

WOMEN PEACE & SECURITY

Expert Group
UK CSW Alliance



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Putting Women at the Centre for Meaningful Change

Executive Summary

The WPS agenda is anchored in the principle that effective incorporation of gender perspectives and women's rights can have a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of women, men, girls, and boys on the ground. Its interlinked and mutually reinforcing aspects - participation, prevention, protection, relief and recovery - are critical in respecting human rights and dignity and in tackling the root causes of conflict to create sustainable peace. We live in a highly interconnected world characterised by major existing and emerging issues such as economic uncertainty, poverty, climate change, technology revolutions, social unrest and violent extremism, and most recently the global health pandemic Covid 19; all of which pose a serious threat to women's rights worldwide. However, they also present windows of opportunity to bring about positive changes for women's equality.

The UK CSW Alliance WPS Expert Group has examined the contemporary nature of WPS and the challenges it brings, and strongly advocates for the UK Government, Nation States around the world and Institutions to realise the commitments made 20 years ago when the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UN SCR 1325. This Resolution and the nine subsequent ones have been comprehensive, but implementation is lacking and often underfunded. The UNSCR 1325+ came with no targets, no timelines and no penalties. It can be ignored at will, and has been ignored at will. Even in those (83) countries which have developed a National Action Plan, progress has been extremely limited.

Our briefing focuses on 4 areas:

- ✧ Impact of the arms trade on the lives of women and girls
- ✧ Actions for women's meaningful participation in peace talks
- ✧ Peacekeeping
- ✧ Leadership and decision making

Below is a summary of our findings and recommendations. You can read the full report and supporting evidence attached.

UK Civil Society Women's Alliance
Expert Group on Women Peace and Security
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Impact of Arms Trade on Lives of Women and Children

By Margaret Owen, President, Widows for Peace through Democracy

It is self-evident that women and children suffer disproportionately through armed conflicts and that these wars depend heavily on the arms trade.

Arms sales and transfers have serious consequences on the lives and safety of women in the countries that receive them and in places where they are not meant to go, especially in the case of small arms, light weapons and drones. Arms are directly implicated in GBV and correlate with a general culture of violence and gender inequality. Heavy war weapons destroy homes, livelihoods and food security, create bereavements, injuries, displacements and turn many women into refugees and IDPs. Moreover, the proliferation of small arms explains the high rate of firearms related femicides.

The UK is a State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), but in breach of its treaty obligations it has continued to sell arms to authoritarian regimes such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia where women are targeted directly and indirectly. We need a judicial review of UK arms sales, as well as the equal representation of women on those government decision-making committees relating to this trade. We have **6 recommendations** to make to HMG:

1. Cease all arms sales to countries, (such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia), who violate international human rights and humanitarian laws, and target [directly or indirectly](#) women during their armed conflicts, whether they are against their own citizens or in other states.
2. Ensure that at least half the members of the five UK government decision-making committees relating to arms trade are women. (Present membership ratio: International Development Committee (3/11); Foreign Affairs Committee 2/11); Defense Committee (2/11); Business, Innovation and Skills (4/7) International Trade Committee (0/11).
3. Support a judicial review of UK arms sales to regimes where firm evidence of human rights violations, and especially VAWG and sexual violence, exists.
4. Ensure women are equally represented on the Export Control Organisation within the Department of Trade and Industry, on the International Trade Committee and the Arms Export Control Committees.
5. Embrace and learn from a bidirectional flow of information from UK Women's NGO reports on the impact of the use of arms, made in the UK and licensed for export, on the lives of women and girls.
6. Cease co-hosting UK ARMS TRADE FAIRS with states that are violating human rights and humanitarian laws in pursuing their armed conflict agendas.

Action for Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Talks

By Lesley Abdela, Senior Partner, Shevolution

A century of using persuasion for women to be included as equal and meaningful partners in peace talks has not succeeded. Women leaders, activists and human rights defenders continue to be side-lined in the majority of peace processes with a few notable exceptions such as the Philippines and Columbia. UNSCR 1325 Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict. UNSCR 1325 came with no carrots and no sticks – no incentives and no sanctions and no penalties - consequently there has been a shameful gap between intentions and implementation.

In conflict after conflict women have been active and courageous in leading campaigns to bring about peace, but as soon as formal peace talks and disarmament processes take place women are pushed aside into a separate silo (usually literally a side-room), relegated to calling out an alternative script from the wings like a Greek chorus, heard faintly, often entirely ignored.

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 ensuring increased representation of women in WPS decision making will not succeed without 'carrots and sticks' – incentives, penalties and sanctions. We must kick-start a change in the template of who sets the peace-building agenda, who participates in conflict prevention mediation at all levels, and particularly who sits at top level peace tables. The UK Government as Penholder for UNSCR 1325+ is in a dominant position of influence. We strongly urge the UK Government to consider and lead on our recommendations below for accelerated progress towards the meaningful inclusion of women in the attainment of peace and security around the world:

1. The UK and the international community should refuse to fund peace talks which lack at least 40% women and at least 40% men, the other 20% can be either.

Parallel Universes - the world's women and men operate in Parallel Universes. Affirmative action could be used to bridge the gaps in the universes at all levels: the pre-negotiation phase, the negotiation phase, the implementation phase.

Affirmative actions should be combined with actions to set women up for success in peace mediation roles.

2. Mediators need to become much stronger in promoting understanding among conflict parties of the value of the broad participation of women and in implementation of gender provisions in peace agreements. All UN men and women peace mediators must be given gender and inclusion training before they are assigned to act as mediators.
3. Everyone needs to lobby Governments, UN and international organisations to use more women as lead mediators.
4. The UN Department of Political Affairs should strengthen their partnerships with women non-governmental peacemakers who are well-qualified to mediate between conflict parties.

5. Political and financial support is needed for women's NGOs at community, local, national, regional and international level who are working to prevent armed conflict and support inclusive peacebuilding and state building.
6. Emergency Funds and Rapid Response grants are needed to provide a crucial lifeline to women's human rights defenders. This should be better funded by the international community.

Peacekeeping

By Juliet Colman, Director, SecurityWomen

Peacekeeping in this document refers to armed forces and police, but obviously civilian peacekeepers in various roles also contribute to peace operations. In fragile, post-conflict and conflict affected countries, peacekeeping is a vital resource to aid recovery and transition to peaceful communities. An important part of their remit is often to strengthen or bring about rule of law and justice systems based on human rights. Peacekeeping is not about passive patrolling but actively working to bring about sustainable peace, and often through reform of the security sector. Women are an integral part of this and crucial to making peacekeeping operationally successful. Female peacekeepers are needed not only to carry out tasks more suited to women, but more importantly, their contribution to leadership, ways of thinking, communicating and taking decisions ensures better outcomes for all of society.

We want to see global leadership from the UK in calling and acting for women's greater participation in UN Peacekeeping. We applaud the recent UN Security Council Resolution 2538 which recognises the indispensable role of women in peacekeeping and calls for the strengthening of cooperation among Nation States to move the barriers to women's deployment and strategically work to increase women's participation, including in senior leadership positions. As part of this, leading by example, the UK needs to put in place strategies to tackle the UK's overwhelmingly male dominated security sector, both police and armed forces, and carry through on recommendations highlighted, for example, in the [Wigston Report](#) (2019).

Recommendations:

1. UK to show global leadership in advocating for more female peacekeepers
2. UK to use its position in the UN Security Council to establish a standard for mixed patrols, ensuring *at least* two women in every platoon/patrol.
3. The FCDO to appoint an Ambassador for WPS with cross-department responsibility and accountability for WPS
4. Deliver gender parity in UK policing at all levels by 2025.
5. Establish a 'pipeline of talent' to ensure a better gender balance within the UK Armed Forces: implementing the following:
 - Use of quotas/targets
 - Wide ranging recruitment campaign targeting women and girls
 - Mentoring/coaching/networking
 - Strategic planning towards 30 percent women at each rank by 2030

- Family-friendly and flexible work packages
 - Leadership at each level openly and vocally supporting gender equality
 - Complaints system – open, fair and accountable
 - Fully funded resources to enable sustainable culture change
6. Improve diversity and inclusion within the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
 7. Expand gender training conducted by the British Peace Support Team
 8. Communicate to the public at large, the role of peacekeeping both military and police.

Leadership and Decision Making

By Barbara Cleary, Vice Chair, SecurityWomen

Women's participation in leadership and decision making at every level is fundamental if we are to create a world that is more human-centred, that is more equal and in which social justice is paramount. In politics women have been historically under-represented and only now, with representation at 36%, are we seeing some improvement, but there is much more to do to create an environment welcoming to women. This is especially true of the security world (policing, private security, armed forces, cyber security) which is significantly male dominated. It is also largely responsible for the low representation of women in UN Peacekeeping missions and senior roles. Now is the time for accelerated actions to get more women into decision making and leadership positions.

COVID 19 has brought to the forefront female leadership in effectively responding to global shocks and crisis. We need to capitalise on women's leadership and decision-making capabilities alongside men in the recovery process and build a peaceful and prosperous future.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure 50:50 access and representation of women at all levels in politics and in policy making bodies from international to national to local ministerial and other public positions to achieve gender parity by 2030.
2. Commitment to work towards gender tipping point in the military each rank to have at least 30% women by 2030.
3. Commitment to achieving gender parity in policing at all levels by 2025.
4. Ensure gender equality is at the centre of the Integrated Review and women's representation at least 30% throughout the integrated review process on panels, boards and research groups and at senior levels, not just in support groups.
5. Ensure parity in the representation of women involved in shaping, developing and implementing the National Action Plan for WPS and leading on peacekeeping missions.
6. Create opportunities for women to access leadership roles including funding leadership programmes engaging academia and training organisations and sponsorship and mentoring initiatives.

7. Enable women's rights organisations to participate in decision-making, while carrying out front line work, by supporting them with appropriate funding and sharing information.

Conclusion

In every country women are already leaders and agents of change. We firmly believe that these turbulent times provide an opportunity to create positive sustainable change and ensure recovery plans are based on gender parity. The goal must be meaningful participation, not 'tokenism'.