Protect. Help. Explain.
COVID-19

Implementing WPS mandated tasks in the context of COVID-19
July 2020

The continued implementation of WPS mandates remains central to peacekeeping missions' COVID-19 mitigation and response efforts. Missions continue to leverage their partnerships with national authorities and women's organizations, leaders and networks as critical peace and security partners in the Secretary- General's Global Ceasefire Call, COVID-19 mitigation and response, and efforts to ensure women's continued direct leadership and participation in peace and political processes.

Current efforts:

Women's participation in peace and political processes: While women's participation remains a key priority, negative trends have been observed across several missions following recent political developments.

- In Sudan, where women successfully advocated for the abolishment of discriminatory laws, they now face public criticism for their actions from Islamist clerics. In July 2020, when Sudan's new government appointed 18 state governors, local political forces worked to ensure that only two women became governors. While this is the first time in Sudan's history any women were appointed governors, it is still troublingly given women's leadership role in political activism. When the Sudanese cabinet was reshuffled in July, its first woman Minister of Foreign Affairs stepped down, although another woman was appointed interim Minister of Finance. UNAMID's support for women's participation in the Juba peace remains critical.
- In South Sudan, the 35% quota for women's representation continues to be ignored. In a joint statement, women leaders expressed disappointment that only one out of the nine state governors appointed in July was a woman and called for parties to the agreement to adhere to the gender provisions in the agreement. A similar statement was made by the donor coordination group on WPS led by Sweden and Norway. UNMISS is supporting the development of state-level directories of women leaders qualified for leadership positions. UNMISS is also engaging the National Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to conduct a gender needs assessment.
- In Mali, women leaders have been mediating among conflict parties during the current political unrest and worked with the ECOWAS mediation delegation to find solutions. Four women attended the 40th session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, when it met in June. The committee agreed to increase the participation of women from two to three representatives for each party. This is the direct result of consistent advocacy by women leaders and the high-level workshop on women's participation facilitated by MINUSMA earlier this year.

- In the <u>Central African Republic</u> (CAR), women continue to be sidelined in the peace agreement's implementation mechanisms and, despite concerted efforts by MINUSMA, only a limited number of women have registered as voters in the upcoming elections due to quarantine related safety concerns and political insecurity.
- In <u>Kosovo</u>, UNMIK is supporting the participation of women in the on-going dialogue for the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. The first meeting included the participation of one woman, a deputy prime minister. Hopefully, the increase in the number of women ministers and the first ever woman Assembly of Kosovo Chairperson will create pressure to increase the number of women at the formal talks.

Gender expertise in COVID-19 related planning and programming: Across all peacekeeping missions, gender units and gender advisers continue to provide strategic gender analysis to mission leadership and national stakeholders. In DRC, MONUSCO worked with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children to integrate gender into COVID-19 response strategies. The missions also continue to partner with women's organizations on COVID-19 response efforts.

Women-led early warning mechanisms, conflict prevention and protection: Missions are partnering with women leaders and organizations to address political instabilities and counter local violence. Several missions are actively integrating WPS into their prevention and protection efforts.
- The women's protection networks established by <u>UNAMID</u> continue to be crucial early-warning mechanisms. The networks contribute to resolving conflicts between local tribes, herders and farmers. UNAMID is working to ensure a continuation of these networks as well as the state-level WPS 1325 committees during the mission's transition period.
- <u>MINUSMA</u> and <u>MINUSCA</u> are working to ensure implementation of protection mandates in collaboration with humanitarian actors and UN country teams. MINUSCA has benefited from crucial information provided by women-led local early warning mechanisms, for example in regard to the flow of small arms.
- <u>MONUSCO</u> is scaling a model, tested in Bukavu, to bring together women leaders from different ethnic groups to work together to resolve local conflicts. Early warning mechanisms established by women's organizations with support from MONUSCO have provided critical information to local security forces regarding abuses committed by militia groups and helped MONUSCO identify protection needs for the local population

Marking the 20th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325: DPO HQ is planning a series of events and communication campaigns on women's participation in peace and political processes to mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 (2000) and highlight efforts to implement Action for Peacekeeping's WPS Commitments. Strategic communications continue to be a key priority across missions and at HQ to ensure engagement with women during the pandemic, to raise awareness of mission activities, and to share risk communications.

Accountability and evidence-generation: The newly launched DPO system-wide data strategy recognized the 15 core WPS indicators as a good practice. Integrating the 15 indicators into system-wide accountability frameworks continues and missions are integrating the indicators

to CPAS processes. UNFICYP has integrated indicators to capture the receptiveness to the WPS agenda within the track 1 process to monitor how the mission and the leadership on both sides engages on WPS issues. UNIFIL is working to integrate the indicators into CPAS. In UNMISS the Strategy on Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security includes integration of gender and WPS indicators into CPAS. Despite COVID 19, all missions will continue to collect data as it is critical to advancing the WPS agenda.

Gender-responsive conflict analysis: This remains a priority and a key tool to inform planning and policy processes across missions and HQ. In CAR, a conflict analysis conducted in partnership with MINUSCA, the EU and AU is about to be finalized. MINUSMA is working on an analysis and good practice note as part of its transition planning process. This will help inform the on-going process of reviewing the Integrated Analysis and Planning Policy. MONUSCO is partnering with UN Women to conduct a gender-responsive conflict analysis to inform transition planning, which will be anchored in the implementation of the SG directive on transition planning. UNISFA is conducting a gender and youth conflict analysis to identify existing conflict prevention and resolutions mechanisms, roles of women in these mechanisms and barriers to their participation.