



gender action for peace and security

Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2017

December 2017

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About GAPS

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) is the UK's only Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 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 (UNSCR) 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 2017 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). It builds on, and complements, the following GAPS submissions:

- Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2015: GAPS Shadow Report, January 2016
- Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2016: GAPS Shadow Report, January 2017
- Informing the new UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: GAPS Written Submission, April 2017
- Women's voices in the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: Summary Report, April 2017

It is recommended that this Shadow Report is read alongside these former submissions. Building on recommendations from the Shadow Report for the 2016 period, and an intention to provide consistency in report structures until the end of the 2014-2017 NAP, the following sections are intended to reflect previous Shadow Report structures and recommendations, whilst making space for notable case studies.

Overall reflections on the UK Government's 2017 Annual Report:

- The final Annual Report under the 2014-17 NAP is a comprehensive and detailed report, providing useful information on the UK Government's WPS related initiatives in focus countries, and against some core thematic areas. GAPS believes this report could have been stronger by reporting against specific commitments. The 2017 report, for example, states that *"Overall the UK has made good progress in delivering its 2014-2017 NAP commitments with the majority of targets in the Implementation Plan met, except for those we have had to postpone due to political, security or operational constraints."* Yet those commitments or targets are not set out in the report nor is it clear which ones have not been met or (specifically) why or how (i.e. commitments are not linked to the efforts laid out in the report).
- A breakdown of country-specific activities is useful, as are the descriptions of the UK's response to recent events within each focus country. More detail, however, on the specifics of certain activities would further the usefulness of this breakdown. For instance, when describing that in Myanmar the UK *"successfully supported the development of a nationally-owned action plan on gender equality, with a specific component on WPS"* it would be useful to know the nature of this support (e.g. technical, financial, political) and to whom it went (e.g. government departments, civil society groups, women's rights organisations).
- GAPS would also welcome reference to activities that were planned and could not be undertaken due to changes in the political, security or operational environment, and what steps were taken to mitigate the effect of these changes or how the planned activities were amended.
- The report could be strengthened with an assessment of the outcomes the Government has or hopes to achieve as a result of its activities. GAPS recognises that achieving outcomes and meaningful impact on WPS will come about from long-term and sustained work, but the Government could elaborate on the mid-term outcomes it has achieved or aims to achieve, for instance, after integrating *"gender equality throughout DFID and CSSF funding streams, including DFID's health, education, water and sanitation (WASH), humanitarian and private sector development programming"* in terms of changes for women and girls in conflict. GAPS does note where this has been provided for some activities, but encourages a more systematic approach to understanding and articulating impact.

1. Lessons from the UK's annual reports

The 2017 Annual Report is the third and final report under the current (2014-17) NAP and provides an opportunity to review and identify lessons from the collection of reports under the current NAP. GAPS welcomes the UK Government's production of annual reports on its Women, Peace and Security work. This is an important mechanism through which the UK should be promoting openness, transparency and accountability for its WPS efforts and progress against its NAP. However, we have also previously noted the variety in format, standard and depth of annual reports under the current NAP.

In our previous Shadow Reports¹ and our Written Submission for the 2018 NAP,² we acknowledged that the 2014-2017 NAP creates multiple challenges for the UK to report effectively against progress. In particular, presenting the UK Government's work at the time of writing, rather than a forward-looking or cumulative approach, has constrained its ability to report effectively on new or emerging work. Similarly, the relatively isolated nature of the current NAP from wider strategy and reporting processes³ created a challenging reporting demand on UK Government staff in the UK and overseas posts.

Going forward, we would also welcome a clearer approach from the UK regarding attribution of changes to the UK's efforts. For example, the 2017 report attributes the increase of women parliamentarians in Somalia solely to a UK-funded programme (the Implementation and Analysis in Action of Accountability Programme). Whilst we hope that the UK's work was effective in supporting this change, it is important to be more specific about that contribution in order to build the UK's capacity in understanding how it can support change in different contexts.

Recommendations

- **Standardise annual reports against a robust monitoring framework:** Standardising their format would allow for consistent reporting over the duration of the new NAP, and enable tracking of progress over time. The format should: focus on progress towards NAP objectives and indicators; report on spending; report on progress in focus countries; and allow space for case studies and lessons learned as well as changes to plans.
- **Retain the annual reports:** The annual report is a key mechanism to support the UK's openness, transparency and accountability and should be retained. An explicit commitment regarding this in the new NAP would be welcome.

2. WPS Funding

GAPS has long-called for the UK to both provide dedicated funds for WPS and significantly strengthen reporting on all Official Development Assistance (ODA) that has been spent on women's rights in fragile and conflict-affected countries. The 2017 report reflects the inconsistency in the UK's current approach for financial reporting on women's rights globally. The 2017 report contains limited financial reporting on WPS, and this lack of transparency and accountability for funding is problematic.

GAPS strongly welcomes the inclusion of the OECD Gender Equality Marker to all programmes in the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and the CSSF's decision to apply the 2014 International Development (Gender Equality) Act to all programmes. GAPS understands and welcomes the steps the UK has taken to ensure that ODA spends support women and gender equality, including the 2014 International Development (Gender Equality) Act. It is vital, however, that the UK goes beyond 'consideration,' and that it reports on ODA spends in a way that promotes clarity on this requirement, accountability for its implementation, and demonstrates effectiveness of funding for gender equality, and transparency of reporting.

GAPS also continues to recommend that the UK provides clearer and more detailed reporting on spending. Although the 2017 report cites the CSSF annual report for further detail on CSSF spends

¹ <http://gaps-uk.org/assessing-uk-government-action-women-peace-security-2016/>

² <http://gaps-uk.org/gaps-submission-informing-new-uk-national-action-plan-women-peace-security/>

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/631120/NAP_ENDLINE.pdf

supporting women and girls, GAPS could not find detail on such expenditure in the report.⁴ We noted that, in a written ministerial statement to parliament, the UK reported that the CSSF spent £214.5 million on programmes that addressed gender equality,⁵ but this detail was not included in the report itself. Greater openness on the UK's spending on women's rights in conflict-affected countries would promote greater transparency and accountability for UK ODA. It would also demonstrate global leadership and raise the standard for the implementation of the WPS framework as well as the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development by demonstrating spends against Goals (especially 5 and 16), and the World Humanitarian Summit Core Commitment 3 on leaving no one behind and 1 on conflict prevention including inclusive decision-making.⁶

As highlighted by the 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, the historic lack of overall funding for driving the WPS agenda has limited the positive impacts for women and girls globally.⁷ We note that £214.5 million represents 19% of the CSSF's budget and is a substantial and welcome increase in spending under the CSSF, which only spent 2% on gender equality in its first year (2015/16).⁸ However we continue to urge the UK, in line the UN target, to dedicate a minimum of 15% of all peacebuilding funds (multilateral and bilateral) to activities whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women – including resourcing to women's rights organisations and women human rights defenders.⁹

Recommendations

- **Gender Marker:** GAPS continues to recommend that the UK Government introduces a gender marker to all ODA spends to enable reporting (building on OECD and IASC markers).
- **Provide clarity on current WPS reporting:** We recommend that the UK Government provides greater clarity on the CSSF's reporting on gender equality spends for improved transparency around the figures provided – for example, where gender equality is the primary objective.
- **Increase funding:** We continue to recommend that the UK increases spend on gender equality in the CSSF, for example through ring-fenced funding or implementing a quota. We continue to recommend that the UK provides dedicated, long-term, core, flexible funding for women's rights organisations to support their vital work in providing front-line services and long-term change.

3. Participation – Supporting women's active participation at UK-hosted events

GAPS welcomes the UK Government's recognition that, "*Research has shown that when women are included in peace processes there is a 35 per cent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 15 years,*" as noted in the Annual Report. At the UN Security Council in October 2015, 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.*"¹⁰

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630077/conflict-stability-security-fund-annual-report-2016-2017.pdf

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-2016-to-2017-and-settlement-for-2017-to-2018-written-ministerial-statement>

⁶ <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/transformation/54>

⁷ UN High Level Review, accessible online via: <http://wps.unwomen.org/>

⁸ £26 million of £1.127 billion (2%) for 2015/16 and £214.5 million of £1.111,3 billion (19%) for 2016/17.

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-07-21/debates/16072152000017/ConflictStabilityAndSecurityFund?highlight=CSSF%20gender#contribution-D4B20344-33C4-4BCB-8453-DF4793FCC082>

⁹ See: <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/GAPS-UK-thematic-briefing-paper-resourcing-for-NAPS.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Assessing-UK-Government-Action-on-Women-Peace-and-Security-in-2016.pdf> page 4

The UK has committed to promote women's active participation at UK-hosted peace-building events, specifically to "*identify women involved in the conflict and shine a torch on them to make sure their voices are heard.*"¹¹ GAPS welcomes recognition of some of the underlying gender inequalities that are barriers to women's meaningful participation, referenced in some of the focus countries' context analyses (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Syria).

The inclusion of the Somalia Conference as an example of efforts made towards women's participation is welcome. Below is GAPS' analysis of the same, recognising that active participation needs to be enabled to be influential.

Case Study: The Somalia Conference

On 11 May 2017, the UK hosted a major international conference to accelerate progress on security sector reform (SSR), build on the international response to the ongoing drought and humanitarian crisis, and agree a new international partnership needed to keep Somalia on course for increased peace and prosperity by 2020. The UK Government made strong commitments to support Somali women's participation in political and economic processes, as well as access to justice, security, educational and health services, and to make sure Somali women were present and heard during this international event.

The outputs from the Somalia Conference, notably the Conference Communiqué¹² and the Security Pact,¹³ made welcome commitments and recognitions for women's participation and to "*mainstream gender and the Women, Peace and Security agenda across the security sector.*" These, however, could have been stronger. Women's' security concerns were not recognised as a stand-alone issue, despite high levels of violence against women in Somalia. Furthermore, the Conference focused on SSR but failed to pair this with efforts to strengthen justice mechanisms and access to justice, which are crucial for women in Somalia.

Given concerns raised by GAPS regarding previous UK-hosted international conferences,¹⁴ the space provided for Somali women's participation fell woefully short of the UK's commitments. Prior to the conference, there was only one consultation with Somali civil society and only shortly before the Conference, thereby providing little opportunity to shape the Conference agenda, structure or priorities. During the Conference, Somali women's participation was largely limited to the civil society side event, rather than core decision-making forums.

The New Partnership for Somalia (NPS) was agreed, formalising mechanisms of international donor support to deliver on the National Development Plan. The lack of meaningful role for civil society, particularly women's groups, in the development of both the Conference and the NPS was a missed opportunity and marks a lack of progress in the UK's implementation of commitments around supporting women's active participation at UK-hosted peace-building events.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-firmly-believes-that-the-15th-anniversary-must-represent-the-start-of-a-new-era-on-women-peace-and-security>

¹² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613714/london-somalia-conference-2017-communicue.pdf

¹³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613720/london-somalia-conference-2017-security-pact.pdf

¹⁴ Including: the 2016 Supporting Syria and the Region Conference; the 2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference; the 2014 NATO Conference; the 2014 Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict Summit; and the 2014 London Conference on Afghanistan.

Recommendations: To support Somali women¹⁵

- **Facilitate access to decision-making arenas:** Somali women face barriers to meaningful participation in peacebuilding due to their historic cultural exclusion from these arenas. Efforts should shift the power imbalance that exists in the domestic and public spheres which limits women's participation at all levels, including political and economic ones.
- **Address sexual abuse and promote accountability:** Somali women continue to face grave sexual abuse at the hands of armed actors, including government troops, clan militia and AMISOM. Accelerate efforts to improve Somali women's access to justice, including building connections between women's organisations and the justice ministry.

Recommendations: To support women's participation at UK-hosted peace-building events

- **Meaningfully engage with women and women's organisations as part of the preparation of the Conference:** e.g. consultations which will effectively identify women's needs and priorities and enable them to influence the agenda and format of the conference and support a strong gendered perspective to issues of national security, justice, inclusive politics and economic empowerment. Identify and address pre-existing barriers to their engagement.
- **Provide space for women and women's organisations to meaningfully participate in a conference:** For example, by ensuring a diverse range of civil society groups are able to attend the conference, providing time on the main agenda of the conference for women's organisations to speak (not just at side events), etc.
- **Support women and women's organisations role in the follow-up to conferences:** For example, by providing funding for their work, ensuring quotas in civil society fora, ensuring specific commitments in communiqués that support women's inclusion in implementation, support access to relevant ministries (e.g. security, justice and internal affairs) etc.

4. Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The UK has made strong commitments towards addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers and has endorsed the Secretary General's reform agenda.¹⁶ In addition to practical measures, the UK has called on the UN to focus on: a) top-class systems for training, prevention and detection; b) support for Member States to enhance their investigation and prosecution capability; and c) explicitly removing child sex crimes from the Convention on UN Privileges and Immunities.¹⁷

The UK has made significant contributions in combatting SEA, including by supporting funding for the office of the Special Coordinator on the UN's response to SEA.¹⁸ It has also directly funded a UN outreach project to victims of SEA in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic,¹⁹ and provides support to the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC)²⁰ in

¹⁵ These recommendations are taken from GAPS consultations with Somali women's organisations in July 2017, funding by the UK Government and to support the development of the new NAP. The full report is available online: <http://gaps-uk.org/somali-womens-voices-uk-national-action-plan-women-peace-security/>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/theresa-mays-speech-to-the-un-general-assembly-2017>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/priti-patel-unga-high-level-event-on-un-development-system-reform>

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/when-a-girl-looks-up-to-a-blue-helmet-she-should-do-so-not-in-fear-but-in-hope>

¹⁹ Conversations with DPKO and DPI

²⁰ <http://www.ipstc.org/about-hpss.aspx>

Kenya in training peacekeepers with respect to SEA. At the November 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference, the UK pledged to extend its commitment to UN peacekeeping in South Sudan to at least 2020, and hopes to act as an exemplar for best practice on SEA.

The UK has also shown strong support for the Secretary-General's agenda for reform, and played a significant role in supporting the adoption of the voluntary compact between Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and the UN with respect to SEA. The UK was one of the first to sign the compact and Prime Minister Theresa May was one of the first to join the Secretary-General's informal "circle of leadership."²¹ As a "penholder" on peacekeeping at the UN Security Council the UK played a key role in pushing through Security Council resolution 2272²² which allows for the repatriation of peacekeeping contingents where SEA is found to be widespread and systemic.

GAPS welcomes the role that the UK has played and urges it to step-up its commitment. As the role of the Special Coordinator is largely limited to the "UN-side" response to SEA, larger problems on the TCC side remain unaddressed, and approaches which focus on training and capacity will not in themselves resolve the wider issues of systemic and structural impunity for criminal sexual acts. The voluntary compact and resolution 2272 take steps in this direction, but the former is voluntary and highly limited, and the latter is only active after abuse has occurred. There is still, therefore, much more to do and the UK is in a strong position to make a significant contribution in this area. Doing so will require a deeper strategic analysis of how SEA relates to the Women Peace and Security and Conflict Related Sexual Violence agendas, and how criminal accountability mechanisms can be applied to criminal acts.

GAPS welcomes UK Government actions in relation to training all UK troops deploying on large scale overseas missions on WPS, gender awareness and prevention of sexual violence in conflict. We highly welcome the commitment to make the UK's core funding to UN, development and humanitarian agencies "*dependent on a zero-tolerance approach*" to SEA, noted in the Report's foreword.

Recommendations

- **Push for clarity on UNSCR 2272:** The UK should use its position on the Security Council to push for the terms "widespread" and "systemic" used in Security Council resolution 2272 to be defined, and to establish a trigger mechanism, to ensure that contingents where widespread and systemic SEA is reported are swiftly repatriated
- **The UK should use its influence to strengthen the Voluntary Compact:** The UK should build on the voluntary compact regarding SEA, using its influence as a Troop Contributor, donor and Security Council member to push for signature of the compact to be taken into account in discussion regarding force generation, and for signature of the compact to be made meaningful by following up on progress TCCs make towards amending domestic legislation to make criminal acts of SEA prosecutable
- **Explore opportunities to strengthen legal accountability for SEA:** The UK should explore taking further action at the Security Council, with the eventual aim of making a demonstrated ability to hold perpetrators of criminal acts of SEA legally accountable a precondition for contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions.

²¹ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2017-09-29/note-correspondents-voluntary-compact-preventing-and>

²² <http://www.refworld.org/docid/56e915484.html>

5. The UK at the UN Security Council

“It’s easy to talk about women, peace and security when that is the subject on our agenda, like it is today, but the challenge is to talk about women and peace and security when our agenda is Syria, or Somalia, or South Sudan.”

Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, UK Permanent Representative to the UN (October 2017).²³

GAPS welcomes the UK’s continued championing of WPS in 2017, at the Security Council. When it presided over the Security Council in March, it invited five civil society representatives to participate in country specific briefings as per UNSCR 2242 (2015). These included women from South Sudan, Afghanistan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although the activist from Burundi was blocked from speaking by other council members, the UK mission still facilitated the taping of her statement which was then promoted by civil society on social media.²⁴

The UK also co-led the Security Council mission to the Lake Chad Basin region. The Terms of Reference included strong WPS elements and the Security Council mission met multiple times with local women and women’s organisations including in internally displaced camp in Maiduguri, North East of Nigeria to hear directly from women on their recommendations and concerns. This Security Council mission should be considered as best practice on how to integrate WPS for future Council missions. It also resulted in the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017) which included, among other WPS references, the importance of dialogue with civil society including from women’s organisations; the need for a holistic approach to defeat Boko Haram and ISIS which includes ensuring women’s participation and empowerment; and the need to address root causes of conflict including gender inequality.

In addition, the UK has advocated against cuts to gender posts in peacekeeping missions and continues to encourage more briefings at the Security Council by women civil society representatives.²⁵ However, GAPS agrees with the analysis by the current UK Permanent Representative to the UN that *“the actual implementation of this agenda still falls way too short.”*²⁶ We will welcome, in January 2018, the first female appointed as UK Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN.²⁷

Recommendations

- **Promote a stronger gendered approach at the UNSC:** As “penholder” on WPS at the Security Council, the UK must continue to ensure all security council outcomes incorporate gender elements; that peace operation mission mandates include gender as a cross-cutting issue as well as in all mission components; and require mission leadership to provide robust gender analysis in mission implementation reports.
- **Facilitate greater inclusion of civil society at the UNSC:** It must also continue to promote civil society participation and consultations at the Security Council and in missions and hold UN mission leadership accountable to their WPS obligations.

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-challenge-is-to-talk-about-women-and-peace-and-security-when-our-agenda-is-syria-or-somalia-or-south-sudan>

²⁴ <http://www.france24.com/en/20170310-burundian-peace-activist-barred-un-meeting>

²⁵ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13045.doc.htm> ; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-challenge-is-to-talk-about-women-and-peace-and-security-when-our-agenda-is-syria-or-somalia-or-south-sudan>

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ This section on the UK at the UN Security Council was written by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. GAPS is grateful for their contribution to the Shadow Report.

6. Yemen and the Arms Trade Treaty

Saudi Arabia initiated a military intervention in Yemen starting in 2015, together with nine other countries.²⁸ All parties to the conflict in Yemen have made widespread use of explosive weapons that have a wide area impact in populated areas, including aircraft bombs, rockets, and mortars, as well as improvised explosive devices.²⁹ Strikes have hit civilian residential areas, schools, mosques and markets, including within the capital Sana'a.³⁰

There is some evidence that the Saudi-led Coalition has deliberately targeted food production and supply.³¹ Yemen imports 90% of its food and almost all its fuel needs. Despite the partial lifting of the total blockade imposed on Yemen in November by the Coalition, limited food imports and no fuel is being allowed to enter northern ports that are the lifeline for the majority of the population. Millions of people have lost access to piped water as a result according to ICRC. The right to life encompasses the right to food and water is included in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Art 12(2), to which the UK, Yemen and Saudi Arabia are all parties.

A UN panel investigating the Saudi-led bombing campaign in Yemen has uncovered “widespread and systematic” attacks on civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law.³² When explosive weapons were used in populated areas in Yemen, civilians made up 95% of reported deaths and injuries.³³ Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.³⁴ In a 2016 survey, women and girls in Hajjah and Taiz said that the main threat to their safety was the risk of airstrikes.³⁵ This is against a backdrop of an already severe humanitarian crisis which exacerbates prevalence of gender-based-violence (GBV) – including sexual violence and trafficking – lack of access to health care (including sexual and reproductive health) and lack of access to survivor assistance.³⁶ UNHCR has expressed concern over sexual violence and abuse of refugee women fleeing to Europe from conflicts in the Middle East, including that in Yemen.³⁷ There is urgent need for cessation of hostilities, as well as GBV prevention and response services.

Despite the disproportionate impact of the conflict on women, the UK has licensed more than £4.6 billion in military equipment since 2015, fuelling the violent impact of the war and limiting opportunities for peace. In the first half of 2017 alone, the UK sold £1.1 billion of weapons.³⁸ These

²⁸ Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, United Arab Emirates are involved in the bombings, while Somalia contributed airspace, territorial waters, and military bases. The United States has provided intelligence and logistical support and has deployed military personnel, along with the United Kingdom, in the command and control centre responsible for the Saudi-led airstrikes.

²⁹ For more information see; “State of Crisis: Explosive Weapons in Yemen,” Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) and UN OCHA, September 2015, <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Yemen%20EWIPA%20report.pdf>

³⁰ Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen are thought to be making extensive use of JDAM and Paveway guided aircraft bombs, which weigh between 500lbs and 2,000lbs. The largest of these bombs is believed to have a lethal radius of up to 360m, and can cause injury and damage as far as 800m from the point of detonation. See pp. 3-8, “Wide Area Impact,” Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), March 2016, <https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Wide-Area-Impact-explosive-weapons-in-populated-areas.pdf>.

³¹ Iona Craig, “Bombed into famine: how Saudi air campaign targets Yemen’s food supplies”, The Guardian, 12 December 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/12/bombed-into-famine-how-saudi-air-campaign-targets-yemens-food-supplies>

³² Ewen MacAskill, “UN report into Saudi-led strikes in Yemen raises questions over UK role,” The Guardian, 27 January 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/27/un-report-into-saudi-led-strikes-in-yemen-raises-questions-over-uk-role>.

³³ Action on Armed Violence and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, State of crisis: Explosive weapons in Yemen, August 2015, <http://www.inew.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/State-of-Crisis.pdf>

³⁴ “Women and Explosive Weapons”, Edited by Ray Acheson and Beatrice Fihn, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 2014. <http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/wew.pdf>

³⁵ Oxfam, Care, IASC GenCap, ‘From the ground up: Gender and conflict analysis in Yemen’, Oct 2016, p. 27:

<http://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/oxfam/bitstream/10546/620112/1/rr-yemen-gender-conflict-analysis-201016-en.pdf>.

³⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women General Recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention conflict and post conflict situations, paragraphs 34-81

³⁷ UNHRC concerned at reports of sexual violence against refugee women and children, 23 October 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/562a3bb16.html>

³⁸ Jessica Elgot, “UK sales of arms and military kit to Saudi Arabia hit £1.1bn in 2017,” The Guardian, 24 October 2017.

licences have included BAE Systems' Typhoon combat aircraft, Raytheon UK Paveway IV bomb kits,³⁹ and MBDA's Brimstone ground attack missiles and Storm Shadow cruise missiles,⁴⁰ as well as assault rifles, grenade launchers, water cannons, gun silencers, components for military helicopters, and components for military combat vehicles.⁴¹

Recommendations

- **Cease arms transfers to Saudi Arabia and other states engaged in military operations in Yemen:** As a state party and one of the original "champions" of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UK government must not sell or transfer weapons to those responsible for creating the humanitarian catastrophe we are seeing in Yemen. Risk assessment under the ATT Article 7, the UK Consolidated Criteria and the EU Common Position mandates the UK to not transfer arms to Saudi Arabia where there is a clear or overriding risk they will be used to commit serious violations of International Humanitarian Law or International Human Rights Law in Yemen. Other EU member States are similarly obligated. The UK should also support independent investigations taking place and encourage its allies and other ATT states parties to stop the flow of arms to this conflict.
- **Establish a mechanism for rigorous and transparent gendered impact assessments of international transfers of arms:** In line with the ATT's legally binding provision against transferring weapons if there is a risk of gender-based violence, the UK should adopt national legislation and policies to ensure the effective implementation of this provision, developed in full consultation with civil society organisations.
- **Supporting IHL at the UN Security Council:** The UK should use its position as "penholder" on Yemen at the UN Security Council to introduce a balanced resolution with the primary aim of stopping the fighting, building peace between Yemen and Saudi Arabia and finding a lasting political solution to Yemen's internal disputes. This would replace UNSC Res 2216.
- **Action at the EU:** The UK should lead in the EU COARM Committee to prepare an EU Common Position ending arms supplies to Saudi Arabia where there is a risk those arms will be used to breach IHL and/or IHRL in Yemen. The UK should also use its influence with the US administration to the same end.
- **Promote women's influential participation and leadership:** The UK should reconvene comprehensive and inclusive peace talks that create a meaningful space for the participation of women, including women-led civil society, at all levels of the peace process to: prioritise the alleviation of civilian suffering; prevent further civilian fatalities; facilitate humanitarian assistance (including GBV prevention and response); and commit to an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.

7. Countering Violent Extremism

'The role of women and girls in relation to violent extremism is a contested one and has been less visible than that of men and the evidence base is still emerging.' UK Government Annual Report, 2017

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and WPS have seen increasing association in the most recent

³⁹ "RAF Bombs Diverted to Saudis for Yemen Strikes," Defense News, 16 July 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Ody3Ms>; "Paveway Pays Off: Saudi Deal Boosts Precision Bomb Production for Raytheon UK," Defense News, 31 March 2014.

⁴⁰ David Wearing, op. cit.

⁴¹ *Strategic Export Controls*, op. cit.; David Wearing, op. cit.

resolution of the WPS agenda – United Nations Security Council resolution 2242 adopted in 2015 – which calls for the “greater integration by Member States and the United Nations on their agendas on women, peace and security, counter-terrorism and countering-violent extremism.”⁴²

Associating these two agendas, how they are interpreted and applied, has considerable risks. GAPS is particularly concerned by interpretations that use women’s rights as means to CVE, i.e. where WPS is seen as an element of CVE, rather than as a self-standing women’s rights and peacebuilding framework.⁴³ Subsuming policy-making on gender equality and women’s rights under national security objectives is an instrumentalisation of WPS,⁴⁴ and is directly harmful to women and girls in fragile contexts.⁴⁵ Instrumentalisation can result in selective and inconsistent commitments that undermine the fundamental importance of the human rights of women and girls. An example of this is the focus on gender-based violence committed by fundamentalist groups that shifts attention and resources away from other types of gender-based violence – like intimate partner violence and early marriage – which affect women at a much higher rate, including in conflict affected states, and are rooted in gender inequality.

The instrumentalisation of the WPS agenda under CVE approaches has other wide-ranging implications, including: a lack of practical steps to support women and girls genuine and meaningful participation; limiting narratives around women and girls’ agency and victimhood; a lack of support to women’s rights organisations (including the diversion of already limited resources going to them); advancing a CVE approach that does not address gendered root causes of inequality and power imbalance; and increased militarisation of the peace and security agenda.

Despite these risks, CVE is an emerging priority for the UK and is linked to its delivery on the WPS agenda, observable in the UK Government’s international and national commitments and decision-making. CVE was reflected in the eighth commitment of the UK’s statement at the High-Level Review on Women, Peace and Security in October 2015,⁴⁶ as well as in the Annual Report of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund for 2016/17: “The role of women and girls in relation to violent extremism has been less visible than men’s and, together with gender identity issues informing violent extremism groups and behaviours, is often overlooked.”⁴⁷ This statement recognises both gendered differential impacts and experiences, as well as an overall absence of gender perspectives in international security affairs.

GAPS comprehends that the UK is leaning towards integrating a gender perspective into its CVE approach in recognition of the contiguity between the two agendas. As the UK starts to put these efforts into practice, including through the next UK NAP, it is vital that WPS remains a priority agenda in its own right and that peacebuilding and WPS experts are afforded space and dialogue to challenge and influence current, often securitised approaches to CVE, in line with WPS principles.

⁴² UN S/RES/2242, 2015. Resolution 2242. Adopted by the Security Council at its 7533rd meeting, on 13 October 2015. para.11.

⁴³ Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, 2016. “The ‘war on terror’ and extremism: assessing the relevance of the women, peace and security agenda.” *International Affairs* 92. p.277-278.

⁴⁴ Katherine E Brown, 2013. “Gender and counter-radicalisation: women and emerging counter-terror measures.” *Gender, National Security, and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives*. p.51.

⁴⁵ UN Women, 2015. *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: A Global Study on the Implementation UNSCR 1325*. p.407.

⁴⁶ UK Mission to the United Nations, New York: “Finally, the UK will ensure that our overseas work to counter violent extremism includes upstream activity targeted specifically at women. Women will be at the centre in the delivery of programming of overseas extremism work, both nationally and locally.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-firmly-believes-that-the-15th-anniversary-must-represent-the-start-of-a-new-era-on-women-peace-and-security>

⁴⁷ HMG, 2017. *Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Annual Report 2016/17*. p.12: “The role of women and girls in relation to violent extremism has been less visible than men’s and, together with gender identity issues informing violent extremist groups and behaviours, is often overlooked. The CSSF funds innovative work in this space. For example, in 2016/17 CSSF funded work in the North Caucasus focussed on enhancing civil efforts towards the prevention of radicalism and extremism involving young women and girls. The project stimulated public debate and awareness of radicalisation, women’s rights and gender-based violence through a media campaign. This included 20 programmes on local radio and TV, and expanded and improved the psychosocial support system provided for women and girls most at risk of terrorist recruit.”

We recognise reference in the Annual Report to the October 2017 roundtable chaired by Lord Ahmad with experts on CVE to begin to explore gender and CVE. We would welcome greater clarity from the UK on how it will take this discussion forward to ensure that its approach is effective and avoids threatening progress in women's rights. Women's rights organisation (WROs) and gender experts should be included in these next steps. We also suggest the need for clarity on how the UK is differentiating and defining PVE and CVE since P/CVE is used in the report; we would welcome analysis of the implications of each of these for women's rights and WROs.

Recommendations

- **Implement the WPS agenda in its own right:** Women's rights and WPS must not be diluted. It must not be seen only as a component of CVE, but rather a stand-alone agenda with its own dedicated resources.
- **Ensure efforts to prevent all forms of violence, including violent extremism, are underpinned by a robust gender analysis:** Women's rights and work towards gender equality, which bolster all efforts to prevent violence and conflict, are prioritised. A gender-sensitive conflict analysis, based on an understanding of how gender roles and inequality fuel and drive conflict or peace, should include actions to mitigate risks to women's rights activism by CVE programming. It should ensure that pre-existing gender norms do not drive policy and programming, but that policies and programmes are based on the realities of and voices of women's and girls.
- **Support grassroots change:** with flexible, long-term funding for women's rights organisations and the prioritisation of community-based approaches for conflict prevention.
- **Include women and women's rights organisations in conflict affected states:** in the design, implementation and review of CVE programmes to ensure a sound and contextualised gendered analysis, to promote women's rights and to support long-term change for gender equality.

8. The UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development

The UK played an important role in the development of the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development ahead of their launch at the end of 2015. These Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on Peace reinforce many WPS protections and the Goals are firmly grounded in the broader international women's rights framework including the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In addition, the World Bank estimates that the majority of people living in extreme poverty will be those living in conflict-affected countries. The OECD estimates that this could increase to 62% (or half a billion people), with women disproportionately and overwhelmingly affected. The Goals and the WPS framework, in both theory and practice, should be mutually supportive agendas for governments to be implementing coherently and consistently.

DFID's 2017 annual report was the first UK report to situate UK efforts in relation to the Global Goals, with all five-strategic objectives being coherently matched to individual Goals. Although Goals 5 and 16 were noted, the UK's own NAP was omitted. References of the NAP and WPS more broadly in UK policies on the Goals are intermittent, although the UK's Agenda 2030 paper (March 2017) makes

a clear and welcome reference to WPS and the NAP.⁴⁸ In 2017, DFID launched its first Economic Development Strategy and made strong commitments to supporting livelihoods in fragile states and to “*place the economic empowerment of girls and women at the heart of our approach*” but made no reference to the NAP or WPS which cover women’s economic participation and empowerment.⁴⁹ We look forward to the publication of DFID’s Strategic Vision for Gender Equality which we understand will include a focus on fragile and conflict affected contexts and references to the 2018 NAP.

It is disappointing that the 2017 Annual Report makes only one reference to the Global Goals. GAPS understands that the new NAP will draw coherent links to the Goals, which we would welcome, but would encourage the UK to go beyond sign-posting towards more in-depth analysis and coherence when reporting on WPS efforts.

Recommendation

- **Articulate clearly the links between poverty, fragility, conflict and gender inequality:** This analysis should be integrated into policy and practice regarding the Global Goals and WPS, at a minimum we would like to see more explicit policy coherence between the NAP and the UK’s approach to the Goals.

9. Comprehensive approach: ensuring consistency

The 2014-17 NAP states an 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.*”⁵⁰ As noted in previous GAPS Shadow reports, the Government should demonstrate these commitments domestically as well as internationally.⁵¹

In Focus: Northern Ireland

GAPS advocates for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland, where communities continue to be affected by violence which can be connected to the Troubles. Events from this year – namely the breakdown of the power sharing agreement in the Northern Ireland Assembly and the questions over the Irish border in ‘Brexit’ negotiations– are a stark reminder that the peace achieved in Northern Ireland cannot be assumed.

Consistently upholding of the values of WPS at home are critical to the UK’s credibility overseas. It is therefore of concern that the Government has not made clear the importance of women’s representation and gender equality in discussions on the peace agreement and in all levels of government in Northern Ireland, nor has it actively involved women-led civil society in processes related to peace and security. Women campaigned and fought hard to secure their place in the 1998 peace talks before UNSCR 1325 even existed; it is vital that their achievements are carried forward by the UK Government by recognising the applicability of WPS to Northern Ireland.

⁴⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603500/Agenda-2030-Report4.pdf

⁴⁹ Economic Development Strategy: prosperity, poverty and meeting global challenges (DFID, January 2017), Page 10,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587374/DFID-Economic-Development-Strategy-2017.pdf

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319870/FCO643_NAP_Printing_final3.pdf

⁵¹ <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Assessing-UK-Government-Action-on-Women-Peace-and-Security-in-2016.pdf> pages

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Recommendations

- **Implement domestically the UK's international commitments:** Ensure the principles of Women, Peace and Security are applied to the UK's work on peace processes and governance in Northern Ireland together with the Northern Ireland Office.
- **Extend protections to refugees and asylum seekers:** Women and girls in the UK affected by conflict and violence should be afforded the same protections as set out in the NAP for women and girls overseas.

10. Developing the new National Action Plan

This year saw a concerted effort to develop the next UK National Action Plan that will be launched in 2018. The cross-departmental working group on WPS began collaborating with GAPS in 2016 to develop the process for designing the NAP, as well as the NAP itself. GAPS was also encouraged by the involvement of civil society, academia and Parliament in this process. We welcomed the practice of regular meetings and consultation, and the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft of the 2018-2022 NAP. We also welcome the continued commitment to transparent reporting through the annual report to Parliament.

GAPS particularly welcomed the financial support provided by the FCO to undertake consultations with women's rights organisations and activists in three of the six current focus countries. With financial contributions from GAPS members, consultations took place in four of the six focus countries. These built on learning from previous consultations with women's rights groups in focus countries in 2014 and marked an improvement in the depth of conversations and a more inclusive approach with consultations being conducted both in the capital and a more remote/conflict-affected area. These country consultations enabled the UK Government to integrate the realities, challenges and opportunities experienced by women in the NAP focus countries into the new NAP. GAPS has advocated for the UK to conduct or fund partners to conduct such consultations in all focus countries; this project was a very welcome step.

The country consultations also raised the bar and set an important precedent for working and consulting with civil society and women's right activists on policy development, and we recommend that it is built upon in the future in all focus countries, and become channels of regular dialogue between women's rights organisations and UK Government posts. In particular, we hope relationships between local and national civil society in focus countries and the UK Government are strengthened so that women's rights organisations are able to influence directly UK policy and access funding for implementing WPS activities. These organisations should be seen as vital partners for the UK in designing, implementing and reviewing its WPS work on the ground. We look forward to seeing how the priorities and recommendations learned from women's organisations, along with UK civil society are reflected in the new NAP, and also welcome the references to underlying and pre-existing gender inequalities that are barriers to the WPS agenda.

Recommendations: For the new NAP

- **Institutionalise consultations:** The next NAP provides an opportunity to consolidate progress made and raise standards by institutionalised consultations with civil society in the UK and conflict-affected countries. This would support their participation in relevant processes; ensure

UK aims and activities reflect and respond to the needs on the ground; and maintain accountable relationships with civil society. Consultation with women in NAP focus countries should be embedded into the reporting process for the next NAP, and become standard practice for any future international policies – such as DFID’s upcoming Strategic Vision – and events hosted jointly or solely by the UK. Demonstration of how women’s priorities have been responded to and incorporated in decisions made should be provided. The consultation process should be part of support the UK provides to other governments in developing NAPs.

- **Monitoring and reporting:** Continue to provide annual written and oral reports to Parliament on NAP implementation and ensure that these reports systematically demonstrate the UK’s progress in implementing the NAP as well as against the global indicators (see also section 1). Also continue to make the mid and endline evaluations of the new NAP publicly available. Demonstration of how women’s priorities have been responded to should be provided to contribute to accountability.
- **Increase spending on WPS and NAP implementation:** Spend a minimum of 15% of UK development aid in FCAS on WPS and related gender equality aims as recommended by the UN Global Study. Similarly, meet the UN target of a minimum of 15% of peacebuilding spending dedicated to furthering women’s empowerment and gender equality, including by funding women’s rights organisations.
- **Address root causes of conflict and gender inequality:** through the systematic use of gender and conflict analysis in all policy and programming in fragile and conflict-affected states including all National Security Council country and regional strategies. Consult women’s rights organisations, WHRDs and civil society for the development and evaluation of gender analyses and to define the priorities it informs. Funding and programming stemming from such analysis should be targeted at addressing these priorities.
- **Policy coherence:** Ensure that the Government’s approach to WPS takes into account the entirety of Governmental decision-making, and that a responsibility is placed upon all departments of Government not to undermine the WPS agenda.⁵²

Annex

Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2015: GAPS Shadow Report
<http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/GAPS-Shadow-Report-Assessing-UK-Government-Action-on-WPS-in-2015.pdf>

Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2016: GAPS Shadow Report
<http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Assessing-UK-Government-Action-on-Women-Peace-and-Security-in-2016.pdf>

Informing the new UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: GAPS Written Submission
<http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Informing-the-new-UK-NAP-on-WPS-GAPS-submission-April-2017.pdf>

Women’s voices in the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: Summary Report
<http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/GAPS-Summary-Consultations-report-NAP-April-2017.pdf>

⁵² Also see our Written Submission (April 2017): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Informing-the-new-UK-NAP-on-WPS-GAPS-submission-April-2017.pdf>