic approaches to ending GBV).

National and local civil society, particularly Women's Rights Organisations, are best placed to design, implement and monitor GBV programmes. They understand the harmful social norms that cause GBV, know the responses required and can design effective programmes to prevent GBV and protect women, girls, men and boys from GBV. It is essential that funding is provided to civil society organisations that is accessible, flexible, long-term and is based on their self-defined priorities. Too often, GBV funding is inaccessible for local and national civil society organisations, is based on donor priorities, and expects changes to, for example, harmful social norms in 12 months. For effective programming and prevention, this must change to enable long-term, effective, meaningful programming. Funding should also allow civil society organisations to work together across and within programmes to enable effective referral pathways across Libyan Government- and civil society-provided services. This is essential for victims and survivors of GBV and strengthens the sustainability of a vibrant civil society space where organisations are able to continue in their specialisation rather than diversify their work in order to receive broad-based donor funding.

3. Survivor-centred protection services: The international community should support an increase in holistic survivor-centred protection services, including refuges.

It remains particularly difficult to access funding for protection services in Libya. It is essential that the international community supports and funds refuges and support centres to enable victims and survivors to access the holistic health, psycho-social and rehabilitation support they need. These services must be survivor-centred, based on consultation with survivors/victims and address their needs, rights and experiences. This support should extend to all service providers and be relevant to their role. Participants highlighted the specific needs of healthcare providers to receive long-term capacity strengthening as they often further perpetuate stigma through inappropriate treatment and abusing the privacy of survivors and victims.

4. Legislation: The international community should use diplomatic efforts and technical support to ensure the Libya Government passes and implements GBV and associated legislation to protect survivors/victims and to prevent GBV.

The Libyan Government should urgently pass legislation to support ending GBV. This includes GBV legislation, for example by amending the Status Code. This legislation is essential to ensure that GBV is criminalised. Such legislation must be implemented (*see all other recommendations to support implementation*).

5. **Capacity strengthening of the security and justice sector:** The international community should fund the systematic and long-term capacity strengthening of the police, judiciary and victim/survivor support centres.

The security and justice sector cannot currently support survivors/victims of GBV effectively. Their capacity to do so has not been supported. The security and justice sector needs significant financial investment to ensure it can support survivors/victims as well as prosecute perpetrators. This capacity strengthening should be long-term. A short-term, one off training will be ineffective. Furthermore, security and justice personnel should be supported with gender-sensitive skills on data collection of the prevalence of GBV.

6. **Accountability:** The international community should support existing work to strengthen the accountability of perpetrators of GBV – including armed groups and state actors – and should ensure that commitments made to ending GBV include implementation and accountability plans.

The international community should use existing work to hold perpetrators – including armed groups and state actors – to account for GBV, including sanctions. International commitments are meaningless without implementation and accountability plans. Numerous commitments have already been made to women and girls, which remain unimplemented. Without ways to track implementation, commitments are not worth investing in, not least by women’s rights activists and organisations who fought for them.