

Women, Peace and Security

February 2021

Central African Republic (CAR)

CAR continues to face grave protection and humanitarian concerns exacerbated by the deterioration of the conflict and natural disasters. In 2021, an estimated 2.8 million people will need humanitarian assistance; the current number of displaced persons is 1.28 million, which is the highest estimate since 2013. There continues to be a notable rise in the reported incidence rate of gender-based violence (GBV); survivors report having been assaulted in their homes, during door-to-door raids, or as they flee violence. In response, the discussion on the situation must be gender-sensitive and include strong calls for humanitarian action to be gender-responsive. Of particular concern is the lack of funding for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, psychosocial support, and access to justice, including via the protection cluster, which has detrimental consequences to survivors/victims of GBV. The Council must inquire as to how the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), in line with its robust women, peace and security (WPS) mandate, is addressing this urgent need for a stronger response to GBV, as well as the way in which the mission is ensuring women's meaningful participation and leadership in all peace and electoral processes, including in the implementation of the peace agreement. Finally, the security of diverse women, including persons with disabilities and the elderly, and the protection of all civilians ([S/RES/2552 \(2020\)](#)) must remain priorities in any discussion regarding the reinstatement of the peace process in CAR.

For February, in which the United Kingdom has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **CAR, Ethiopia, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen.**

Ethiopia

As the conflict in the northern region of Tigray nears three months, compounded by climate-fueled locust infestations and the coronavirus pandemic, 4.5 million people in Tigray need urgent humanitarian assistance ([Oxfam](#)), and over 2 million people are now displaced within Ethiopia or neighboring countries ([RI](#)). More than 25% of the 60,000 Ethiopians who have fled to Sudan are estimated to be women and girls of reproductive age, highlighting the gendered dimension of the humanitarian crisis and the importance of ensuring there **are** comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and services available for survivors of GBV ([OSRSG-SVC](#), [OCHA](#)). Further, those women who do remain in the affected region are particularly at risk for violence due to the disruption of essential public services, which has resulted in women traveling long distances to gather basic food, water and fuel ([UN Women](#)). In its discussion of the situation, Council members should demand that all actors uphold international humanitarian and human rights law and exercise due diligence in their obligations to protect all civilians, including from GBV. Further, the Council should call on the government to uphold the agreement between the UN and Government on humanitarian access to ensure free and unhindered access, and further call on any humanitarian response to be gender-responsive and inclusive of diverse women and girls. Finally, there should be recognition of the active role of women's groups in providing frontline support in crisis situations, and **the** inclusion of women, including young women, as leaders and participants in any efforts to bring an end to the crisis.

Iraq

In its discussion of the situation in Iraq and the most recent report on the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), the Council should consider the extent to which the mission is mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting issue ([S/RES/2522 \(2020\)](#), OP 2(e)), and follow-up on recommendations from previous meetings of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS, including on the documentation and investigation of attacks against women human rights defenders (as noted in [S/2020/353](#), paras. 15, 53-58, 88) and on progressing the draft anti-domestic violence law and its inclusion of a provision that would legally recognize civil society-run safe homes, produced following an inclusive, consultative process. Further, Security Council members should support Iraqi civil society calls to set up an investigative mechanism that documents, with a gender-sensitive methodology, the violations perpetrated against peaceful demonstrators since 2019, and follow this up with an impartial and transparent mechanism to hold perpetrators accountable. This independent mechanism should affirm the link between impunity for past crimes and ongoing violence in Iraq, recognizing the importance of ensuring accountability for crimes committed prior to the

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2019 protests, including ISIL crimes. Briefings should include details about UNAMI's efforts to ensure women are participating in all aspects of peace, security and political processes, including in roles with influence and authority, particularly regarding the electoral reforms developed in response to protesters' demands and the new electoral law. There is a correlation between the increase in domestic violence and GBV and increased availability of and access to firearms, as shown by civil society research, which should be accounted for in such processes. It is imperative that UNAMI report on their support for the forthcoming second National Action Plan (NAP) on Resolution 1325 (2000), including ensuring that there are the necessary financial resources for implementation and the establishment of accountability mechanisms to track and measure progress and impact.

Sudan

In its discussion of the situation in Sudan, the Security Council should address how the mission is supporting women's meaningful participation and leadership in peace and political processes, and inquire into the extent to which the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) is mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting issue across its work, including by regularly consulting with diverse women's civil society organizations. Additionally, UNITAMS should support the vital work of women human rights defenders and peacebuilders and foster safe and enabling environments for their work, including by responding to and preventing attacks against them. Further, Council members should follow-up on how UNITAMS has incorporated a gender lens in its support for humanitarian response, as well as its activities related to ensuring the meaningful participation and leadership of women in peace, political, and peacebuilding processes ([S/RES/2524 \(2020\)](#)). UNITAMS must engage more deeply at the community level to ensure that the priorities of all people are considered, including in the democratic transition.

Yemen

The Security Council's discussions on the situation in Yemen have historically failed to reflect critical gender dimensions, despite multiple meetings of the [Security Council IEG on WPS \(S/2017/627, S/2017/1040, S/2019/253\)](#) and [briefings by civil society in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020](#). The Council should consider the recommendations brought forward by the [report of the Group of Eminent Experts \(GEE\)](#) and by the [Panel of Experts](#). These recommendations call for accountability for gross violations of human rights and women's rights, and further call on states, including some Council members and their allies, to cease arms transfers and other support to the conflict parties, and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Ongoing [violence](#), including the [recent escalation](#) in Al-Hudaydah, the [explosion](#) at the airport in Aden, and [restrictions](#) imposed by authorities, has undermined humanitarian actors' ability to provide necessary assistance. This violence, combined with humanitarian diversion, donors' failure to meet aid obligations, ongoing blockages of vital supplies, and the [projected humanitarian impact](#) of the recent designation of the Houthis as a terrorist group, moves [millions of Yemenis closer to starvation](#). Council members must call for the [reversal of the designation](#) as a matter of urgency to ensure lifesaving humanitarian aid, as well as to ensure the broader peace process is not undermined. In its discussion, the Council should focus on upholding and supporting a sustainable and nationwide ceasefire, in line with [resolution 2532 \(2020\)](#), that would support viable conditions for protecting civilians, including women, and lead to a resumption of peace negotiations. The Council must address the recent violations against women by the Houthis, including the ban on [contraceptives](#) and the recent alleged accusation of the Houthis preventing women from working in public spaces. Further, Council members should support the [#NoWomenNoGovernment Campaign](#) and [denounce the full exclusion of women from the new government](#) formed last December 2020, which marks the first complete exclusion of women in the last two decades, and which is not in line with the national dialogue outcomes. It is important for Council members to continue to emphasize the necessity of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes, ensuring no less than the 30% quota of women in all processes [as a matter of urgency](#). The peace consultations led by the UN on the issue of prisoners of war continue to be held without any representation of women. The Council should also support the Riyadh peace agreement signed in November 2019 and prioritize women's calls to relocate military camps and depots from cities. The international community must support Yemen's NAP on WPS and ensure full funding for its implementation, including by supporting diverse women's groups, while taking into consideration [recommendations brought forward by civil society organizations](#) to strengthen the NAP. Finally, the Council would benefit from appointing a gender expert in the Panel of Experts to strengthen GBV reporting.

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security members are: Amnesty International; CARE International; Center for Reproductive Rights; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Cordaid; Global Justice Center; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict; Human Rights Watch; International Alert; MADRE; Nobel Women's Initiative; OutRight Action International; Oxfam; Refugees International; Women Enabled International; Women's Refugee Commission; and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security is a project of Tides Center.