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**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP:
CANADA AND THE WOMEN, PEACE
AND SECURITY AGENDA**

**Report of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs and International Development**

**Hon. Robert D. Nault
Chair**

OCTOBER 2016

42nd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the Committee on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, the Committee has studied issues concerning women, peace and security and has agreed to report the following:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women's involvement in security institutions enhances the effectiveness of military and policing operations. Women's participation in peace processes increases the durability of the peace that is achieved. Investments in the women, peace and security agenda and in gender equality more broadly, are – ultimately – about building societies that are more stable, inclusive and just. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is therefore recommending that the Government of Canada make women, peace and security a core priority of its foreign policy.

The women, peace and security agenda is largely embodied in eight resolutions adopted over 15 years by the United Nations Security Council. In essence, those resolutions are about empowering women in efforts to prevent, end and recover from armed conflict. Renewed commitment to this agenda is needed because it does not appear that the norms enshrined in the relevant Security Council resolutions are having a clear and consistent impact in the places where they are needed the most: fragile and conflict-affected states. Women must constantly push for inclusion and influence in peace and reconstruction processes, and are still under-represented in security institutions. Women's organizations at the grassroots level often lack the resources and political support needed to sustain their essential work. Moreover, sexual and gender-based violence remains pervasive in armed conflicts, notwithstanding the robust international legal regime prohibiting such crimes.

The United Nations itself must do better as an institution if the full promise of the women, peace and security agenda is to be realized. That begins with eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse from peace support operations, which has corroded the reputation and effectiveness of UN missions.

Greater and more consistent leadership is needed from Canada in relation to women, peace and security. The renewal of the Government of Canada's national action plan on that agenda presents the opportunity to articulate a bold and ambitious global role for Canada.

The effectiveness of Canada's new action plan will be determined not only by what it contains and the degree to which it is adequately resourced, but also by how it is devised and then treated within government. Comprehensive consultations with parliamentarians and civil society in the development of the new action plan must take place. To guard against any risk that it could fade into irrelevancy, the Committee is further recommending that the plan be accompanied by departmental directives to guide implementation. The objective is to see the women, peace and security agenda ingrained in the government's policies and decision-making structures to the point where it informs Canada's response to any crisis or issue where peace and security is concerned.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Government of Canada should make women, peace and security a priority of its foreign policy agenda..... 15

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Government of Canada should increase the number of women it puts forward and supports as nominees for senior UN positions, up to and including the post of United Nations Secretary-General..... 17

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Government of Canada should work within the United Nations and with troop- and police-contributing countries to develop a concrete and time-bound strategy that would lead to substantial increases in the number of women deployed to UN peace support operations. 21

RECOMMENDATION 4

Within the United Nations, the Government of Canada should insist on full adherence to the UN Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse as a condition for all countries contributing troops and police to UN peace support operations, and insist on full transparency and regular reporting in relation to all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as robust accountability measures, including prosecution. 24

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government of Canada should work with the United Nations in order to improve the pre-deployment and in-mission training provided to UN peacekeepers on women, peace and security, as well as the prevention and investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse. 24

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Government of Canada should ensure that extensive training on women, peace and security is provided to Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Global Affairs Canada personnel prior to and during deployments to international peace support operations..... 24

RECOMMENDATION 7

As part of the humanitarian and development assistance it provides in countries affected by and recovering from conflict, the Government of Canada should include in its programming the necessary short- and long-term resources towards services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual and reproductive health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and economic reintegration..... 30

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Government of Canada should work to significantly strengthen the rule of law and justice systems in conflict-affected and fragile states, including by providing appropriate support through multilateral and grassroots mechanisms for programs that seek to improve access to justice for women and to enhance national capacity to prosecute those responsible for sexual and gender-based violence. 32

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Government of Canada should support training programs that equip women in conflict-affected and fragile states with the skills, capacity, experience and networks necessary to play meaningful roles in peace and security processes and institutions..... 39

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada should vigorously use all of the diplomatic and financial tools – bilateral and multilateral – at its disposal to encourage the inclusion of women in a meaningful way in mediation initiatives, ceasefire and peace negotiations, and donor conferences, as well as in all aspects of post-conflict planning and decision-making..... 39

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The Government of Canada should significantly increase the diplomatic, financial and material support it provides to human rights defenders as part of its approach to women, peace and security, and advocate on the world stage for other countries to take similar actions, including by calling within the United Nations for the adoption of special protection measures. 43

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Government of Canada should consider contributing to the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action..... 48

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Government of Canada should provide development assistance on a multi-year basis and for core operations to civil society organizations – including at the grassroots level – that are working to implement the women, peace and security agenda in conflict-affected and fragile states..... 48

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Government of Canada should consider allocating at least 15% of the international assistance it provides for peace and security programming to projects that have gender equality and women's empowerment as their primary objective..... 52

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Government of Canada should engage in comprehensive consultations with parliamentarians and civil society organizations to develop a new, ambitious and well-resourced national action plan on women, peace and security. 55

RECOMMENDATION 16

Each Canadian government department and agency with responsibilities under the action plan on women, peace and security should identify a high-level champion who would be responsible for developing and overseeing a directive that would be specific to that department or agency's role in the implementation of the action plan, and which would, among other requirements, identify needed financial and human resources, as well as time-bound objectives. 55

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Government of Canada should provide a report to Parliament by 1 March of each year on the implementation of its action plan on women, peace and security, which must include detailed information on the financial resources it has allocated to all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda, and an evaluation of the outcomes and broader impact of those initiatives..... 55

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP: CANADA AND THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

A. The Committee's Study

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Committee) studied the women, peace and security agenda, and Canada's role in supporting its implementation.¹ In completing this report, the Committee benefitted tremendously from the testimony and written briefs it received, and the documentation that was brought to its attention by witnesses. Those witnesses reflected a broad range of perspectives, including that of Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the United Nations (UN) Development Programme, and UN Women, as well as those of dedicated non-governmental organizations, academics and practitioners.

B. Background: the United Nations and Women, Peace and Security

The women, peace and security agenda is about empowering women in efforts aimed at preventing and ending conflict and building and sustaining peace. It has been established through resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council. The first was the landmark [Resolution 1325](#), adopted in October 2000. That resolution, which resulted in large part from the committed activism of civil society organizations, was the first international instrument to deal exclusively with women in situations of armed conflict. It draws attention to the ways in which armed conflict has a specific – and, often, disproportionate – impact on women, while affirming that women's full participation in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict contributes significantly to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

Resolution 1325 has been built on, and expanded by, seven subsequent Security Council resolutions: [1820](#) (2008), [1888](#) (2009), [1889](#) (2009), [1960](#) (2010), [2106](#) (2013), [2122](#) (2013) and [2242](#) (2015). Through those resolutions, new and more robust provisions have been incorporated over time. Resolution 1820, for example, recognized that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide. It calls on UN member states to prosecute persons responsible for such acts and declares the Security Council's willingness to impose sanctions against conflict parties who commit rape and other forms of violence against women and girls. Resolution 1889 deals specifically with the role of women in post-conflict public life, including their participation in decision-making and post-conflict planning. Adopted most recently, Resolution 2242 urges the UN and its member

¹ House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE), [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 23 February 2016.

states to ensure that women are able to participate in the development of strategies aimed at countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Many of these resolutions have introduced new monitoring and reporting mechanisms, as well as institutional tools (e.g., women protection advisors) and processes (e.g., inter-agency focal points) in order to strengthen the UN's ability to meet the objectives outlined in the various Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. The UN Secretary-General is now required, for example, to report on an agreed set of indicators tracking progress. They are organized according to four categories of activities, or what are commonly referred to as the four "pillars" of the women, peace and security agenda: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery.² Prevention is about developing strategies to reduce violence before armed conflict breaks out, including through early warning mechanisms and the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality. Participation is about ensuring that women are meaningfully involved in all processes and decision-making related to the management and resolution of conflict. That includes everything from women's participation in peace negotiations to their representation within UN institutions and security forces. Protection focuses on the rights of women and girls, including with respect to conflict-related sexual violence. Finally, relief and recovery is about including women in post-conflict planning and governance structures. It is also about providing humanitarian and development assistance that is gender responsive.

While more than 15 years have passed since Resolution 1325 was adopted, there is mounting frustration in response to what is seen as slow and inconsistent progress. Assessments from within and outside the UN have highlighted the fact that women continue to be seriously under-represented in peace negotiations, as well as in peacebuilding processes. Relatively few women serve in international peace support operations, particularly in leadership roles. More systemically, implementation of the women, peace and security agenda has seen little in the way of dedicated financing. Accountability for the agenda's implementation is dependent on political will, which has not been resolute.

In 2013, the Security Council commissioned a Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325, which was finalized in the lead-up to the Security Council's High-level Review of women, peace and security, held in October 2015 on the 15th anniversary of Resolution 1325's adoption. In the foreword to the Global Study, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, described what she called "a crippling gap between the ambition" of the commitments enshrined in Resolution 1325 "and actual political and financial support."³

2 For a full list of the goals attached to the four pillars and the associated indicators, see: [Women, Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General](#), United Nations Security Council, S/1010/498, 28 September 2010.

3 [Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace, A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325](#) (the Global Study), UN Women, 2015, p. 5. The lead author of the Global Study was Radhika Coomaraswamy.

C. Organization of the Committee's Report

It is within the context outlined above that the Committee initiated its study. This report is therefore focused on addressing the “crippling gap”. It is not an exhaustive survey of the literature on women, peace and security, or a detailed examination of every UN institution and program that has a role in relation to that agenda. The report instead focuses on the key implementation gaps that were brought to the Committee's attention. As such, it is – deliberately – not organized according to the four pillars described above. Testimony and documentation provided to the Committee made it clear that, if those pillars are to result in transformative change, they must be seen as interdependent and indivisible. Moreover, most of the issues highlighted in this report – including justice, human rights and women's empowerment – have relevance across the women, peace and security agenda.

The conclusions reached in this report and the recommendations it puts forward are ultimately focused on Canada. As a member state of the UN, Canada has an important role to play in integrating the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions in domestic policy and through the actions it takes at the international level, including in New York. One of the key mechanisms for organizing and conceptualizing national efforts is an action plan. The Government of Canada is currently in the process of revising and updating the action plan on women, peace and security it put forward in October 2010, which expired at the end of March 2016.⁴ Throughout its study, the Committee was therefore mindful of the need to consider the ways in which the government's new plan can be designed both to help address the implementation gaps that exist and to maximize Canada's contribution to the agenda's fulfilment.

The report begins with a discussion of the central ideas that underpin the women, peace and security agenda, and the evidence supporting its importance as a peacebuilding tool. The focus of the report then moves from the consideration of theory to an evaluation of practice. That begins with an assessment of the gaps between the UN's own performance and the many tasks that have been assigned to it by the relevant Security Council resolutions. The report then identifies specific areas that the Committee believes require concerted action and attention: the delivery of justice; and, the empowerment of women as agents of change, including through political and financial support for the grassroots organizations and individual women who are carrying forward the women, peace and security agenda on the ground. The report's final chapter is focused on how the Canadian government needs to organize itself – centred on an ambitious new action plan – in order to assume a role of global leadership on women, peace and security.

4 Global Affairs Canada, [*Building Peace and Security for All: Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security*](#), October 2010.

UNDERSTANDING WHY WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY MATTERS

For many people, the phrase “women, peace and security” likely does not have a readily apparent meaning. It seems, at first, a grouping of three distinct words. Even among those in the foreign policy community, there can be a tendency to see the women, peace and security agenda as a niche area of policy, or the concern of certain civil society stakeholders and the people who engage in the technical negotiation of resolutions at the United Nations in New York.

As the Committee learned throughout its hearings on this subject, the term “women, peace and security” is, in fact, a cohesive and coherent policy agenda. It is grounded by a two-part idea that is as simple as it is compelling. First, women have a fundamental right to be involved in all matters of peace and security, which inevitably, touch, shape – and, all too often, destroy – their lives. Second, security interventions and peace initiatives, before, during and after conflict, are more effective, legitimate and durable if they involve women, and take their perspectives and expertise into account in a meaningful and consistent way. The three words “women, peace and security” are, therefore, not distinct, but mutually reinforcing when combined.

The women, peace and security agenda is relevant to a wide range of policy areas and has many applications. It seeks a real place for women in the negotiation of ceasefires and peace settlements, in the design and delivery of humanitarian aid, and in decision-making about the governance structures and economic plans that will be adopted to help their society move on from war. It aims to recruit women into peacekeeping missions and police forces and to give them opportunities to achieve leadership roles within the same. It works to build justice systems that are accessible and responsive to women, and which hold perpetrators to account for gender-based crimes. The agenda also aspires to empower women who are striving, on the front lines of the world’s most fragile and turbulent places, for peace, human rights and reconciliation.

More broadly, the women, peace and security agenda seeks to ensure that all UN member states – including Canada – live up to the purposes and principles of that organization’s foundational document, the Charter of the United Nations. In the debate leading up to the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000, then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, remarked: “The Charter tells us that the Organization was created ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’. It also proclaims the equal rights of men and women.” As he said, “We must live up to both challenges or we shall not succeed fully in either.”⁵

There are, of course, many agendas competing for the attention of governments and parliamentarians in what is the crowded domain of international affairs. The foreign policy ideas with the greatest resilience and traction are, in the end, those that are grounded by a compelling theory and supported by evidence. The Committee’s hearings and the documentation that was brought to its attention suggest that, while research

5 United Nations Security Council, 4208th meeting, Tuesday, 24 October 2000, 10 a.m., New York, [S/PV.4208](#).

continues to be conducted and best practices and standards identified, the women, peace and security agenda is anchored by both.

Witnesses argued that there are tangible connections between women's involvement in efforts to secure peace and the durability, inclusiveness and effectiveness of those processes. At the outset of the Committee's examination of these matters, Jacquelyn Wright, Vice-President, International Programs, CARE Canada, summarized those connections as follows:

The evidence is clear that women's involvement in the development and application of policy and programs in conflict situations supports violence reduction and the prevention of conflict, the attainment and sustainability of peace, the effectiveness of humanitarian relief and recovery, and the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence.⁶

That position was echoed by many of the Committee's witnesses. It was also documented in the Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325.

Nahla Valji, Deputy Chief, Peace and Security Section, UN Women, who led the Global Study's secretariat, cited concrete examples of the catalytic roles that women can play in the pursuit of peace and security. Among these is the relationship between the deployment of female peacekeepers and the number of sexual and gender-based violence crimes that are reported.⁷ General Jonathan Vance, the Chief of the Defence Staff, also highlighted the connection between women's participation in military missions and the effectiveness of military operations. Drawing on his personal experience commanding Canadian forces in Afghanistan, General Vance described the dramatic effect that women's presence within the military ranks can have on operational planning and success. In addition to the core duties shared by all personnel, the effect of women's inclusion extends to the ability of a mission to engage with all segments of the population and to understand their concerns and the dangers facing them. In the context of the police work carried out by UN missions, Chief Superintendent Barbara Fleury, Police Advisor, Canada's Permanent Mission to the UN, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), similarly noted that the deployment of female police can help such missions "to build trust with populations," while also providing them with "role models."⁸

Another aspect of the women, peace and security agenda that has produced evidence of that agenda's value is women's meaningful involvement in peace processes and political transitions. Ms. Valji informed the Committee that women's participation in such processes has been found to have increased "the sustainability of peace by

6 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 March 2016.

7 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

8 Ibid.

30% over 15 years.”⁹ Based on the 40 peace processes that were examined in the research she cited, Ms. Valji pointed to findings that “the meaningful participation of women leads to the conclusion of talks, the implementation of agreements, and the sustainability of peace.”¹⁰ In terms of why that might be the case, Ms. Valji noted that women’s involvement “brings a broader constituency” into peace processes, which have traditionally been limited to a narrow group of the direct parties to a conflict, while also shifting the dynamics at peace tables.¹¹

At a broader level, several witnesses told the Committee that there is now research pointing to a relationship between the security of women and the peacefulness of states. One of the lead authors of that research, Valerie M. Hudson, who is now Professor and George H.W. Bush Chair in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, has articulated its central findings as follows: “the very best predictor of a state’s peacefulness is not its level of wealth, its level of democracy, or its ethno-religious identity; the best predictor of a state’s peacefulness is how well its women are treated.”¹² Jacqueline O’Neill, Director, Institute for Inclusive Security, suggested that this research reveals the underlying rationale for the women, peace and security agenda. Greater awareness is needed, in her view, of that agenda’s real purpose. As she emphasized, it is not about doing something for women, “either as a favour to them or because we want to protect them; it’s something that we’re doing for all of us.”¹³

Beth Woroniuk, Steering Committee Member, Women, Peace and Security Network–Canada, stressed that, at its core, the women, peace and security agenda challenges us “to rethink the way we approach security and armed conflict.” As Ms. Woroniuk argued, if

9 Ibid. Regarding the impact women can have on the durability of peace, after examining peace talks that occurred between 1989 and 2011, research points to short- and long-term effects. “In the short term, peace processes that included women as witnesses, signatories, mediators, and/or negotiators demonstrated a 20 percent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years. This percentage continues to increase over time, with a 35 percent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting fifteen years.” On the other hand, the mainstreaming of gender-specific language and women’s rights provisions has not, on its own, been found to increase the “prospects for durable peace”. Source: Laurel Stone, “Annex II: Quantitative Analysis of Women’s Participation in Peace Processes,” in Marie O’Reilly, Andrea Ó Suilleabhain, and Thania Paffenholz, [Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes](#), International Peace Institute (IPI), New York, June 2015, p. 34. See also: Laurel Stone, “[Women Transforming Conflict: A Quantitative Analysis of Female Peacemaking](#),” Seton Hall University, 13 May 2014.

10 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016. This research is reflected in O’Reilly, Ó Suilleabhain, and Paffenholz (June 2015). That IPI study states that, “When women’s groups were able to strongly influence negotiations or push for a peace deal an agreement was almost always reached (only one case presented an exception). Even where women’s groups only had moderate influence, an agreement was reached in the majority of cases. When women’s groups were not involved at all, or had a low influence on the process, the chance of reaching an agreement was considerably lower.” The study acknowledges that women’s involvement is not the only influencing factor; the results, however, “demonstrate that women’s inclusion does not hinder reaching agreements,” and “is associated with an increased likelihood of an agreement being reached” (p. 11).

11 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

12 Valerie M. Hudson, “[What Sex Means for World Peace – The evidence is clear: The best predictor of a state’s stability is how its women are treated](#),” *Foreign Policy*, 24 April 2012. For a detailed discussion of this research, see: Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex & World Peace*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2014.

13 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

there is, in fact, a “clear link” between the position of women and girls in a society and the overall peacefulness of that society’s state, women’s rights should not be seen “as something that we’ll get to when more important issues are resolved,” but rather as “a crucial factor that is interwoven with conflict prevention and conflict resolution in the first place.”¹⁴ Randi Davis, Director, Gender Team, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also reinforced this link between conflict prevention and investments in the empowerment of women and girls. Nonetheless, she also indicated that support for relevant programming – such as work related to women’s reproductive health and rights, education, and economic and political empowerment – remains “underfunded”. These are areas of work, Ms. Davis noted, in which Canada has global expertise.¹⁵

The Committee came to realize that the women, peace and security agenda is, in its essence, about investing in an approach to foreign affairs, development policy and international security that is more likely to result in stable, inclusive and just societies. The urgency and necessity of acting on that central finding has only increased in recent years. At the time of Resolution 1325’s adoption in 2000, the international community was grappling with the increasingly disproportionate impact of armed conflict on civilians – particularly women and girls – and the frequency of internal conflicts, as opposed to those involving clashes between the conventional armies of states. The complexity of violence has only intensified in the 21st century. Many conflicts lack clearly defined beginning and end points or contained battlefields. Most are characterized by a plethora of non-state armed groups, including terrorist and criminal networks, few of which respect basic tenets of international law.

As these conflict dynamics have been unleashed on communities, it is no coincidence that there are now more people displaced in the world than at any time since the Second World War. But those absolute numbers are not the only challenging aspect of the phenomenon of global displacement. Ms. Davis drew attention to the protracted nature of the displacement that is being generated by many contemporary crises, which, she warned, threatens “to stall and even reverse progress for women and girls in communities.”¹⁶ She cited the ongoing crisis in Syria in this regard. More than two million children are out of school, and early marriage is on the rise. Ms. Davis also noted that, “in many host countries, Syrian women and girls do not have papers to access services or employment.”¹⁷ All of these trends, which can accelerate in very short windows of time as a conflict intensifies, threaten years – and in the worst case, decades – of development gains. In addition to these immediate crises, the international community will also need to grapple with new drivers of instability and displacement, including climate change.

It is within this context of an evolving international security landscape that the UN conducted three major reviews – all in 2015 – of its peace and security institutions,

14 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016. That very insight, according to Ms. Woroniuk, has “been lacking in Canada’s approach to women, peace, and security up to now, as these issues are often treated as a sideline or marginal concerns.”

15 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

capabilities and responses: one on peacekeeping,¹⁸ one on peacebuilding¹⁹ and one on women, peace and security (the Global Study). The rise of violent extremism is an emerging trend that affects all of those processes, including from the perspective of women's rights and empowerment, and the various roles women play in conflict.²⁰ A number of extremist groups – including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Boko Haram – are pursuing ideologies that are characterized by their brutality and their misogyny. The suppression of women is not an incidental consequence of their activities; in many cases, it is a core part of their objectives.

Testimony and information provided to the Committee suggested that the women, peace and security agenda must be expanded so as to fully understand and address violent extremism. Ms. Valji conveyed that,

There is perhaps no form of conflict that has made the gendered underpinnings of insecurity and violence more clear than the rise of violent extremism that we are currently witnessing. These groups target women's and girls' basic rights to exist, to health, education, public life, and rights over their own bodies, but they equally use gender stereotypes for their own ends in their radicalization and recruitment efforts as well as in their use of young girls as suicide bombers, as we are increasingly seeing by Boko Haram.²¹

Ms. Valji also framed violent extremism in a way that connects back to the broader consideration, discussed above, of the linkages between gender equality and conflict prevention. She told the Committee that “violent extremism seems to take root more easily” in communities characterized by gender inequality. Radicalization and recruitment are easier, she indicated, in contexts that lack “models of women as political leaders, educated mothers, sisters, community leaders, etc.”²²

When considering the many pressing foreign policy issues competing for the attention of parliamentarians and governments, a person could rightly ask why we should prioritize women, peace and security, and why it is important to do so now. The answer to those questions was perhaps best articulated by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the Security Council's open debate on women, peace and security in October 2015. He stated: “At a time when armed extremist groups place the subordination of women at

18 [Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People - Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations](#), United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015.

19 [The Challenge of Sustaining Peace - Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture](#), United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, A/69/968-S/2015/490, 30 June 2015.

20 The written brief submitted to the Committee by the United Nations Association in Canada asserts that the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security have tended to focus on women's roles as peacebuilders and to overlook women's roles “as active agents in conflict.” The brief states, in relation to the recent focus at the UN on violent extremism, that “Women have been both supporters and active agents in violence.” They are also being “actively recruited” to support extremism. The brief therefore argues that the various roles women play in violent extremism need “to be further researched and interrogated in a way that adds value to the design of responses.” The brief is dated 9 May 2016.

21 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

22 Ibid.

the top of their agenda, we must place women's leadership and the protection of women's rights at the top of ours."²³

The Committee is of the same mind. It believes that the protection of women's rights and the promotion of women's empowerment must be paramount concerns, both at the United Nations and in Canada's international policy. While principles are the guiding force of that conclusion, it is determined in equal measure from a hard-headed assessment of strategic interests. The ongoing turmoil in Syria provides a daily reminder of the consequences of a society's disintegration through war. The millions of people displaced by the violence that has engulfed Syria, and that conflict's role as the global rallying point of armed extremists, have generated ripple effects throughout the immediate region and far beyond. Our national interests are advanced when societies are able to pull back from the brink of armed conflict, when they are able to stem the rising tide of extremism, and when they set out on a path towards sustained peace and prosperity. The Committee's study pointed to mounting evidence that the women, peace and security agenda is a vital tool that can help to achieve those ends.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Government of Canada should make women, peace and security a priority of its foreign policy agenda.

CLOSING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has a central and essential role to play in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. That agenda is, after all, based on resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council. The work of implementation therefore begins with the Security Council, which is the body that is responsible under the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, and through which the agenda's norms have been established. The Secretary-General and many other UN entities also have important responsibilities to fulfil. That includes UN organizations with global reach – such as the UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations – as well as UN Women, which is tasked with promoting and coordinating UN accountability in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment. These organizations are not only responsible for meeting the UN's institutional commitments; they also support countries around the world in building their own national capacity to implement the women, peace and security agenda.

Yet, as was stated at the beginning of this report, a “crippling gap” has been found between the commitments that have been agreed and actual implementation. Various reviews undertaken by the UN itself indicate that much work remains to be done within the organization to realize the goals and the aspiration of the women, peace and security agenda.

That overarching point echoed throughout the Committee's hearings. The remarks delivered to the Committee by Louise Allen, Executive Coordinator of the NGO Working

23 United Nations Security Council, 7533rd meeting, 13 October 2015, 10 a.m., New York, [S/PV.7533](#).

Group on Women, Peace and Security, were infused with that sentiment. She told the Committee that, despite the progress being made at the normative level, “implementation by the Security Council UN leadership at headquarters and in the field and by member states does not match the rhetorical support we witness every year in October [during the annual Security Council open debates on women, peace and security].”²⁴ The fundamental issue, in Ms. Allen’s view, is that implementation “continues to rely on political support by individual countries, and sometimes even individual diplomats within missions, rather than serving as a systematic lens by which to view peace and security and long-term conflict prevention.”²⁵

Among the many implementation gaps within the UN that require further attention, the Committee chose to highlight three in this report: institutional coordination and coherence across the UN; women’s representation in peace support operations; and, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers.

A. Institutional Challenges at the United Nations

Witness testimony pointed to a number of systemic institutional challenges that are hampering the UN’s role with regards to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Many of those relate to concerns about inconsistent practices and leadership. The under-representation of women in senior-level positions within the UN System, irregular and superficial consultations with civil society, and the limited funds attached to the agenda’s implementation, are all examples.

On the issue of positions within the UN, Anne Marie Goetz, Professor, Center for Global Affairs, New York University, drew the Committee’s attention to a recent paper which found that, between 1 January and 10 December 2015, approximately 92% of the individuals appointed to the position of UN Under-Secretary-General were men.²⁶ The under-representation of women in leadership positions, both at headquarters and in the field, was highlighted by the Global Study. It indicated that, of the almost 7,000 international civilian staff in UN field missions, fewer than 30% are women. Furthermore, women occupy only 20% of the senior management positions. Among national staff, who represent the largest share of the workforce in UN missions, the percentage of women is even smaller, at 17%.²⁷ For her part, Ms. Allen maintained that high-level attention is generally needed to prioritize the appointments of women to UN leadership positions, and to address any obstacles, structural or otherwise, preventing their advancement.²⁸

24 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

25 Ibid.

26 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016. For the paper highlighted by Professor Goetz, see: Karin Landgren, “[The Lost Agenda: Gender Parity in Senior UN Appointments](#),” *Global Peace Operations Review*, 14 December 2015. The paper indicates that 22 men and only two women were appointed to the position of UN Under-Secretary General between 1 January and 10 December 2015.

27 The Global Study, p. 273.

28 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Government of Canada should increase the number of women it puts forward and supports as nominees for senior UN positions, up to and including the post of United Nations Secretary-General.

The Committee also heard that the mandates of UN peacekeeping and political missions do not address issues related to gender and women, peace and security in a consistent or sufficient way. Ms. Allen revealed that only 4 of the 13 UN peacekeeping missions that had their mandates renewed in 2015 called for the mission in question “to consider gender as a crosscutting issue.” She also noted that only 40% of Security Council resolutions and presidential statements issued in response to a specific crisis “had any element on women, peace, and security,” or mentioned “any sort of gender considerations.”²⁹ Ms. Allen argued that the promotion of women's participation and engagement with women's organizations should be written into the terms of reference for all special representatives of the UN Secretary-General, senior envoys, mediators, and force commanders.

In general, the consistency of UN engagement with civil society was identified as a gap in UN implementation of the women, peace and security resolutions. Ms. Allen, for example, noted that in Resolution 2242, the Security Council expressed its intention to invite civil society, including women's organizations, to brief the Council on country-specific considerations and thematic areas related to women, peace and security. Nevertheless, “the Security Council has yet to act on this commitment.”³⁰ Ms. Allen underlined that support for women civil society representatives during the Security Council's open debates on women, peace and security “is not enough.” She called for civil society engagement to be institutionalized within the UN and across its peace operations, including on the part of mission leadership in the field. In her view, that outreach with civil society should then “be reflected in mission implementation reports and briefings to the Security Council.”³¹

The issue of resources and financing within the UN System for work related to women, peace and security was also raised. That includes proper resourcing for UN Women, but also dedicated resources across the UN System for gender expertise and gender advisors. Ms. Allen commented that UN Women “is known to be under-resourced, particularly in terms of women, peace and security.”³² That problem extends to the gender expertise within the far larger Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Political Affairs. She described the resourcing of gender expertise across the UN as “inconsistent” and called on member states that sit on the UN budget committee to ensure that there is gender expertise across the UN and in its field missions. As things stand, Ms. Allen remarked, “a lot of the gender experts aren't part of the core budgets.”³³

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

Financing is also an issue in the programming delivered by the UN. In 2010, the UN Secretary-General set the target of allocating a minimum of 15% of peacebuilding funds to projects whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs and advance gender equality. To date, that target has not been met. The Secretary-General has urged "all relevant United Nations entities to ensure the target is not only met but surpassed by 2020."³⁴

B. Women's Representation in Peace Support Operations

One of the most glaring gaps in the UN's implementation of the women, peace and security agenda is the extremely low percentage of female military personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping missions. The Global Study reported that, as of July 2015, only 3% of the military in UN missions were women, with the majority of them employed as support staff.³⁵ As of August 2016, that figure was 3.4%.³⁶ Worryingly, this number has not substantially increased since 2011, and is only a minimal improvement from 1993, when women comprised 1% of military personnel. Limited progress has occurred despite "repeated calls" from the Security Council to address female recruitment.³⁷

The picture is also problematic – albeit to a slightly less troubling degree – for the police components of UN peacekeeping missions. In 2009, the UN launched a campaign with the goal that women would make up 20% of all UN police by 2014. That target has not been met. Although women represented almost 16% of the police who were individually recruited as of August 2016, women comprised only 6.4% of the UN's formed police units.³⁸

As noted in the previous chapter, the deployment of women in military and police operations can have a positive effect on overall mission conduct and effectiveness. One of the reasons for the low number of women in UN peace support operations is that member states have not done enough to recruit women nationally or to give them sufficient training and deployment opportunities. While the UN can advocate for more

34 [Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2015/716, 16 September 2015, para 169.

35 The Global Study, p. 139.

36 Department of Peacekeeping Operations, [Gender Statistics by Mission: For the month of August 2016](#), 7 September 2016. Note: the 3.4% figure includes military experts and troops (2,975 women out of 88,048 total military personnel).

37 [Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2015/716, 16 September 2015, para 80.

38 Department of Peacekeeping Operations, [Gender Statistics by Mission: For the month of August 2016](#), 7 September 2016. Individual police officers are assigned to serve with the UN on secondment from the governments of member states. Their duties include mentoring and in some cases training national police officers. Formed police units (FPU) are specialized units that consist of approximately 140 police officers, who are "trained and equipped to act as a cohesive unit capable of accomplishing policing tasks that individual Police Officers could not address." The three core duties of FPUs are public order management, the protection of UN personnel and facilities, and the provision of support to UN police operations that "require a concerted response but do not respond to military threats." The majority of police officers serving in UN peacekeeping operations are deployed as part of an FPU. See: United Nations Police, [Formed Police Units](#).

women to serve in peace operations, the primary responsibility for the deployment of personnel rests with member states.

The Committee heard that Canada has made positive strides to increase the number of women that it deploys to UN peace support operations. Chief Superintendent Fleury indicated that the RCMP has surpassed the UN's own target of having women constitute 20% of deployed police personnel. As of April 2016, approximately 25% of Canadian police deployed to international police peacekeeping and peace operations were women.³⁹ (At the national level, the RCMP's goal is for women to comprise 30% of its ranks by 2025.⁴⁰) Specific actions have been taken to address recruitment in this regard. Chief Superintendent Fleury indicated that "all job bulletins for peace operations encourage women to apply, and female candidates have been selected when equally qualified men and women are competing for a position."⁴¹ Even so, she cautioned the Committee to remember that absolute numbers are not everything or necessarily indicative of impact. In her words, "We also need to focus on the positions and the roles and importance of what those people actually do."⁴²

While not limited to the UN peacekeeping context, General Vance has directed his staff to "use retention and recruiting efforts to increase the number of women in the Canadian Armed Forces [CAF]."⁴³ Current statistics indicate that the percentage of women in the CAF, regular force and primary reserve combined, is approximately 15%.⁴⁴ General Vance informed the Committee that his goal is to increase the percentage of women within the CAF's ranks by 1% each year until it reaches a target of 25%. While recent statistics were not provided to the Committee, the 2013–2014 progress report on the implementation of Canada's action plan on women, peace and security indicated that, as of 31 March 2014, 13.4% of CAF personnel deployed to international peace operations were women.⁴⁵

Even though the deployment of troops and police remains first and foremost the responsibility of member states, the Committee heard that more could be done at the UN to prioritize the recruitment of women. Ms. Allen, for example, asserted that a "comprehensive strategy involving UN entities and countries which contribute troops and

39 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016. The Canadian Police Arrangement (CPA) is the framework through which Canadian police are deployed to international police peacekeeping and peace operations. The CPA is a partnership between Global Affairs Canada, Public Safety Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The RCMP manages the overall deployment of Canadian police, from various police forces in Canada, including through the selection and training of personnel. For more information, see: RCMP, [International Peace Operations](#).

40 RCMP, [Women in Policing](#).

41 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 According to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), as of February 2016, 13,863 women were serving in the CAF out of a total of 92,617 personnel, or about 15%. See: National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, [Women in the Canadian Armed Forces](#), Background, 8 March 2016.

45 Global Affairs Canada, [2013-2014 Progress Report – Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security](#).

police is needed to address both the pipeline and the structural obstacles preventing women's recruitment and professional advancement.”⁴⁶

Some witnesses explored the idea of providing incentives to troop- and police-contributing countries with the view to increasing women's participation in international operations. Professor Goetz mentioned a proposal that UN Women circulated in 2015 involving a “gender premium” that would be given to troop contributing countries to encourage them to deploy more women.⁴⁷ Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Co-Founder and Executive Director, International Civil Society Action Network, suggested another option in terms of the priority selection of peacekeeping contingents. She said that there could be “scope to offer the incentive of jumping the queue as a troop-contributing country if you meet the 20% or 30% target of women.”⁴⁸

The notion of incentives has gained momentum at the UN. In Resolution 2242, the Security Council expressed support for efforts to “incentivize greater numbers of women in militaries and police deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations”. It also called upon the UN Secretary-General and member states to develop a strategy to double the number of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping operations by 2020.⁴⁹

The Committee is of the view that such a strategy must be developed and put in motion without any further delay or reticence. The evidence is clear that greater numbers of women in security forces enhances their quality, credibility, inclusivity and effectiveness. The current numbers of women deployed in UN peace support operations are, without a doubt, insufficient.

Given the efforts that are being undertaken within the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP to recruit and retain a greater number of women, and to ensure that senior positions are open to them, the Committee also believes that there is a leadership role for Canada to play on recruitment issues within the UN. In this regard, Canada's ability to serve as a model will continue to depend on its own performance. The Committee therefore looks forward to receiving updates on the Forces' progress towards its 25% target.

Furthermore, while the Committee is intrigued by the options brought to its attention regarding possible incentives for troop- and police-contributing countries, it is more inclined to favour those that would be structured to reward good performers, rather than to subsidize them. Ensuring that women are meaningfully involved in security institutions and security forces is, after all, one of the core objectives of the women, peace and security agenda. It should, therefore, never be seen as something that is optional and the concern and responsibility of a few member states. The onus is on all countries that contribute troops and police to UN operations to ensure that they are living up to these objectives.

46 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

47 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

48 Ibid.

49 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#), 13 October 2015.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Government of Canada should work within the United Nations and with troop- and police-contributing countries to develop a concrete and time-bound strategy that would lead to substantial increases in the number of women deployed to UN peace support operations.

C. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers

A final and very serious issue that was raised on numerous occasions throughout the Committee's hearings pertains to the conduct of some personnel serving in UN peace support operations. Recent scandals related to sexual exploitation and abuse have compromised the credibility of UN peacekeeping missions, and undermined their ability to implement the very mandates entrusted to them: the protection of civilians, including women and girls. Notwithstanding the UN Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" policy, the Committee heard about disturbing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving UN peacekeepers. This issue is not only relevant to the UN's performance in implementing the women, peace and security agenda; it also raises broader issues regarding needed reforms in the UN's peacekeeping architecture.

Over the past two and a half years, a variety of allegations have come to light regarding sexual exploitation and abuse by international troops serving in the Central African Republic. The first allegations surfaced in early 2014 in relation to peacekeepers from the French military who were operating under authorization of the Security Council, but not UN command.⁵⁰ Since that time, a number of new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving troops from the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who were deployed as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, have been reported.⁵¹

The Secretary-General appointed an independent panel to review the UN's response to the serious allegations – including of child rape – made in the context of the mission in the Central African Republic. That panel, which was led by Marie Deschamps, a former Justice of the Canadian Supreme Court, issued a scathing report in December 2015. The report concluded that the UN's response to the allegations was "seriously flawed." It was "fragmented and bureaucratic, and failed to satisfy the UN's core mandate to address human rights violations."⁵²

50 [Taking Action on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers](#), Report of an Independent Review on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Peacekeeping Forces in the Central African Republic, 17 December 2015.

51 An opinion-editorial written by Anthony Banbury, a former UN Assistant Secretary-General for field support, who resigned from the UN in February 2016, was referred to several times during the Committee's study. In that article, Mr. Banbury stated that troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo had been included in the UN mission in the Central African Republic "without appropriate debate, and for cynical political reasons" despite reports of "serious human rights violations by these soldiers." Anthony Banbury, "[I Love the U.N., but It Is Failing](#)," *The New York Times*, 18 March 2016.

52 [Taking Action on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers](#), Report of an Independent Review on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Peacekeeping Forces in the Central African Republic, 17 December 2015. Note: the United Nations has been trying to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse for more than 10 years. Allegations first arose in the early 1990s (see pages 15-16).

On 16 February 2016, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council on measures being taken to enhance protection in relation to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.⁵³ That report, which covers allegations from 1 January to 31 December 2015, indicates that 99 new allegations were received from the offices of the UN Secretariat and various UN agencies, funds and programmes in 2015, compared with 80 such allegations in 2014.⁵⁴ Of those, 69 allegations were reported in peacekeeping missions. Some 55% of the allegations against UN peacekeepers in 2015 were connected to two peacekeeping missions: the ones deployed in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Moreover, among the total allegations from peacekeeping missions in 2015, 55% “involved the most egregious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse,” including “23 allegations of sexual activities with minors.”⁵⁵ As of 31 January 2016, 17 of the 69 allegations that were received had been investigated by either the UN or the troop-contributing countries.⁵⁶ In early February 2016, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Many witnesses expressed alarm and outrage about these allegations and the findings of the reports cited above. At the same time, the Committee also heard that member states must take responsibility for preventing and investigating acts of sexual misconduct. Jacqueline Hansen, Major Campaigns and Women’s Rights Campaigner, Amnesty International Canada, said that UN member states should ensure that any allegations of misconduct by peacekeepers are “thoroughly, promptly and impartially investigated at the national level” and that “any perpetrators are held to account.”⁵⁷ Other steps are needed to improve vetting and reporting procedures.

Several witnesses called on Canada to take an active and assertive role in pushing for accountability and reform at the UN. Sarah Taylor, Women, Peace and Security Advocate, Women’s Rights Division, Human Rights Watch, said that Canada should work with other governments to press for a “major overhaul to boost accountability mechanisms, ensuring that there are clear policies and training in this area, and for independent investigative mechanisms in an effort to bring judicial redress for those who have had these crimes committed against them.” In all, Ms. Taylor emphasized the need for the “security and well-being of survivors” to be prioritized.⁵⁸ That point was later echoed by Ms. Allen who highlighted “best practices such as maintaining confidentiality, minimizing

53 [*Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse: Report of the Secretary-General*](#), United Nations General Assembly, A/70/729, 16 February 2016.

54 The Secretary-General’s report indicates that no allegations had been received in relation to the 29 Canadian military personnel deployed in UN missions in 2015. However, in relation to the 84 Canadian police officers deployed in that year, two allegations had been received. [*Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse: Report of the Secretary-General*](#), United Nations General Assembly, A/70/729, 16 February 2016.

55 Ibid., para 10.

56 Ibid., para 13. From those 17 investigations, 7 allegations were substantiated and 10 were unsubstantiated.

57 FAAE, [*Evidence*](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

58 FAAE, [*Evidence*](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

repeated trauma from multiple interviews, and ensuring rapid access to medical and psychosocial care.”⁵⁹

A fundamental issue is ensuring that there are consequences for the abuses that have been committed. Ms. O’Neill called for Canada “to be at the forefront of saying that people need to be prosecuted when they arrive back home.” As she underscored, “Simply losing your job on an international mission is not enough.”⁶⁰

The Canadian government officials who appeared before the Committee said that Canada is working to confront sexual exploitation and abuse in UN operations. Tamara Guttman, Director General, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, Global Affairs Canada, informed the Committee that Canada encourages “greater transparency in the handling of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse,” and is urging “all troop and police contributors to uphold their obligations to investigate misconduct.”⁶¹

With respect to the conduct of Canada’s own military and police personnel, Chief Superintendent Fleury stated that “Canada takes all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or other misconduct within peace operations extremely seriously.”⁶² She told the Committee that the RCMP has mandatory online training modules that must be completed by all police who are being deployed before they attend their pre-deployment training. Those modules cover a number of topics, including women, peace and security, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse. During the pre-deployment training in Ottawa, the RCMP also provides an in-class “mission-specific session on the differential impact of conflict on women and girls and on sexual and gender-based violence, in addition to covering cultural awareness and code of conduct and ethics issues.”⁶³

In terms of the Canadian Armed Forces, the government’s 2013–2014 progress report on Canada’s national action plan indicates that all CAF personnel deploying overseas receive training on human rights, codes of conduct and cultural awareness, all of which address gender and the protection of women and girls.⁶⁴ The progress report also indicates that the CAF has policies in place regarding the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, which apply to CAF members at all times.

When posed the question about what Canada could do to help address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN missions, General Vance responded unequivocally that:

We can provide extensive training and support to the contingents of the troop-contributing nations in United Nations missions.

59 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

60 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

61 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 8 March 2016.

62 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

63 Ibid.

64 Global Affairs Canada, [2013-2014 Progress Report – Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security](#).

We can suggest new ideas on ways to conduct activities in peacekeeping missions in order to prevent and eliminate the times when things go wrong.

We can also provide mentorship. It is possible for us to be on the ground, with the United Nations contingents, to reduce incidents of sexual misconduct to zero. That can be done.⁶⁵

The Committee agrees that zero cases must be the ultimate objective of the UN's "zero tolerance" policy. Sexual exploitation and abuse is completely unacceptable and undermines the credibility and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, as well as the wider organization. Concerted action and leadership are needed on the part of Canada and other member states to improve the UN's training, vetting, investigation and accountability procedures and practices. In all of these efforts, transparency must be absolute. In taking action at the UN, the Committee is also of the view that Canada should maximize the clout it derives from being one of the top financial contributors to UN peacekeeping – the 9th highest overall.⁶⁶ Given the broader ramifications of these issues, the Committee believes that Canada must play a significant role in strengthening the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse, not only through political leadership, but also with the professional expertise it can provide in the security sector.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Within the United Nations, the Government of Canada should insist on full adherence to the UN Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse as a condition for all countries contributing troops and police to UN peace support operations, and insist on full transparency and regular reporting in relation to all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as robust accountability measures, including prosecution.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government of Canada should work with the United Nations in order to improve the pre-deployment and in-mission training provided to UN peacekeepers on women, peace and security, as well as the prevention and investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Government of Canada should ensure that extensive training on women, peace and security is provided to Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Global Affairs Canada personnel prior to and during deployments to international peace support operations.

65 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

66 Department of Peacekeeping Operations, [Financing Peacekeeping](#). For 2016-2017, Canada's assessed contribution for UN peacekeeping operations is more than \$313 million. See: Government of Canada, [2016-17 Estimates: Parts I and II, The Government Expenditure Plan and Main Estimates](#), 2016, p. II-124.

PROMOTING RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND DIGNITY

The preceding chapter outlined some of the overall challenges that have been encountered in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, focusing on institutional responsibilities within the United Nations. Underlying all of the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security are women's human rights. As this chapter will demonstrate, however, those rights remain unrealized for many women who find themselves in, or fleeing from, countries that are mired in, and emerging from, conflict. Sexual and gender-based violence is a pervasive and brutal feature of conflict in the 21st century, a phenomenon that has only been amplified with the rise of groups that adhere to ideologies of violent extremism. Justice systems at the national level struggle, in many cases, to investigate and prosecute these crimes and meet the needs of survivors.

While these efforts are anchored by the relevant Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, they also take place within a broader UN context. In 2015, member states agreed on an ambitious and far-reaching framework that is meant to guide the development efforts of all countries over the next 15 years. In addition to a specific goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, one of the other goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the fostering of peaceful and inclusive societies. Achieving that objective will require dedicated and sustained efforts to protect women and girls from all forms of violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. It will also hinge on the existence of national systems that can deliver justice for survivors.

A. The Framework

A robust international legal and normative framework has been developed to address conflict-related sexual violence. The *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* (ICC) defines circumstances under which sexual violence amounts to an international crime. When “committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack” against a civilian population, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, “or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity,” constitute a crime against humanity, according to which individuals can be found criminally responsible and liable for punishment.⁶⁷ Sexual violence can also constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977. Significant jurisprudence on sexual violence was also developed by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The UN Security Council has explicitly recognized sexual violence as a matter of international peace and security. Resolution 1820, adopted by the Security Council in 2008, stresses that sexual violence used as a tactic or systematic attack against civilians “can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security”. That resolution demands the cessation of all such acts of violence, and requires that immediate steps be taken by all conflict parties to protect women and girls. Resolution 1820 also stresses that crimes of sexual violence

67 International Criminal Court, [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#), The Hague, 2011.

should be excluded from amnesty provisions in the context of peace negotiations. It further calls on UN member states to abide by their obligations to prosecute persons responsible for such acts of violence, ensuring, at the same time, that victims have equal access to justice. Ending impunity, as expressed by Resolution 1820, must be seen as “part of a comprehensive approach to seeking sustainable peace, justice, truth, and national reconciliation”.⁶⁸

A milestone in the application of the international legal prohibition on sexual violence in conflict was reached around the time that the Committee began its hearings on women, peace and security. On 21 March 2016, the ICC unanimously declared that Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, a former Vice President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including in relation to rape. The crimes were committed by a contingent of Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC) rebels that operated in the Central African Republic from October 2002 to March 2003. Mr. Bemba, the Court concluded, “effectively acted as a military commander and had effective authority and control over the MLC forces that committed the crimes.” He knew about the crimes and failed to exercise proper control. Mr. Bemba was, therefore, found by the Court to be criminally responsible for the murders, rapes and pillaging committed by his subordinates, the MLC forces. In reaching that conclusion, the Court also determined that the “multiple acts of rape and murder committed by the MLC soldiers constituted a course of conduct, and were not merely isolated or random acts.” Civilians were “the primary, as opposed to incidental, target” of attacks.⁶⁹

The case was the first in which an ICC verdict focused on sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war and the issue of command responsibility in relation to such crimes.⁷⁰ Many victims – more than 5,000 – “were granted the right to participate in the proceedings.”⁷¹ On 21 June 2016, Mr. Bemba was sentenced to 18 years in prison, the longest-ever sentence handed out at the ICC. Both the prosecution and the defence are appealing the decision, requesting longer and shorter sentences respectively.⁷²

Despite its clear legal and symbolic importance, the Bemba case still represents a single ICC conviction. In her testimony to the Committee, Ms. Taylor assessed that

68 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/1820 \(2008\)](#), 19 June 2008.

69 International Criminal Court, [Summary of Trial Chamber III's Judgment of 21 March 2016, pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute in the case of The Prosecutor v. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo](#), No. ICC-01/05-01/08, 21 March 2016.

70 Owen Bowcott, [“Congo politician guilty in first ICC trial to focus on rape as a war crime,”](#) *The Guardian*, 21 March 2016. On the term command responsibility, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, “Commanders and other superiors are criminally responsible for war crimes committed by their subordinates if they knew, or had reason to know, that the subordinates were about to commit or were committing such crimes and did not take all necessary and reasonable measures in their power to prevent their commission, or if such crimes had been committed, to punish the persons responsible.” See: International Committee of the Red Cross, [“Rule 153. Command Responsibility for Failure to Prevent, Repress or Report War Crimes,”](#) *Customary IHL*.

71 UN Women, [Statement by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on the conviction of Jean-Pierre Bemba by the International Criminal Court](#), 22 March 2016.

72 International Justice Monitor, [“Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo,”](#) *Background*.

Mr. Bemba's conviction is "indeed a victory for sexual violence victims and a stark warning to senior commanders who turn a blind eye while their troops rape and commit other atrocities." Even so, Ms. Taylor emphasized that "the vast majority of perpetrators remain unpunished."⁷³

B. The Ongoing Peril for Women in Conflict-Affected States

It is evident that a far greater intolerance for impunity is needed to ensure that the protections guaranteed in the legal and normative framework described above extend to the millions of women and girls who are in areas of the world in which the women, peace and security agenda is needed the most. The perilous situation that continues to face women in conflict situations was outlined in the UN Secretary-General's most recent report to the Security Council on conflict-related sexual violence. He noted, with alarm, that "incidents of mass rape continue to occur with impunity despite the issue having been a priority concern on the agenda of the Security Council for almost a decade."⁷⁴ He cited the cases of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Sudan in this regard, while also taking note of the "widespread and systematic sexual violence" in Syria and the areas of Iraq that are held by ISIL. In this context, the Secretary-General documented the disturbing connection between sexual violence and the violent extremist groups that have metastasized in a number of contemporary conflicts, which are targeting women in a "premeditated, systematic and strategic" way.⁷⁵ In her presentation to the Committee, Ms. Davis emphasized how important it is to recognize that sexual violence is being used by groups like ISIL and Boko Haram "as deliberate and central tactics to repress populations and destroy the social foundations upon which any recovery must be built."⁷⁶

The acute situation facing women in Iraq was highlighted during the Committee's study. The rise of ISIL in parts of northern and western Iraq has brought with it the return of such horrors as slavery. Even so, as was emphasized by Gulie Khalaf, Representative of Yezidis Human Rights, ISIL's crimes towards women have not been carried out in a secretive manner. Those crimes have, in fact, been brazenly advertised by a group that operates in total opposition to basic standards of human dignity, let alone international law. Areas under ISIL's control are, quite simply, devoid of human rights. Ms. Khalaf reminded the Committee that ISIL has been "raping, torturing, and enslaving women," crimes that it publicizes "on social media and in special magazines."⁷⁷ Thousands of women and girls

73 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

74 [Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2016/361, 20 April 2016, para 10.

75 Ibid., para 19.

76 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

77 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

are still thought to be held captive by ISIL.⁷⁸ Contemplation of the daily reality these women and girls must face – as “sex slaves” and people who have been “sold into servitude” and forced to marry ISIL fighters⁷⁹ – created a haunting spectre during the Committee’s meetings. In response to this situation, Dalal Abdallah, a Yazidi human rights activist, urged “Canada to recognize the ISIL campaign against the Yazidi people as an act of genocide.”⁸⁰

At the same time, the Committee was informed that Iraqi women in areas that are being taken back from ISIL also face insecurity and rights violations, as do women in more stable parts of the country. Yanar Mohammed, President, Baghdad Headquarters, Organization of Women’s Freedom in Iraq, explained that, while the violence perpetrated against women in these different zones within the country may differ in “source and intensity,” violence against women has, more generally, persisted over many years in Iraq. The country is not divided into an area that is safe for women and one that is insecure. Ms. Mohammed recounted that, in cities and towns that are being recaptured from ISIL, there have been honour killings perpetrated by tribal fighters against women who were violated by ISIL. Moreover, in parts of Iraq that are not under ISIL’s control, including the capital, Baghdad, women are being trafficked in “broad daylight”. To Ms. Mohammed’s knowledge, “no traffickers have been detained to date.” She insisted that these other crimes, “including crimes against women as human rights defenders and based on gender,” must be documented in Iraq, in addition to the efforts to document ISIL’s involvement in sexual slavery.⁸¹

C. Providing Comprehensive Services and Support to Survivors

In Iraq, and all other situations of fragility and conflict, women and girls not only need protection from violence, but also services and remedies for the violations they have suffered. As part of international and national responses to crisis, sexual and reproductive health care and rights need to be upheld. The Committee was informed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, that three out of five maternal deaths occur in humanitarian settings and contexts of fragility.⁸² Ms. Hansen also drew attention to the particular risks and vulnerabilities facing women who are displaced. Women fleeing conflict, she stated, are at “heightened risk” of sexual

78 The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has reported that, “Thousands of Yazidi women and girls were captured from Sinjar (Iraq) by [ISIL] in August 2014 and brought to the Syrian Arab Republic, where they are held in sexual slavery, bought and sold like chattel, and subjected to extreme sexual and physical violence.” See: [Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic](#), United Nations Human Rights Council, 31st Session, A/HRC/31/68, 11 February 2016, advanced edited version, para 112. In March 2016, the UN Human Rights Council was informed that more than 3,000 Yazidi women and girls are still held by ISIL. See: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Statement by Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic](#), United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva, 15 March 2016.

79 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016 (Gulie Khalaf).

80 Ibid.

81 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 May 2016.

82 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 8 March 2016.

violence. They also “face barriers to accessing everything from menstrual products to contraception to prenatal and postnatal care and birthing facilities.”⁸³ Ms. Hansen also emphasized that, if a refugee woman is raped, she has “very little access to testing for sexually transmitted infections, post-exposure prophylaxis, safe abortion services, and other sexual and reproductive health care services.”⁸⁴

Women who have suffered sexual and gender-based violence need full and timely access to medical and psychosocial support, but also assistance with livelihoods and economic reintegration so that they can return to normal life with dignity, and start to move forward. That is not a quick or simple process. Ms. Taylor underscored that the physical, psychological and social consequences of sexual and gender-based violence are both “acute and long-term”. However, service provision for survivors has, she asserted, typically been “inconsistent, if forthcoming at all.”⁸⁵ Ensuring access to the full range of services described here, of course, requires sustained and significant investments, the primary responsibility for which falls at the national level. Given the scale of the services that are needed, however, most national institutions, where they exist, need international support.

While women’s agency amidst violence and dislocation is the subject of the next chapter of this report, it is an equally important consideration in the approach taken to protection. A recurrent theme of this report is that women should be treated as actors, and not as objects, recipients or helpless victims. That basic understanding is necessary if the four pillars of the women, peace and security agenda are to work together as a coherent whole. When considering strategies aimed at enhancing women’s protection, Ms. Hansen emphasized that it is women who “are best placed to identify concrete solutions to the rights violations impacting them,” and must therefore “be meaningfully involved in the planning and implementation of projects to prevent sexual and reproductive rights violations and to support survivors.”⁸⁶

The Committee is of the view that, if basic health and social services are denied to women in conflict and post-conflict situations, whether for logistical, financial, legal, or any other reasons, women’s rights are not being fulfilled. The groundwork for any societal recovery – based on empowerment and justice – is also not being laid. The Committee is aware that the Government of Canada has a significant budget for humanitarian assistance, portions of which have been devoted specifically to assisting survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.⁸⁷ With the aim of building on these existing efforts, the Committee would emphasize access, timeliness, and longevity in the services that are funded by Canada, and other donor governments and international organizations.

83 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

84 Ibid.

85 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

86 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

87 See, for example: Prime Minister of Canada, “[Addressing the Crises in Iraq and Syria and Impacts on the Region: Helping Those Most Affected](#),” *Backgrounder*, 8 February 2016; and, Global Affairs Canada, “[Project profile: Fight against Impunity and Support to Survivors of Sexual Violence](#),” Project Number A035509-001. The latter is an \$18 million project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from 2013–2018.

Such programs must address the full range of needs that women have in situations of conflict and displacement, as identified by women.

RECOMMENDATION 7

As part of the humanitarian and development assistance it provides in countries affected by and recovering from conflict, the Government of Canada should include in its programming the necessary short- and long-term resources towards services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual and reproductive health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and economic reintegration.

D. Strengthening Justice Systems

Ensuring that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have access to justice is a core part of the promotion of dignity and empowerment. However, even with the “increased global attention” that has been devoted in recent years to the problem of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, Ms. Davis indicated that “prosecutions are way outpaced by violations.” As she put it: “The wheels of justice are taking decades instead of years.”⁸⁸ For that reason, Ms. Davis emphasized that the solution to the problem must, ultimately, be found in the prevention of conflict. When women have secure rights, as well as access to education, resources and opportunities they are, as Ms. Davis pointed out, “less vulnerable to violence in all its forms.”⁸⁹

Such a shift – that would focus on tackling the underlying and structural causes of conflict – will, of course, take many years. The women who are suffering in areas where conflict has not been prevented need access to justice now. There are various reasons for the slow pace of justice in societies affected by and emerging from conflict, and the limited number of prosecutions in relation to sexual violence at the national level.⁹⁰ Ms. Taylor acknowledged that providing all of the different components of a well-functioning national justice system – investigations and evidence collection, prosecutions, fair trials, witness protection and support for survivors – is “not an easy process” in any society. All of these challenges are, she noted, “only compounded when we talk about the complexity of conflict; when we talk about the diminution and dismantling of national-level judicial systems; when we talk about increased insecurity, displacement.”⁹¹

The ICC is a court of last resort, designed to complement – not replace – national courts. It deals with a few cases at any time, usually over several years, which involve crimes of the most serious concern to the international community. It is not, therefore, meant to be the body through which all survivors of conflict-related violence from a given country can seek justice. It is at the national level that justice for the majority of survivors must be found. As was noted above, however, most national justice systems in conflict-

88 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

89 Ibid.

90 The Global Study, p. 14.

91 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

affected states are characterized by limited capacity. In some situations, the infrastructure of justice may have been destroyed. Moreover, a culture of impunity may prevail, particularly with respect to violations committed by government forces. The judiciary may lack independence.

Security Council Resolution 1888, adopted on 30 September 2009, acknowledged this reality to a certain degree in recognizing that “national justice systems may be significantly weakened” in conflict and post-conflict situations. The resolution, among other things, urges states to undertake comprehensive legal and judicial reforms so as to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and that survivors have access to justice to receive redress for what they suffered. The resolution encourages other states, UN entities and civil society to provide assistance to national authorities, in close cooperation with them, in order to build the capacity of their judicial and law enforcement systems.⁹²

The UN has developed a number of institutional tools and programs to address rule of law issues in conflict and post-conflict settings. From the perspective of documentation, UN Women has partnered with Justice Rapid Response, a multistakeholder partnership that facilitates the rapid deployment of criminal justice experts to assist with the investigation of international crimes.⁹³ Ms. Valji informed the Committee that, through this partnership, UN Women has created “a dedicated sub-roster of sexual and gender-based crimes investigators,” which it has drawn from to support UN commissions of inquiry and other fact-finding missions.⁹⁴ Recent documentation of sexual violence in Syria, Nigeria, Libya and Iraq, Ms. Valji indicated, is the result of that initiative.

With respect to national capacity in the justice and security sectors, a Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict was established from UN Security Council Resolution 1888. It draws on the technical expertise of different parts of the UN, and works under the leadership of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. The team works with national authorities to improve their capacity and expertise to investigate and prosecute acts of sexual violence.⁹⁵ Another mechanism is the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections, which was created in 2012 “to enhance the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the support provided” by the UN for rule of law initiatives.⁹⁶ It brings the operational expertise of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations together with the institution-building role of the UNDP, as part of a joint delivery mechanism for justice

92 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/1888 \(2009\)](#), 30 September 2009.

93 See: Justice Rapid Response (JRR), [About Us](#); and, Global Affairs Canada, [Deploying Canadian Expertise](#).

94 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016. According to JRR, as a result of its partnership with UN Women, “every UN Commission of Inquiry” has had a gender advisor/sexual and gender-based violence investigator on its team of experts since 2009. See: JRR, [Annual Report 2015](#), 23 March 2016

95 United Nations, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, [Team of Experts](#).

96 UNDP, [Strengthening the Rule of Law in Crisis-Affected and Fragile Situations: Global Programme Annual Report 2014](#), New York, 2015, p. 26. Document provided to FAAE by Randi Davis, Director, Gender Team, UNDP.

assistance. The Focal Point is also able to draw on the specialized skills of other UN entities, including the gender mainstreaming expertise of UN Women.

More broadly, the UNDP implements a Global Programme to Strengthen the Rule of Law in Crisis-Affected and Fragile Situations. It helps countries to address legacies of violence, build accessible and effective justice and security institutions, and improve the delivery of justice, including for women. The budget for that program is not large; it mobilized approximately US\$191 million in contributions over the 2008–2015 period. Canada provided around US\$7.2 million over those same years, while the Netherlands was the leading donor at US\$59.7 million.⁹⁷ The Committee is of the view that Canada’s assistance to rule of law initiatives in conflict-affected states could be enhanced given the enormity of the justice sector capacity challenges in most of those states.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Government of Canada should work to significantly strengthen the rule of law and justice systems in conflict-affected and fragile states, including by providing appropriate support through multilateral and grassroots mechanisms for programs that seek to improve access to justice for women and to enhance national capacity to prosecute those responsible for sexual and gender-based violence.

Guatemala, a country that experienced a devastating 36-year war, may be illustrative of the slow wheels of national justice and the slow process of rebuilding the rule of law after conflict, but also a sign of forward momentum. Bill Fairbairn, Latin America Program Manager for Inter Pares, described his recent experience attending a Supreme Court trial in that country involving a group of indigenous Maya Q’eqchi’ women from the area of Sepur Zarco, which is in northeastern Guatemala. These women, Mr. Fairbairn explained, “were making history as plaintiffs in what is both the first criminal trial for sexual violence during Guatemala’s armed conflict and the first-ever sexual slavery case to be heard in a national court.”⁹⁸ The case dealt with events that took place years ago, in the early 1980s. The plaintiffs had been forcibly displaced from their land by the military, raped, and “held as slaves” outside a military base in Sepur Zarco.⁹⁹

The legal system in Guatemala, according to Mr. Fairbairn, “historically excluded and re-victimized indigenous women.” Those systemic issues, coupled with “feelings of shame and trauma meant that the women never sought legal redress.” Nevertheless,

97 UNDP, [Strengthening the Rule of Law in Crisis-Affected and Fragile Situations, 2015 Global Programme Annual Report Eight Years On](#), New York, June 2016, p. 80.

98 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

99 Ibid. The Committee visited Guatemala from 28–31 August 2016 to learn more about the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and to examine Canada’s bilateral development assistance in Guatemala. On 30 August 2016, the Committee met with women from the Sepur Zarco region who had been victims of violence during Guatemala’s internal armed conflict. More information on this exchange and the Committee’s trip to Guatemala will be available in a forthcoming Committee report. For further information on the Sepur Zarco case, see: Jo-Marie Burt, [“Military Officers Convicted in Landmark Sepur Zarco Sexual Violence Case,”](#) *International Justice Monitor*, 4 March 2016.

more than a decade ago, these women “began a slow and long path toward justice.”¹⁰⁰ The support provided to them throughout that process by grassroots women’s organizations was critical. In welcoming the guilty verdict that was eventually reached in the Sepur Zarco trial, the Government of Canada praised “the courage of the survivors in pursuing justice, as well as the dedication of the human rights organizations and lawyers who have supported them.”¹⁰¹ In addition to achieving justice for individuals, such cases can, as Mr. Fairbairn observed, serve “to promote long-term transformations and behaviours in society, so that what was once deemed to be acceptable or even celebrated is exposed to be unacceptable and repugnant.”¹⁰²

The slow path towards justice in Guatemala, which saw the formal end of conflict in 1996, also exemplifies the long-term nature of peacebuilding processes, and the need for continuity in international support. There are other countries that are currently striving to realize peace, including another within the Western hemisphere: Colombia.¹⁰³ As the post-conflict experiences of Central American nations have demonstrated, when a formal peace agreement is reached, the international community cannot assume a completed process, and move its attention and resources somewhere else. In most cases, the signing of a peace agreement does not represent an end state, and the definitive arrival of peace and justice. It is, rather, only the beginning of a new and equally important phase. The Committee therefore believes that, as the Government of Canada reviews its support for the women, peace and security agenda, and develops its next national action plan, it must embrace a mentality of multi-year – if not multi-decade – commitments that can carry out the complex work that is inevitably involved in helping war-torn countries to build peaceful and inclusive societies.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

As was noted at the beginning of this report, Resolution 1325 came about in large measure because of the dedicated work of civil society organizations. Individual women and women’s movements have always been at the heart of the women, peace and security agenda. But they have been so when engaged as direct participants – contributing to debates, negotiations, rights campaigns, planning, and advocacy – not when treated as disempowered victims.

More than 15 years after the original resolution on women, peace and security was adopted, however, women’s participation in peace processes, security institutions and post-conflict peacebuilding remains sporadic, and falls short of the aspirations enshrined in

100 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

101 Global Affairs Canada, “[Canada welcomes verdict in Sepur Zarco trial in Guatemala](#),” News release, 27 February 2016.

102 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

103 The Committee traveled to Colombia from 31 August to 8 September 2016 in connection to its studies on women, peace and security and the countries of focus for Canada’s bilateral development assistance. The Committee’s mission to Colombia took place only days after the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) had announced that they had finalized a comprehensive peace agreement to bring an end to a conflict that had endured for more than 50 years. More information on the Committee’s trip to Colombia will be available in a forthcoming Committee report.

the various Security Council resolutions. While individual success stories continue to emerge, the key precepts of the women, peace and security agenda have not yet been ingrained in either the mentality or the machinery of governmental and multilateral responses to conflict and crisis. Far from being automatic, the Committee was told that women must constantly push for inclusion and influence. Ms. Wright summarized these persistent implementation gaps in noting that, while much has been achieved in relation to the women, peace and security agenda, and “huge volumes” of statements and reports have been issued, the “original and innovative spirit of Resolution 1325 has ... often been lost in the process.” In her view, “Women’s participation in discussions about how to respond to crises and rebuild communities remains inconsistent and often tokenistic.”¹⁰⁴

The women, peace and security agenda rests on four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. While protecting women from conflict-related violence is necessary and essential, the agenda will not be achieved through that action alone. Women’s roles in preventing conflict, bringing about the end of conflict, and helping society to recover from it must also be realized. Those same roles are directly connected to the broader findings outlined at the beginning of this report, namely the connection between women’s meaningful participation and the durability of peace, as well as the linkages between gender equality and the peacefulness of states. The Committee’s study suggests that action is needed to reinvigorate those other pillars, shifting the emphasis from the lofty rhetoric of UN resolutions to real change on the ground. Efforts must, in particular, support and empower women and grassroots organizations at the local level, and ensure that women seeking to influence peace and security processes in their countries and regions have the opportunities, political support, funding, training and skills needed to do so.

A. Still a Long Way to Go

The original intent of the women, peace and security agenda is expressed in Resolution 1325. It urges UN 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”.¹⁰⁵ Yet, 13 years after its adoption, the Security Council warned that, “without a significant implementation shift, women and women’s perspectives will continue to be under-represented in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding for the foreseeable future....”¹⁰⁶ Two years later still, on the 15th anniversary of Resolution 1325, the Security Council expressed its deep concern about the frequent under-representation of women in peace and security processes and bodies. The Council declared that the persistent barriers to Resolution 1325’s implementation “will only be dismantled through dedicated commitment to women’s participation and human rights, and through concerted leadership, consistent information and action, and support, to build women’s engagement in all levels of decision-making.”¹⁰⁷

104 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 March 2016.

105 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/1325 \(2000\)](#), 31 October 2000.

106 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/2122 \(2013\)](#), 18 October 2013.

107 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/2242 \(2015\)](#), 13 October 2015.

Statistics compiled by the Global Study and the UN System indicate that some progress is being made. For example, in 2014, all UN mediation support teams included at least one woman. With respect to women's representation in the delegations of negotiating parties, "senior women" participated in 75% of those processes in 2014, compared to 36% in 2011.¹⁰⁸ Those statistics do not, it should be cautioned, assess the degree to which that participation was meaningful, as opposed to symbolic. The latter statistic is also not proportionate in that it does not depict the number of women involved in delegations in comparison to the total number of negotiators. In terms of the content of the peace agreements themselves, while only 11% of the agreements produced between 1990 and 2000 included at least one reference to women, 27% of the agreements reached between October 2000 and 1 January 2015 included references to women. One of the indicators now being tracked by the UN System shows that four of the six "agreements emerging from United Nations-supported peace processes" in 2014 included references to women, peace and security.¹⁰⁹ Even so, the 2015 report of the UN Secretary-General notes that, "Very few of the examined agreements reflect comprehensive gender equality or women and peace and security considerations."¹¹⁰

The intra-Syrian talks, which were intended to bring about a resolution to the ongoing war in Syria, may be indicative of these trends and challenges. Talks involving representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition were held in Geneva in the early months of 2016¹¹¹ under UN auspices and the mediation of Steffan de Mistura, the UN Special Envoy for Syria. At the beginning of February 2016, Mr. De Mistura established a Women's Advisory Board. The Board includes 12 women "chosen by several Syrian women organizations through their own consultative process." The Special Envoy's office indicated that the Board's formation would "allow Syrian women to articulate their concerns and ideas and present recommendations, covering all topics discussed during the talks, to the UN Special Envoy for consideration."¹¹²

While information on the details of the talks was limited, the Board's qualitative impact on peacemaking vis-à-vis the Syrian war has not been readily apparent. As noted, the Board was at the margins and not among the actual negotiating parties in Geneva; it must provide ideas to the Special Envoy for his reflection and action. A summary of the 13-27 April 2016 round of talks briefly mentions the Board: that it met with the Special Envoy, contributed information regarding the daily challenges facing Syrians and "provided

108 [Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2015/716, 16 September 2015, para 18.

109 Ibid., paras 13-14.

110 Ibid., para 15.

111 The talks have been in abeyance as a result of the escalation of violence in Syria and the breakdown of the "cessation of hostilities" agreement. See: The United Nations Office at Geneva, "[Remarks by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, to meeting of the Security Council](#)", 21 September 2016.

112 The United Nations Office at Geneva, "[16.02.02 – Office of the Special Envoy for Syria Press Statement](#)," 2 February 2016.

principles for the political transition.”¹¹³ The 17 May 2016 statement of the International Syria Support Group, however, included no mention of women’s participation or their rights.¹¹⁴ Yet, the Security Council resolution that was adopted in December 2015, establishing the framework that has guided recent efforts to lessen the violence in Syria and initiate a political transition, encouraged “the meaningful participation of women in the UN-facilitated political process for Syria”.¹¹⁵

Diana Sarosi, Manager, Policy and Advocacy, Nobel Women’s Initiative, provided her assessment of these developments to the Committee, as of early April 2016. In her view, “women face severe obstacles” with respect to meaningful participation in the Syrian peace talks. Even with the establishment of the Advisory Board, she said that women “continue to lack influence and resources to independently engage.” They are also treated as a block, with women’s groups who are pro-regime and those completely opposed to the regime of Bashar al-Assad somehow expected to “have the same opinion when it comes to the process and the future of their country”. That is obviously not the case, as Ms. Sarosi emphasized. The expectation of homogeneity has seemingly limited the Board’s ability to provide a strong influence over responses to the conflict. Ms. Sarosi suggested that the broader problem illustrated by this case reflects a recurrent structural problem that can be seen with most peace processes. A process is designed and set-up and then women are incorporated – or added – to it. Ms. Sarosi noted one of the findings of the Global Study in this regard, namely that “there have been very few cases in which women’s participation was an integral component of the design process.” She argued that “women must be part of these processes from the design of the preliminary talks, throughout negotiations, as well as implementation.”¹¹⁶

Beyond the design of peace processes, there is an issue more fundamental still, which may explain why there has been comparatively less progress on the empowerment aspects of the women, peace and security agenda. Those elements of the agenda are, as Professor Goetz articulated, a “political project,” and one that is not underpinned by the same accountability mechanisms and legal framework as have evolved to address conflict-related sexual violence. She explained that key difference as follows:

Sexual violence in warfare committed or condoned by warring parties is a very serious international crime. A failure to include women in peace talks is not. A failure to address gender issues in ceasefire agreements is not. A failure to contribute women soldiers and police to peacekeeping is not an international crime, nor is a failure to promote women’s participation in international foreign affairs decisions. There’s an obvious difference in the strength of the accountability frameworks between international law and the more political challenging project of promoting women’s participation and leadership.¹¹⁷

113 The United Nations Office at Geneva, “[Mediator’s Summary of the 13-27 April Round of UN Facilitated Intra-Syrian Talks](#),” 28 April 2016. Further information on the activities of the Women’s Advisory Board are outlined in UN Women, “[Press Release: Syrian Women’s Advisory Board shares experience in exploring solutions for peace](#),” 31 August 2016.

114 The United Nations Office at Geneva, “[Statement of the International Syria Support Group](#),” 17 May 2016.

115 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/2254 \(2015\)](#), 18 December 2015.

116 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

117 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

As a political project, the impetus for change – of the kind that would see women consistently and meaningfully involved in the decision-making that affects their lives – can therefore only derive from political will. The Committee would like the Government of Canada to show such political will.

B. Building Capacity at the Local Level and Enabling Participation

Testimony pointed to a number of avenues through which UN member states, including Canada, could help to embed women’s participation and empowerment as regular aspects of peace and security processes. One is the use of Canada’s diplomatic voice and leverage, which can be exercised through bilateral and multilateral channels. Ms. Davis suggested that Canada can use those channels of influence to urge the inclusion of women in the delegations that are involved in negotiations, to identify and support the women leaders who could participate, and to demand “that internationally sponsored negotiations create and finance processes for women’s engagement.”¹¹⁸

Another avenue is for UN member states to invest in various forms of capacity-building. Some of these are very practical, such as alleviating the logistical issues that may be hindering women’s participation (e.g., insecurity, limited access to appropriate meeting space and transportation constraints). Targeted support is also needed to train women in everything from the preparation of humanitarian assessments, to skills development in relation to mediation, economic planning, constitution-drafting and ceasefire monitoring. Professor Goetz noted that women are often impeded from participating in political processes because they lack access to networks and may have limited political experience. As she said, “Political power, credibility, and legitimacy is not something that external actors can build, and it’s not something that happens overnight.” Yet the training that exists, according to Professor Goetz, is “often ad hoc and random”.¹¹⁹

A new mechanism for delivering training and building women’s capacity to engage in peace and security processes and bodies could be based on the Justice Rapid Response model, which was mentioned in the previous chapter of this report. That mechanism is not only a roster of experts that is used to organize and facilitate deployments. It also delivers training to justice and security professionals – magistrates, police, judges, and lawyers – on various aspects of international law, who are then certified for deployment upon the request of states, international courts and international organizations. Professor Goetz explained that Justice Rapid Response is a unique tool in this regard because it targets professionals from fragile states for training.¹²⁰ It could, as she proposed, serve as a model for developing a “global community of practice” that would focus on the skills and networks women need to participate and assert leadership in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery.¹²¹

118 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

119 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

A third avenue involves shifting resources, attention and political support for women, peace and security to the local level. A clear consensus emerged in the Committee's study regarding the critical importance of focusing efforts on the ground in conflict-affected communities. In many ways, that point provides the bridge that connects the various themes raised in this report. International leadership and support are, as has been argued throughout, needed. But the women, peace and security agenda can only succeed as it was fully intended if that global support is used to catalyze local action. As Mr. Fairbairn said, "we must listen to, respect, and support the voices of women at the grassroots level" because it is they "who are actively experiencing conflict."¹²²

It is women in situations of fragility, crisis and conflict who must, ultimately, carry the agenda forward. They are the agents of change identified by the Committee in the heading of this chapter. They must get involved in ceasefire monitoring, negotiate reconstruction plans, and convey the concerns, experiences and needs of their communities. They can also help to resolve community-level conflicts, preventing their escalation into wider violence, as a network of women mediators – supported by UN Women and the UN Peacebuilding Fund – has been doing in Burundi.¹²³ Local civil society can also, as an example involving legal clinics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo demonstrates, build the local trust that could enable larger institution-building projects.¹²⁴

There is strong rationale in support of prioritizing and enabling the work of women peacebuilders who are active at the local level. These women are finely attuned to the realities and security risks affecting their communities, as well as to their cultural and political sensitivities. They can adapt the normative framework established by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to make it responsive to conditions and concerns on the ground, while being more likely to have the access and local credibility necessary to do so.¹²⁵ Generally speaking, local women's groups can help to design solutions that are relevant to their communities, and, thus, increase the probability that projects will work and elicit local support. Related to that, they can also promote local ownership of those initiatives and accountability for them. As Jacqueline O'Neill put it, "Canada's policy never will be, or be able to be, or should be the primary driver of change in a country." The best long-term strategy will, in her view, "always be to build the capacity of women in that country to hold their own government accountable."¹²⁶

The Committee found the evidence in favour of local approaches compelling. While international policy and normative frameworks are always needed to establish standards, delivering on those commitments requires dedicated champions on the ground. At the same time, those individuals and movements need to be put in a position where they can thrive and contribute the leadership and innovative solutions envisioned by the women, peace and security agenda. The Committee is also aware that many networks of

122 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

123 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016, (Nahla Valiji).

124 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016, (Ian Thomson).

125 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016, (Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini).

126 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

women peacebuilders have already been established and training tools developed and improved. The role for Canada is therefore to harness, connect and expand those networks and tools, and to ensure that local women's groups have the resources and political backing that can enable them to make a difference on a large scale. Canada is a wealthy democracy, and visible player within UN bodies and various diplomatic circles. It should use its influence to insist that the women who are part of those networks and who receive training are able to act – and have access – when peace negotiations, donor conferences, and other such decision-making moments arrive. All of these actions may not, in the end, cost very much from a financial perspective. But the Committee believes that equipping women with the skills, confidence and connections that can allow them to become involved in matters of peace and security can be a game-changing investment.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Government of Canada should support training programs that equip women in conflict-affected and fragile states with the skills, capacity, experience and networks necessary to play meaningful roles in peace and security processes and institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada should vigorously use all of the diplomatic and financial tools – bilateral and multilateral – at its disposal to encourage the inclusion of women in a meaningful way in mediation initiatives, ceasefire and peace negotiations, and donor conferences, as well as in all aspects of post-conflict planning and decision-making.

Another approach to addressing women's empowerment involves widening the lens of the women, peace and security agenda to ensure that it encapsulates all of the programs and institutions that can have a role in advancing gender equality. That point is particularly relevant in post-conflict contexts. For his part, Robert Jenkins, Professor, Faculty of Political Science, Hunter College, drew the Committee's attention to women's economic empowerment, suggesting that jobs programs are a tool that merits closer examination as part of this agenda. He called for an ambitious approach that can maximize the potential of employment programs in post-conflict settings "as instruments of both peace building and women's empowerment."¹²⁷ Achieving that objective would require rights-based programs, public involvement in the prioritization of projects, and civil society engagement "in ensuring accountability for how funds are used."¹²⁸ Professor Jenkins argued that it is by addressing those three elements "that gender equality and women's empowerment can be placed at the forefront of large-scale employment programs in conflict-affected and fragile states."¹²⁹

Another tool that is often overlooked is a country's health system. Valerie Percival, Assistant Professor of International Affairs, Norman Paterson School of International

127 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

Affairs, Carleton University, articulated how the health sector is usually viewed from a narrow perspective as an institution that provides services to women, rather than one that “should be engaged in the broad societal efforts to promote gender equality.”¹³⁰ There is an irony, she pointed out, in ignoring health institutions as part of the women, peace and security agenda given that they are the very institutions with which people interact the most throughout their lives. Health institutions can, as the research cited by Professor Percival suggests, be used to build state capacity and public confidence in the state; they can also help to promote gender equality through such levers as human resource strategies and the adoption of gender-related norms.¹³¹

C. Supporting Human Rights Defenders

When considering the ways in which local action can be enabled and women empowered as agents of change, witnesses called for particular attention to be devoted to women human rights defenders.¹³² As with the other actors highlighted in this chapter, women human rights defenders are, in many ways, the beating heart of the women, peace and security agenda. The Committee heard that these brave individuals and groups are on the front lines of human rights work. They are, consequently, often targeted with violence, intimidation and harassment by armed groups, local security forces and governments for the work they do and the sensitive issues they raise. Jess Tomlin, Executive Director, MATCH International Women’s Fund, reminded the Committee that human rights defenders are, at the end of the day, “ordinary people who work at great personal risk to defend the rights of their communities.”¹³³ They fulfil vital roles, as Ms. Taylor explained, including the promotion of national legal reforms that adhere to human rights obligations, the provision of assistance and legal aid to survivors of sexual violence, the exposure of abuses and impunity, and the application of pressure on “their own governments to tackle these problems more effectively.”¹³⁴

Human Rights Watch recently documented the pressures facing women human rights defenders in Sudan, and the actions taken by the state in that country to “silence” them. In reference to that work, Ms. Taylor underlined that women who are engaged in rights campaigns and other public action “are targeted with a range of abuses, from rape and rape threats to deliberate efforts to tar their reputations.”¹³⁵ From a global perspective,

130 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 May 2016.

131 Ibid.

132 According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the term “human rights defender” is used “to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights.” They are identified as being a human rights defender according to the activities they carry out, rather than the positions or occupations that they hold. Issues addressed by human rights defenders can, therefore, include everything from summary executions to forced evictions and environmental damage. See: OHCHR, [Human Rights Defenders: Protecting the Right to Defend Human Rights](#), Fact Sheet No. 29, Geneva, April 2004.

133 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

134 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

135 Ibid. For further information, see Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest”: Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protestors in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016.

the ultimate nature of the risk involved in being a human rights defender was captured in the statistic provided to the Committee by Ms. Tomlin, specifically that “156 human rights defenders were killed or died in detention” in 2015.¹³⁶

A prominent case involving the murder of a woman human rights defender generated significant outrage around the time that the Committee began its study on women, peace and security. On 3 March 2016, Berta Cáceres, the founder of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations Honduras, was shot to death in her home in Honduras. Ms. Cáceres, an environmentalist and indigenous woman, was an active figure promoting the rights of indigenous people in her country, including through opposition to a hydroelectric project.¹³⁷ She had received death threats and been subjected to other forms of intimidation for years. Ms. Hansen highlighted these events during her testimony in order to emphasize the importance of international monitoring. Pressure, she noted, also needs to be directed against national authorities to ensure accountability for violence committed against women human rights defenders. Ms. Hansen stated that, following Ms. Cáceres’ murder, Canada immediately issued “a very strong statement,” something that Ms. Hansen identified as essential in such cases, so that there is a clear signal that “the international community is watching.”¹³⁸

Testimony indicated that Canada should take a more systematic approach to supporting human rights defenders at the multilateral level, including in the negotiation of UN resolutions. The Committee was told that Canada has the ability to raise these issues in the UN Commission on the Status of Women, now that Canada will serve as a member of its governing body from 2017 to 2021. Ms. Hansen indicated that Amnesty International Canada is encouraging Canada to use its new role on the Commission “to advocate for the adoption of special measures to protect women human rights defenders.”¹³⁹ In December 2015, by a vote of 127 in favour (including Canada) to 14 against with 41 abstentions, the UN General Assembly did adopt a stand-alone resolution on human rights defenders. It includes a paragraph expressing “particular concern” about the “systemic and structural discrimination and violence faced by women human rights defenders of all ages,” calling for “appropriate, robust and practical steps” to be taken to

136 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

137 See: Darryl Fears, “[A daughter takes up her slain mother’s activism](#),” *The Washington Post*, 9 April 2016; and, OHCHR, “[Berta Cáceres’ murder: UN experts renew call to Honduras to end impunity](#),” Geneva, 11 April 2016. In May and June 2016, FAAE’s Subcommittee on International Human Rights held [three meetings](#) on the situation in Honduras, in which it heard from Bertha Zuniga Cáceres, the daughter of Berta Cáceres, and Castro Soto, a human rights activist who was present when Berta Cáceres was assassinated.

138 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016. See: Embassy of Canada to Costa Rica, “[Canada urges Honduras authorities to clarify the murder of Berta Cáceres](#),” Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 3 March 2016.

139 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016. When the Commission dealt specifically with violence against women in 2013, its agreed conclusions included a very general call on governments and various other actors to support and provide protection for “those who are committed to eliminating violence against women,” including women human rights defenders. See: UN Women, [Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls: 2013 Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions](#).

protect them.¹⁴⁰ A previous General Assembly resolution, which was adopted at the end of 2013, addressed the situation of women human rights defenders specifically. Among other provisions, and as one aspect of the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, that General Assembly resolution calls for police officers and law enforcement personnel to be provided with “gender-sensitive training,” including on “barriers that women human rights defenders face in gaining access to justice in armed conflict and post conflict situations....”¹⁴¹

In addition to the work done in those specific UN bodies, Ms. Taylor argued that Canada could take a “powerful” step by bringing the issue of women human rights defenders into the UN Security Council.¹⁴² More broadly, Ms. Tomlin suggested that Canada could follow the leadership example set by the Netherlands and Norway in “making the protection of human rights defenders a foreign policy priority.”¹⁴³

While such diplomatic action at the international level is an importance piece, testimony indicated that concrete support for women human rights defenders is also needed on the ground. Speaking from her personal experience, Ms. Mohammed recalled a time in 2008 when she had been in danger in Iraq and lost her Canadian passport. She told the Committee that she received “absolutely no co-operation” from the Canadian embassy in the region, notwithstanding the fact that Iraq was “at the height of the sectarian war” and she was “left without a home and on the streets”. Ms. Mohammed attested that women human rights defenders need “access to safe places” because the very nature of their work is to challenge government positions and policies, often on sensitive aspects of women’s rights. As she put it, in her line of work, “You find yourself grabbing your bags and running for safety.”¹⁴⁴

As will be addressed in greater detail below, witnesses also emphasized that financial support is needed to sustain the individuals and organizations involved in human rights work. Doing so, as Ms. Tomlin pointed out, can help to put them in a position where they are able to “change the situations that put them at risk.”¹⁴⁵

The Committee agrees that Canada should take a role of leadership in the protection of human rights defenders. In difficult environments around the world, the realization of so many of the principles that underpin Canadian foreign policy – including the rule of law,

140 United Nations General Assembly, [Human rights defenders in the context of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#), A/RES/70/161, adopted on 17 December 2015, para 14.

141 United Nations General Assembly, [Promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protecting women human rights defenders](#), A/RES/68/181, adopted on 18 December 2013, para 16.

142 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

143 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

144 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 May 2016.

145 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

democratic governance, and gender equality – often depends on the dedication of people who are willing to put themselves in harm’s way in the furtherance of human rights. The same is true for the women, peace and security agenda, which is advanced, step-by-step, through the work of human rights defenders who are pushing for accountability, reform and justice. It is those very human rights defenders who can help to bridge the gap between international policy and daily realities. And to paraphrase Ms. Hansen, their efforts can only be reinforced by knowing that Canada is always watching.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Government of Canada should significantly increase the diplomatic, financial and material support it provides to human rights defenders as part of its approach to women, peace and security, and advocate on the world stage for other countries to take similar actions, including by calling within the United Nations for the adoption of special protection measures.

D. Attaching Resources to Commitments

There was a general sense throughout the Committee’s study that a far greater amount of international financial resources needs to be allocated to the promotion of women’s empowerment and gender equality. In fact, testimony suggested that the paucity of resources dedicated to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda may be the greatest impediment to its realization. That view was included in the Global Study, which observed that the “failure to allocate sufficient resources and funds has been perhaps the most serious and unrelenting obstacle to implementation of women, peace and security commitments over the past 15 years.”¹⁴⁶ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that, in 2012–2013, “only 2% of all aid to peace and security in fragile states and economies targeted gender equality as a principal objective.”¹⁴⁷ That percentage translated into US\$40 million out of the US\$1.9 billion pledged for peace and security programming in fragile states.¹⁴⁸

Within that broader picture, the Committee learned, in particular, that not enough funding is reaching the organizations that are trying to advance implementation of the women, peace and security agenda on the ground. That sentiment was captured in a survey – conducted in 2015 – of civil society organizations that work on these issues in 71 countries. The survey indicated that its respondents “are affected by inadequate short-term funding mechanisms skewed toward international organizations”; the same

146 The Global Study, p. 16.

147 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Network on Gender Equality, [Financing UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Aid in support of gender equality and women’s rights in fragile contexts](#), OECD, March 2015, p. 1. Notwithstanding these statistics, Professor Goetz cautioned the Committee that “we actually know very little about the real amount spent.” She emphasized that there “have been no serious gender audits of actual spending on women, peace, and security.” See: FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

148 OECD-DAC, [Financing UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Aid in support of gender equality and women’s rights in fragile contexts](#), p. 7.

respondents also noted “a disconnect between donor agendas and the reality of working in crisis settings.”¹⁴⁹

The Committee was struck by the information brought to its attention regarding the precarious situation facing a range of civil society organizations. Many face ongoing financial pressures, while others have disappeared or curtailed their activities over the years as a result of insufficient resources. Ms. Tomlin informed the Committee that grassroots organizations working in developing countries have an average annual income of US\$20,000; that figure is US\$12,000 in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Ms. Tomlin, 48% of those organizations “never receive core funding for day-to-day necessities such as staffing, lights, the Internet, and security.” As such, “every month, one in five close their doors due to financial shortfalls.”¹⁵⁰

These groups remain in tenuous situations, Ms. Tomlin noted, notwithstanding “significant donor prioritization in the last decade for women and girls, whether for maternal and child health or economic empowerment initiatives.”¹⁵¹ Two funding trends were brought to the Committee’s attention in this regard. The first is the increasing tendency of donors to channel large-scale resources through big multilateral organizations. Ian Thomson, Partnerships Coordinator for Africa, KAIROS, sees that trend unfolding in the context of Canadian development assistance. He asserted that the Canadian government has increasingly channelled its official development assistance “through large multilateral organizations, such as UN agencies and the World Bank, and less through partnerships with civil society organizations in Canada and internationally.”¹⁵²

The second trend is the recent emphasis on project-based funding. Speaking from a Canadian perspective, Mr. Fairbairn said that the government’s “funding architecture has shifted a great deal” in recent years. In the past, working with the then-Canadian International Development Agency’s partnership branch, organizations such as his own were able “to be responsive to the needs identified by our partners on the ground.” However, the current funding framework “privileges unpredictable funding through periodic calls for proposals based on themes that are pre-selected by the Canadian government,” which is, in Mr. Fairbairn’s view, “simply inadequate.”¹⁵³

Witnesses provided negative views of the project-based funding model, access and eligibility among the concerns. Ms. Tomlin argued that recent large-scale commitments

149 The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Cordaid, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and International Civil Society Action Network, [Global Report: Civil Society Organization \(CSO\) Survey for the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security](#), 2015, p. 8.

150 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid. The [International Development and Humanitarian Civil Society Partnership Policy](#) of what was then Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development “recognizes that responsive mechanisms (including unsolicited proposals) can provide the impetus for innovative approaches, and that [civil society organizations - CSOs] require time to plan their programming.” The policy also states that the department would “provide merit-based, predictable funding opportunities through equitable, flexible and transparent modalities that will support the diverse roles and types of CSOs in Canada and in developing countries.”

made at the global level that are focused on women and girls writ-large have not had a financial impact at the grassroots level. It is so because “women's organizations are often not eligible to apply for calls for proposals due to their smaller budget size and the funders' requirements for sophisticated operational and monitoring systems that don't align with the realities on the ground.”¹⁵⁴ The recent emphasis on project-based funding has, according to Ms. Tomlin, had the effect of rendering many of those smaller organizations ineligible to receive such funding because of their size and typical focus on cross-cutting issues affecting their communities (e.g., health, human rights and political issues), as opposed to “narrow deliverables”.¹⁵⁵

Other issues raised in connection to project-based funding relate to the sustainability and effectiveness of civil society operations. The end result of that funding model, according to Ms. Hansen, is to have women's organizations “going from project to project to project,” while “no one wants to pay the money to keep the lights on and to sustain” the organizations themselves. Consequently, organizations are unable to keep the staff they need over the long-term and cannot put in place, as Ms. Hansen described it, the “big vision” of what they are seeking to accomplish, with a plan to see that vision through over a number of years.¹⁵⁶

Ms. Taylor highlighted the particular challenges of short-term funding when speaking to the ways in which human rights defenders require support. In her view, the provision of a single year of funding to groups that are subject to “violence, oppression, and shame” is not enough. Enabling these groups to do their important work, requires, as Ms. Taylor argued, “long-term, consistent, and reliable funding, not unrealistic one year, outcome-based project funding.”¹⁵⁷ Defending human rights in environments characterized by their insecurity and weak rule of law, and, in many cases, government corruption and oppression, is, by its nature, not short-term work.

With these and other factors in mind, many of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee suggested that one of the most important steps that Canada could take to advance women's empowerment and gender equality around the world would be through the provision of multi-year and core funding to the civil society organizations that champion those very issues, particularly at the grassroots level. Witnesses argued for funding that is both predictable and of a scale appropriate to enable those organizations to carry out their vital work.

154 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016. As one example, a [call](#) for proposals was issued by what is now known as Global Affairs Canada in 2015 to promote the advancement of women and girl's rights and empowerment in Afghanistan. The total call was for up to \$30 million for projects that will be implemented between 2016–2017 and 2020–2021. The department wanted to contribute funding in the \$3–\$6 million range for selected projects. The full list of open and closed calls for proposals is available on the Global Affairs Canada [website](#). The [discussion paper](#) that was published to accompany the 2016 review of Canada's international assistance policy, funding and delivery framework states that the review “is an opportunity to discuss how to establish more productive partnerships with a broader range of CSOs.”

155 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

156 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

157 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

While data published by the OECD indicates that Canada has provided a sizeable amount of development assistance that is focused on gender equality and women's empowerment,¹⁵⁸ Canada does not appear to have provided very much support to what are classified as "women's equality organisations and institutions". Canada allocated US\$4 million in development assistance to such organizations in 2014. That compares to the US\$114 million provided by Norway, US\$69 million provided by Sweden, US\$53 million provided by Australia, US\$47 million provided by the United Kingdom, US\$37 million provided by Spain, and US\$24 million provided by the Netherlands in the same year.¹⁵⁹ A few witnesses drew attention to the funding mechanisms used by Norway¹⁶⁰ and the Netherlands as possible models for Canada. The Netherlands, for example, developed a fund – "women on the frontlines" – to target "institutional development funds to women's civil society groups in the Middle East."¹⁶¹

Witnesses urged the exploration of new and expanded national-level and international funding mechanisms. From a multilateral perspective, it was noted that the United Nations recently launched the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. As Ms. Valji explained, the instrument is "a pooled UN trust fund that has been established with donors, the UN and civil society in particular, to conduit funding to crisis contexts and directly to women's organizations on the ground."¹⁶² In fact, the Global Acceleration Instrument is expected to allocate a minimum of 50% of all the funds that are mobilized to civil society organizations.¹⁶³ To date, funding has been committed by Australia, Lithuania and the United Kingdom. At the time of writing, Australia had made the largest commitment, almost US\$3.1 million; Canada has not pledged any funding.¹⁶⁴ With respect to the national level, some testimony suggested that Canada could consider expanding the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, including through

158 Data is based on reporting from members of the OECD-DAC in relation to the gender equality marker – a classification system that determines whether an activity is focused on gender equality – for 2013–2014. According to that data, US\$717 million in aid was allocated by Canada for which gender equality was the "principal objective" and US\$1,104 million for which gender equality was a "significant objective." These allocations amounted to 61% of the total (bilateral, allocable) aid screened against the gender marker, or US\$2.96 billion. A principle objective means that gender equality "was an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental in its design." A significant objective, on the other hand, means that gender equality "was an important, but secondary objective of the activity." See: OECD, [Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Donor Charts](#), March 2016.

159 Ibid.

160 Norway announced a specific call for proposals for 2015–2017 for efforts to support women, peace and security. The call for proposals indicated that the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) intended to "support national and international civil society organisations in their efforts to strengthen women's effective influence in peace processes and post conflict contexts." See: Norad, "[Funds for efforts supporting the follow-up of 1325 – Women, Peace and Security 2015–2017](#)."

161 Written remarks provided to FAAE by Anne Marie Goetz, Professor, Center for Global Affairs, New York University, dated 2 May 2016. The Netherlands has also developed a specific grant programme called [Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women](#) (FLOW) and a [Human Rights Fund](#).

162 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

163 United Nations Development Group, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, [The Global Acceleration Instrument](#), 26 February 2016.

164 United Nations Development Group, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, "[Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action](#)," accessed 26 September 2016.

a dedicated envelope for women, peace and security activities.¹⁶⁵ Others believe that a new national funding mechanism may be required.¹⁶⁶

Ms. Davis tied these various threads together to reinforce why the existence of empowered and adequately funded civil society organizations is so essential, not only for the women, peace and security agenda, but for broader foreign policy objectives. The general view is, as she noted, that the “democratic space” for civil society is closing, and women’s civil society organizations are “stretched”. Yet, Ms. Davis underlined that we also “know that if we can support them to do the work they do anyway in their homes and communities, the bang for the buck is tremendous.”¹⁶⁷

Investment in civil society can be seen through a strategic lens. When the environment for civil society becomes more dangerous and constrained, there are deleterious effects on broader international agendas that depend on such organizations having the capacity and space to translate high-level norms into deeds. Within that overall context, funding is clearly an issue that must be resolved. That said, the Committee does not feel that it has received enough information to draw definitive conclusions as regards to the exact national funding mechanisms that should be used by the Government of Canada to enable civil society work in relation to women, peace and security. The Committee is, at the same time, aware that the Security Council has encouraged UN member states “to develop dedicated funding mechanisms to support the work and enhance capacities of organizations that support women’s leadership development and full participation in all levels of decision-making” as regards Resolution 1325, including by “increasing contributions to local civil society”.¹⁶⁸ Regardless of the exact mechanism used, the Committee is of the firm view that Canada needs to answer that call. Put simply, more Canadian funding needs to get into the hands of grassroots women’s organizations more quickly and on a more dependable basis.

165 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 May 2016, (Valerie Percival). According to Global Affairs Canada’s 2014–2015 [statistical report](#) on international assistance, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives “is a contributions program administered at Canadian missions abroad, which is used to advance Canadian interests and priorities in a targeted and flexible manner.” It supports “small scale locally-developed projects” that are, on average, provided with funding of approximately \$25,000. The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives does not fund the core operations or recurrent costs of any organizations. See: The Embassy of Canada to Ethiopia, [Call for Canada Fund for Local Initiatives Applications](#).”

166 Jess Tomlin suggested that Canada could develop “a national funding instrument that is accessible to women’s rights organizations, as well as an earmarked funding mechanism within this for women’s organizations that are working on peace and security issues.” See: FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016, (Jess Tomlin). The written brief submitted by the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada states that Canada needs to allocate “significant new resources to support grassroots women’s organizations building peace.” The brief argues that an expansion of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives would not be a “sufficient” means of achieving that end. It identifies the possible options of: establishing “a specific Canadian fund to support grassroots women’s organizations working on [women, peace and security] issues”; issuing a call for proposals whereby Canadian non-governmental organizations would partner with grassroots women’s organizations in other countries; and, “working through the global network of women’s funds (of which the MATCH International Women’s Fund is a member).” See: Written brief provided to FAAE by the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada, 28 April 2016.

167 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

168 United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/2122 \(2013\)](#), 18 October 2013.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Government of Canada should consider contributing to the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Government of Canada should provide development assistance on a multi-year basis and for core operations to civil society organizations – including at the grassroots level – that are working to implement the women, peace and security agenda in conflict-affected and fragile states.

ESTABLISHING AN AMBITIOUS AND BOLD AGENDA FOR CANADA

Canada has important history and connections with the women, peace and security agenda. Canada was a non-permanent member of the Security Council when Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000. The next year, Canada initiated the establishment of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security in New York. That group is a coalition of UN member states, UN agencies and civil society organizations that coordinate actions to promote the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. As chair of the group, Canada regularly convenes meetings with stakeholders, including a special meeting in 2015 that specifically addressed sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers.¹⁶⁹

Canada has also developed concrete expertise. One example can be found in Canada's support for the Justice Rapid Response mechanism. In 2015, three female Canadian police officers were deployed to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Chief Superintendent Fleury informed the Committee that those officers assisted in the investigation of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide that were allegedly committed between 1975 and 1979, the years of the Khmer Rouge regime.¹⁷⁰ New tools are also being introduced within the Canadian Armed Forces and Department of National Defence. General Vance informed the Committee that a team of gender advisers is being established that will provide him and senior command with specific advice on women, peace and security. Gender adviser positions have also been created at Canadian Joint Operations Command and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. Furthermore, General Vance reported that gender advisers will be added "to deployed task forces in the very near future."¹⁷¹

In the larger picture, however, the Committee's study indicated that greater and more consistent leadership is needed across the Government of Canada on women, peace and security. In many ways, the Committee's impression of the role played by Canada in recent years is one of a collection of activities that have been developed by

169 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 21 April 2016.

170 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

171 Ibid.

different departments and agencies, some more effective and systematic than others. The Committee was not given the sense that an overarching and strategic vision has been entrenched, informing and connecting all relevant areas of policy.

Yet, as indicated above and in the other chapters of this report, Canada has much to offer and to build on in support of the women, peace and security agenda. That includes police and military training, and justice sector expertise in the investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as long-standing experience conducting gender analysis in the design and evaluation of development projects. Other activities have been undertaken in the diplomatic realm to advance women's participation in peace and security processes, but do not appear to have been given much visibility or large-scale resources. In the words of Professor Goetz, "Canada is not starting from scratch." But its support has, in her view, "been uneven". As such, she argued that "Canada could and should do more to be a standout international leader on women, peace, and security."¹⁷² This view was put even more strongly by Julie Delahanty, Executive Director, Oxfam Canada, who contended that,

Canada has played a role, but this role has not been one of a global leader. It has not been commensurate with our national and international commitments to gender equality and women's rights. Our rhetoric has not been backed by sufficient resources and expenditures of diplomatic capital. We have the chance to change this.¹⁷³

The starting point for doing so is in the design of Canada's next national action plan.

As was noted at the beginning of this report, Canada's existing action plan – *Building Peace and Security for All: Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security* – was released in October 2010.¹⁷⁴ It provides a framework for government departments and agencies with mandates relevant to the implementation of the women, peace and security resolutions, including with respect to policy, doctrine, programming, operations and training. While Global Affairs Canada has primary responsibility for the development of the action plan, other departments and agencies with international operations, including the RCMP and DND/CAF, are also responsible for implementation, monitoring and reporting.

The plan includes goals and indicators connected to the four pillars of the agenda: conflict prevention; women's participation and representation in the management of conflict; the protection of women in situations of armed conflict; and, the process of relief and recovery from conflict. Progress reports were meant to be tabled in Parliament each year (the last one reflects activities undertaken in 2013–2014). While it expired at the end of March 2016, officials from Global Affairs Canada told the Committee that the

172 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 3 May 2016.

173 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 March 2016.

174 Global Affairs Canada, [Building Peace and Security for All: Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security](#), October 2010.

government is committed to the action plan's renewal. Their intention is to update the plan so as "to reflect both the world and the Canada of 2016."¹⁷⁵

The Committee's main recommendation was put forward earlier, namely that the Canadian government should make women, peace and security a priority of its foreign policy agenda. An ambitious new action plan, focused on bringing about transformative change from policies and investments, is the tool through which that objective can be operationalized. All of the issues raised in previous chapters – including the training and recruitment of UN peacekeepers, justice sector capacity-building, services for survivors of sexual violence, training support for women peacebuilders, and funding for grassroots organizations – need to be organized and conceptualized as pieces of a cohesive and coherent approach.

When it was launched in 2010, Canada was one of about 20 countries to have a national action plan on women, peace and security. Today, around 60 countries have adopted such plans.¹⁷⁶ Arriving at a new plan that will position the Canadian government to implement all of the recommendations contained in this report begins with an evaluation of the existing plan, and the best practices that have been identified by others.

A. Lessons Learned: Making Women, Peace and Security a Policy Directive

The general message from the Committee's study is that Canada's next national action plan on women, peace and security needs to embrace simplicity, while also focusing on the impact that Canada is and could be making. Ms. O'Neill recommended that the next iteration of the plan should have fewer indicators, and those should be of a more qualitative nature. She placed an overall emphasis on "outcomes" and "not just performance."¹⁷⁷ The big question to resolve, as Ms. O'Neill suggested to the Committee, is the ultimate difference that Canada wants to make from its efforts. That question is an elemental one because all of the other components of an effective plan need to be designed to accomplish that goal. Put simply, the Canadian government should determine its answer to the big question, and then work backwards.

To understand why simplicity and clarity of purpose are needed, a review of the content of the existing action plan, and its monitoring framework, is warranted. The plan states that it is meant to guide the Government of Canada's actions in response to the relevant Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security; it also stresses the government's commitment to the effective implementation of the same. The plan, as it describes itself, is meant to provide "a framework for a cohesive whole-of-government approach".¹⁷⁸ What is missing is an explicit explanation as to why such an approach and the actions it entails are needed, and what larger outcomes are meant to be achieved.

175 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 8 March 2016.

176 PeaceWomen, "[Member States](#)"; and, Institute for Inclusive Security, "[National Action Plan Resource Center](#)."

177 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

178 Global Affairs Canada, [Building Peace and Security for All: Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security](#), October 2010.

Take women's participation, for example. There is little analysis explaining why women's participation in all matters of peace and security is important. The plan includes several intended actions in relation to that pillar, one of which is to encourage women's active and meaningful participation in decision-making and in peace operations. The first of five related indicators then tracks the "number of Canadian strategic-level national and international security policy directives or guiding documents that address the participation of women in decision making." For that indicator, the government's progress report for 2013–2014 simply states "none this year," which presumably means that no new directives or documents were developed by Canada's foreign affairs department on women's participation that year. It could, however, mean that none exist at all. It is difficult to interpret "none this year" with any certainty.¹⁷⁹

Granted, much more detail is reported for indicators relevant to the number of deployed foreign affairs, CAF and RCMP personnel, as well as recruitment and training practices. Extensive information is also provided on Canadian programming in fragile and conflict-affected states. The plan, however, seems relatively disinterested in tracking conditions, circumstances or developments outside of the Canadian government. There are, for example, no indicators on the number of women who participated in the peace negotiations in which Canada played a role, or the degree to which the perspectives and priorities of local women were incorporated in international agreements – whether a reconstruction strategy or transitional governance framework – that Canada played a part in negotiating. With all of the above, there is an absence of baseline data (i.e., the extent of the problem at the time the action plan was launched) and time-bound targets (i.e., where the Canadian government wanted to be by the time the action plan ran out).

Witnesses conveyed their frustrations with these progress reports, which have not provided a clear picture of how Canada is doing or facilitated the ability to understand and evaluate activities within a real-world context. Ms. Delahanty, for example, has seen "little effort" to evaluate and explain how the activities undertaken by the Canadian government "are leading to much needed change on the ground."¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the progress reports do not address in detail the setbacks that may have been encountered in the action plan's implementation, or lessons learned and corresponding adjustments made by the government along the way.

Other concerns were raised in regards to funding. Witnesses emphasized that Canada's action plan was not accompanied with a dedicated budget for implementation and did not identify any human resource commitments. The plan and corresponding progress reports contain little spending information of any kind. Ms. Woroniuk highlighted the absence of "clear data on investments and investment trends." It has therefore been, as she pointed out, "impossible to tell if the government is investing more resources now than before [the action plan] was established."¹⁸¹ During this study, the Committee was not provided with any information on Canada's overall budget for activities related to women,

179 Global Affairs Canada, [2013-2014 Progress Report – Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security](#).

180 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 March 2016.

181 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

peace and security, or any sense of Canada's budgetary allocations compared with other countries of a similar size and role internationally. Ms. Woroniuk argued that, going forward, public reporting must include "full financial information."¹⁸²

It seems that the above issues may not be limited to the Canadian context. Ms. O'Neill referred to the women, peace and security agenda as one that "suffers from the 'budgetless add-on syndrome' ... where people think we can just add on to people's existing responsibilities and not resource it." As she said, "If this is an authentic priority, it needs to be resourced."¹⁸³ Or, as Ms. Woroniuk put it, "A commitment without resources is not a commitment."¹⁸⁴

The Committee was told that a reference point that could be used as the basis on which Canada could dedicate budgetary resources is the UN Secretary-General's 15% target. As noted previously, that target is about the allocation of peacebuilding funds for initiatives that have gender equality and women's empowerment as their primary objective. In his 2015 report to the Security Council, the Secretary-General further recommended that a similar target should be applied to all projects aimed at addressing "new peace and security threats, including violent extremism, in recognition of the fact that these threats will not be eliminated and sustainable peace will not be built without the adequately resourced participation of women."¹⁸⁵ Several witnesses mentioned the 15% target in their presentations and argued that it be adopted by Canada.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Government of Canada should consider allocating at least 15% of the international assistance it provides for peace and security programming to projects that have gender equality and women's empowerment as their primary objective.

A related issue is policy capacity. The Committee was told that a single person has dedicated responsibility for women, peace and security within Global Affairs Canada.¹⁸⁶ According to Professor Percival, the "women, peace, and security file is often sidelined in [Canada's] stabilization and recovery programming and given to junior officials to oversee and implement." As she argued, "the department cannot contract out policy development and thinking or outsource leadership to the United Nations or other multilateral actors." The necessary policy expertise, in her view, must come from within.¹⁸⁷

The apparent lack of senior personnel who are dedicated to the women, peace and security file within Global Affairs Canada may be indicative of the action plan's relevance,

182 Ibid.

183 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

184 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

185 [Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2015/716, 16 September 2015, para 169.

186 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016, (Diana Sarosi).

187 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 May 2016.

or lack thereof. Testimony and other documentation suggest that the action plan has not shaped broader Canadian government policies or the manner in which decisions relevant to peace and security matters are being made. In other words, if the analogy of the action plan is one of a tool, it does not appear to have been taken off the shelf and used very often, other than as a means of organizing reporting on activities that are otherwise being pursued by the department. In this regard, references were made to the independent mid-term review of the action plan that was conducted by the U.S.-based Institute of Inclusive Security. It found that the action plan was “perceived as not significantly influencing Canada’s overall policy direction with respect to conflict-affected and fragile states.” The review included six main recommendations, one of which was to “reaffirm Canada’s commitment to the [action plan] as a policy directive.”¹⁸⁸

In support of that finding from the mid-term review, Ms. Woroniuk recommended that Canada move its action plan “from the margins” to the centre of its approach to peace and security. The plan must, in other words, be treated and seen by those who work within the Canadian government as a policy directive. There is a simple test, as Ms. Woroniuk suggested, for determining whether or not such a substantive shift has occurred and can be detected throughout Canada’s multi-faceted work on peace and security, from the consideration of disarmament initiatives to the management of crises in specific countries and regions. The question just needs to be asked: if “women, peace, and security is not the main topic under discussion, does it come up?”¹⁸⁹

It was clear from the Committee’s study that high-level leadership on women, peace and security is needed within the Government of Canada. The Chief of the Defence Staff Directive on women, peace and security, which was published at the end of January 2016, provides an important touchstone.¹⁹⁰ The directive outlines the ways in which gender perspectives will be fully integrated into Canadian Armed Forces planning, operations, training, education and doctrine. General Vance informed the Committee that his mission is “to fully integrate these requirements and direction on gender-based analysis plus, GBA+, into Canadian Armed Forces planning and operations by August 31, 2017, and into the wider institution by March 31, 2019.”¹⁹¹ He decided to take such action, shortly after being appointed Chief of the Defence Staff in 2015, because he realized that more could be done “to systematically implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security.” It is clear that there is nothing optional about this directive. As General Vance put it to the Committee, he has issued his implementation “orders,” and accountability for the directive ultimately rests with him.¹⁹²

188 Inclusive Security, [Assessment of Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security 2010-2016](#), 15 September 2014.

189 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 April 2016.

190 National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, [CDS Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions into CAF Planning and Operations](#), January 2016.

191 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016. GBA+ is an “analytical tool used to assess the potential impacts of policies, programs, services, and other initiatives on diverse groups of women and men, taking into account gender and other identity factors.” For more information on GBA+, see: Status of Women Canada, [Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#).

192 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

Such a directive clarifies intent, roles, expectations and timelines. As Ms. O'Neill described General Vance's plan, it "lays out what he wants to achieve, who's responsible for doing it, and by when they need to do so." Department-specific implementation plans are, she noted, an important part of removing any "guesswork" for government personnel in terms of understanding "what it means for their day-to-day life to bring this national action plan alive."¹⁹³ Ms. O'Neill also stressed that fully ingraining a policy within the "capillaries or the DNA" of a department also involves incorporating women, peace and security policy and the action plan in job descriptions and performance evaluations. In her words, it is about creating a "culture of accountability" around the plan.¹⁹⁴

When he appeared before the Committee, General Vance was asked for his opinion regarding how Canada's action plan could be strengthened. In his reply, he emphasized the need to arrive at something that is more than "simply aspirational language". An action plan, in his view "needs to really speak to the function of the organization." It must be "a necessity".¹⁹⁵

It is not the Committee's role to provide detailed recommendations on the exact content of Canada's next national action plan on women, peace and security. The intention of this report was not to propose a list of targets and indicators. It was, rather, to establish broad parameters and criteria. The Committee agrees that a simplified framework that focuses on policy objectives and challenges is needed. Many of those were discussed in detail in earlier chapters of this report, all of which emphasized women's participation in the structures, processes, services and institutions that concern them. The Committee's view of the overall purpose of the women, peace and security agenda – peaceful, just and inclusive societies – could also inform the basis on which Canada's next action plan is built, with targets relevant to the four pillars selected in order to meet that objective.

Each of the Committee's meetings revealed the wealth of expertise that is out there on women, peace and security. In addition to engagement with parliamentarians, the Committee believes that the Government of Canada can draw on that expertise by pursuing regular and comprehensive consultations with civil society on the design of the next action plan, the level and type of resources needed to carry it forward, and the annual evaluation of its progress. For that engagement to be meaningful, it must be incorporated from the beginning of the process, before the first draft is written.

Whatever the final content of the Canadian government's next action plan, the Committee agrees with witnesses that leadership, accountability and transparency will be the essential ingredients determining its success. The action plan cannot be another document posted on another website to meet another international requirement. It must, as argued above, be treated as a core directive, and one that concerns what has often been referred to as the whole of government. If the approach to authentic engagement

193 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 April 2016.

194 Ibid.

195 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 April 2016.

that is suggested here is adopted, it is the Committee's hope that women, peace and security can start to become something bigger still: a whole of society effort.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Government of Canada should engage in comprehensive consultations with parliamentarians and civil society organizations to develop a new, ambitious and well-resourced national action plan on women, peace and security.

RECOMMENDATION 16

Each Canadian government department and agency with responsibilities under the action plan on women, peace and security should identify a high-level champion who would be responsible for developing and overseeing a directive that would be specific to that department or agency's role in the implementation of the action plan, and which would, among other requirements, identify needed financial and human resources, as well as time-bound objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Government of Canada should provide a report to Parliament by 1 March of each year on the implementation of its action plan on women, peace and security, which must include detailed information on the financial resources it has allocated to all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda, and an evaluation of the outcomes and broader impact of those initiatives.

As a final word, the Committee stresses that this report is not the end of its consideration of women, peace and security. The study reinforced the complexity of these issues and their implications for a broad range of policies, including the design and delivery of Canada's development assistance and the role our country plays within the United Nations. Indeed, many of the themes raised in this report will be relevant as Canada campaigns for a seat on the UN Security Council. The Committee therefore intends to practice what it has advocated throughout this report. It will do so by continuing to consider issues relevant to women, peace and security as part of its broader consideration of Canada's foreign and development policies and, ultimately, Canada's role in the world.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development</p> <p>Anthony Anderson, Senior Policy Advisor, Conflict Policy and Security Coherence Secretariat, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force</p> <p>Tamara Guttman, Director General, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force</p> <p>Julie Shouldice, Acting Director General, Social Development</p>	2016/03/08	4
<p>CARE Canada</p> <p>Margaret Capelazo, Gender Advisor, International Programs</p> <p>Jacquelyn Wright, Vice-President, International Programs</p>	2016/03/10	5
<p>Oxfam Canada</p> <p>Julie Delahanty, Executive Director</p>		
<p>Inter Pares</p> <p>Bill Fairbairn, Latin America Program Manager</p>	2016/04/12	6
<p>KAIROS</p> <p>Ian Thomson, Partnerships Coordinator, Africa</p>		
<p>MATCH International Women's Fund</p> <p>Jess Tomlin, Executive Director</p>		
<p>Nobel Women's Initiative</p> <p>Diana Sarosi, Manager, Policy and Advocacy</p>		
<p>Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada</p> <p>Beth Woroniuk, Steering Committee Member</p>		
<p>Human Rights Watch</p> <p>Sarah Taylor, Women, Peace and Security Advocate, Women's Rights Division</p>	2016/04/14	7
<p>Institute for Inclusive Security</p> <p>Jacqueline O'Neill, Director</p>		
<p>Department of National Defence</p> <p>Greg Smolyneec, Director General of Strategic Initiatives, Strategic Joint Staff</p> <p>Gen Jonathan H. Vance, Chief of the Defence Staff</p>	2016/04/19	8

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of National Defence LGen Christine T. Whitecross, Commander, Military Personnel Command</p> <p>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Barbara Fleury, Chief Superintendent, Police Advisor, Canada's Permanent Mission to the United Nations</p> <p>UN Women Nahla Valji, Deputy Chief, Peace and Security Section</p> <p>United Nations Development Programme Randi Davis, Director, Gender Team</p>	2016/04/19	8
<p>Amnesty International Canada Jacqueline Hansen, Major Campaigns and Women's Rights Campaigner</p> <p>NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security Louise Allen, Executive Coordinator</p>	2016/04/21	9
<p>As individuals Dalal Abdallah, Yezidi Human Rights Activist Anne Marie Goetz, Professor, Center for Global Affairs, New York University Robert Jenkins, Professor, Faculty of Political Science, Hunter College</p> <p>International Civil Society Action Network Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Co-Founder and Executive Director</p> <p>Yezidis Human Rights Gulie Khalaf, Representative</p>	2016/05/03	10
<p>As an individual Valerie Percival, Assistant Professor of International Affairs, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University</p> <p>Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq Yanar Mohammed, President, Baghdad Headquarters</p>	2016/05/10	12

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

Organizations and Individuals

Control Arms Secretariat

Gender and Mine Action Programme

Global Compliance Research Project

Inter Pares

Mines Action Canada

Oxfam Canada

United Nations Association in Canada

United Nations Population Fund

Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 4 to 10, 12, 20 to 22 and 23) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Robert D. Nault
Chair

An Opportunity for Global Leadership: Canada and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Supplementary Opinion from the **New Democratic Party of Canada**

The Committee's study on Canada and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda was proposed by the New Democratic Party. We were pleased that this was the first study to be adopted by the committee in the 42nd Parliament – an action which, we believe, reflects the importance of this issue to Canadians.

The Committee heard from many witnesses over the course of the study, including leaders in the WPS field in Canada and internationally. We thank the witnesses for sharing their expertise with the Committee and we hope their recommendations will be taken seriously by the Government of Canada as it designs a new, ambitious, and well-funded National Action Plan.

Unfortunately, we believe the final recommendations of the Committee's report do not sufficiently reflect the suggestions from the many expert witnesses, especially with regard to outlining the concrete steps Canada must do to become a global leader in Women, Peace, and Security. We therefore outline our position and recommendations in this supplementary report.

Over the last decade, the issue of women, peace and security was largely neglected by the Canadian government. Reports on Canada's National Action Plan were frequently late, and the Agenda was underfunded. We note that the scarcity of funds has been one of the key challenges of implementing the WPS agenda at both the national and global level. We believe this must change.

While we are generally in agreement with the Committee's report and many of its recommendations, we remain concerned with regard to the inadequate attention paid to the important issue of funding from the Canadian government. Given the strong evidence the Committee heard about the effectiveness of the WPS agenda, we believe the Committee's recommendations should be far more ambitious with regard to long-term, predictable and accessible funding for implementation of this agenda.

Rhetoric is useless without clear and specific targets. If Canada is to make the WPS Agenda a core goal of Canadian foreign policy, it *must* provide a dedicated budget for Canada's National Action Plan, including funds for staff, consultations, outreach, Canadian capacity building and knowledge management. The Committee report does not sufficiently reflect this need, despite the fact that this point was articulated by multiple witnesses over the course of the study.

Recommendation 12 does not outright ask the Government of Canada to fund the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian engagement. This is a pooled UN trust fund that has been established with donors, the

UN and civil society. We urge Canada to immediately contribute to this Instrument, as several of its international peers have already done.

The New Democratic Party believes Recommendation 14 is unnecessarily weak. We believe Canada *must* allocate *at least 15%* of the international assistance it provides for peace and security programming to projects that have the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment as their primary objective. The Committee was urged by several witnesses to prioritize this target, and should have done so.

The 15% target was proposed by the UN Secretary General in the Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender Responsive Peacebuilding in 2010, yet this target remains largely unmet. The New Democratic Party believes that Canada should support efforts by the United Nations to move this Agenda forward. At a time when the Government of Canada is expressing renewed support for the United Nations and multilateralism, and campaigning for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council, this seems to us especially important.

We cannot emphasize enough the words of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women: "It is a continuing frustration that the level of rhetoric for gender equality, and the level of ambition expressed, is not evidenced in financing. We must not miss the chance to achieve radical change – moving from treating women's issues as side issues or peripheral to the business of the UN, to making women and girls the missing answer to creating a peaceful and just world."¹

We urge the Canadian government to demonstrate it believes in the power of engaging women in peace and security, by walking the talk, and dedicating the political and financial support to make Canada a leader in implementing the WPS Agenda.

¹ Quoted in the Global Study on UNSC resolution 1325, Chapter 13: Financing the Women Peace and Security Agenda (2015)
<http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/chapters%20of%20global%20study%20-%20english/ch13.pdf>, p. 375