

Women, Peace and Security

October 2018

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For October, in which Bolivia has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on **Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan (Darfur), Western Sahara, and Women, Peace and Security.**

Gender equality, women's empowerment

and access to resources, and the protection of women's rights are essential for conflict prevention, inclusive development, and sustainable peace. Women's meaningful participation is at the heart of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda including through recognition of women's agency and the vital roles played by women in local communities, as well as the inclusion of women in political and peace processes and institution-building. The positive momentum of the Council's implementation of the WPS agenda in 2017 has mostly continued in 2018: 64% of resolutions and 89% of presidential statements, as of 1 October 2018, contain references to WPS. The success has been particularly visible in the increase of the Council's engagement with civil society under the leadership of its non-permanent members; in 2018, so far, 10 women have been invited to brief on country-specific situations. As the Council holds its annual **open debate** on WPS, it is incumbent upon all speakers to articulate concrete achievements, identify barriers, and put forward bold proposals for ways to holistically implement the WPS agenda, including across different thematic areas.

- The structures supporting the implementation of the WPS agenda within the UN system and the Security Council must have adequate capacity, expertise, and funding. All recommendations of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS should be implemented and systematically integrated into the Council's deliberations and further reflected in decisions related to staffing (i.e. gender advisers) made by the Fifth Committee.
- All interventions must start with gendered and intersectional conflict analysis which takes into account masculinities, femininities, gender roles, age, and diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), accompanied by sex and age-disaggregated data.
- Civil society, including women's groups, must be recognized as crucial contributors to international peace and security and to sustaining peace. Promoting the spaces for their meaningful participation, as well as the rights of women human rights defenders should be a priority.
- The Council should increase engagement with UN human rights bodies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Human Rights Council, as a means for better linking human rights, disarmament, and prevention in peace and security work.
- The gendered impact of arms must be recognized, and national level action should be called for by Member States to identify and regulate the influx of arms that exacerbate the risk to the rights, safety, and security, of women, girls, and individuals with diverse SOGIESC.
- The role of masculinities must be critically examined as part of conflict analysis, peace and security decision-making, and related programming. There should be an effort made to engage men and boys as partners in promoting inclusive participation in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and gender equality.
- All UN Member States should prioritize adapting and mainstreaming the core principles of the WPS Agenda into existing and new policy frameworks which are supported by well-funded implementation and oversight mechanisms. The development of new policies and action plans should be community-led and include consultation with, and involvement of, civil society organizations (CSOs) at every step of the process.

Burundi

As the Security Council discusses the **situation** in Burundi, it should expeditiously increase its attention to advancing high-level diplomatic efforts and necessary support for mediation as the dialogue process in the country is of high priority. Burundi faces persistent human rights violations, repression and ongoing violence characterized by impunity. Any dialogue must be accompanied with concrete actions by all stakeholders in the context of a fifth and potentially final inter-Burundi dialogue. It is imperative that the Council put contingency planning back at the center of its discussions to ensure the timely, unfettered, and appropriate protection of the civilian population. According to the UN Commission of Inquiry for Burundi, since April 2015, there is "reasonable ground to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed" (A/HRC/36/54). The Commission also confirmed the "persistence of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, and [sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)]" (A/HRC/36/54). Women and girls are reported to be amongst the first victims of SGBV perpetrated with extreme cruelty alongside gender-based, political or ethnic hate speech. In addition, the number of individuals with acute humanitarian needs has tripled in one year (OCHA). Some of the most affected refugees are young women and girls; lack of access to education impacts opportunities to develop viable skills, resulting in increased

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vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Host countries should be supported and the Council should strongly advocate against any coerced or forceful returns and for transparent Refugee Determination Status procedures.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In light of the forthcoming discussion regarding the latest update on the political **situation** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Council must continue to discuss and push for the participation of women in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, elections, and political processes. The information provided by the Secretary-General on the extent to which women are engaged in implementing the Saint Sylvester Agreement has been non-existent in recent updates ([S/2018/174](#), [S/2018/128](#), [S/2017/963](#), [S/2018/655](#)). Furthermore, the Council should demand the urgent implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Investigation regarding the violent oppression of peaceful demonstrations by the security forces. Violent repression of those peaceful demonstrations persists, often resulting in threats and physical harm to CSOs and journalists, as well as the sexual assault of women participants, and unjust arrest of peaceful demonstrators. According to the Joint Human Rights Office of the UN, August has seen a dramatic increase in human rights violations (515 reported violations in July to 620 in August). The number of violations perpetrated by Government agents has nearly doubled, reaching 66% of all violations including at least 24 extrajudicial executions. The Council must address the closing of civic space and increasing violence in the upcoming briefings by ensuring the provision and appropriate resourcing of gender-responsive services for and access to justice for everyone, including survivors of violence. The Security Council must urge the Government and armed groups to put a stop to those increased violations and ensure accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the survivors. Tensions around elections are likely to escalate further nearing election day, especially if the absence of inclusive and credible solutions are exacerbated by issues such as the electoral calendar, voting machines, and the electoral register. The inclusivity of the elections is already severely undermined by the exclusion of two of the main opposition candidates and could be restricted even more by placing obstacles to women's participation, such as intimidation, safety, and security. The Council should set a date for its upcoming visit to DRC and, in coordination with the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), drive efforts to foster a credible dialogue and agreement between the government and opposition on the main issues around elections. The Council should call on the Government and MONUSCO to listen to the population's concerns, especially those of women and youth, and effectively address the continued violence.

Sudan (Darfur)

The Security Council will be considering the forthcoming **report** on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); the report should reflect the extent to which WPS provisions of UNAMID's mandate have been implemented in the context of the two-pronged approach mission concept as well as a whole-of-system approach to Darfur ([S/2018/530](#)). The role of UNAMID has been crucial in providing protection for civilians; security for humanitarian workers; and ensuring the free flow of and access to humanitarian aid. Despite the improvement in the security situation since 2017, the root causes of the conflict remain and withdrawal of the UN presence, without ensuring a robust process that includes independent monitoring and clear benchmarks, will result in a reversal of any gains in peace. The Council should proceed with caution when considering any further actions with regards to the mandate and call for any further reduction in UNAMID's presence or departure of the mission to be based on a measurable peace process which includes a Government-led and community-based reconciliation process with active participation of women and women's groups within Darfur. The Council should call for clear benchmarks to assess the extent to which the situation warrants further withdrawal; these benchmarks should measure progress in addressing root causes of the conflict, including engagement in an inclusive political and peace process; reconciliation among various tribes within Darfur, to ensure co-existence at the local level; and agreement amongst all stakeholders that there will be full adherence and commitment to a political process to avoid a relapse. Finally, the Government must fully cooperate with UNAMID, and the Council should demand that visas are processed, and that access is allowed to restricted areas to ensure the mission can carry out its duties. In the event violations occur or continue, the drawdown process should be halted ([UNAMID](#)).

Western Sahara

In its renewal of the **mandate** for the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the Council should include a new provision calling on gender to be mainstreamed as a crosscutting issue ([PK/G/2018.01](#)). The establishment of this function will ensure that MINURSO can fulfill the standard functions of peacekeeping, including monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on local developments through the appointment of personnel responsible for civil affairs to work systematically and directly with concerned communities. The Council should include new language which emphasizes the importance of women's participation and the protection and promotion of women's rights ([S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#); [CEDAW/C/GC/30](#); [CCPR/C/MAR/CO/6](#)).