

Update on women, peace and security in Mali September 2016

The Informal Expert Group of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security met on **February 29th 2016** to discuss the situation in Mali, with the participation of the leadership of the mission and the country team. The annexed background note was prepared for the meeting and a record of the meeting was issued as [S/2016/682](#). The group resolved to reconvene in approximately six months. Below is a non-exhaustive list of **relevant developments since then**.

Security Council mission to Mali (March 2016)

The Security Council visited Mali in early March and issued a full [report](#) of the visit. The **terms of reference** of the mission included assessing the contribution of women's organizations in the Malian peace process and in the implementation of the Agreement, including through full and effective participation of women at all levels in the monitoring committees of the Agreement, as well as in peace, reconciliation and electoral processes; as well as MINUSMA's performance in providing specific protection for women, taking into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate, and assisting Malian authorities in taking conflict-related sexual violence into account in all security and justice-related processes. The mission's report includes women, peace and security as one of the key issues raised and in the observations of the Security Council, and the mission did meet with women's groups, but there were reportedly few questions on WPS in the other engagements of the mission.

Security Council Resolution 2295

On June 29th, the Council adopted a new resolution on the situation in Mali, which maintained gender-related language provisions from the previous resolution and included new language on WPS, namely on DDR, SEA, and enhanced reporting by MINUSMA to the Security Council on gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate. The resolution also welcomed the adoption of Mali's second National Action Plan on WPS and the adoption of a law requiring a 30 per cent quota for women in national institutions.

SG's reports on Mali to the Security Council

The Secretary-General has presented a report on [May 31st](#) and is in the process of preparing the next one. The May 2016 report reported on sex-disaggregated information on IDPs, beneficiaries of demining programmes, and the military, police, and civilian components of the mission; SRSB Bangura's visit in April and limited progress on addressing impunity for serious violations and abuses, including CRSV, committed in 2012; number of incidents of gender-based violence; information on sexual exploitation and abuse; and various activities addressing livelihood support to women, special arrangements for female combatants in cantonment sites, reinsertion and peacebuilding programmes for women and youth, and trainings on SGBV to legal authorities in the North.

Conflict-related sexual violence

SRSB Bangura undertook an official mission to Mali in April 2016, during which she met with national authorities, non-state actors, civil society organizations, victims and victims' groups, religious leaders, the diplomatic corps and UN colleagues. Impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of sexual violence crimes, inadequate provision of services to victims of sexual violence, rise and real threat of violent extremism and significant delays in initiating the truth and reconciliation process were some of the issues raised in meetings with interlocutors. At the visit, SRSB Bangura initiated discussions with the Government on developing and finalizing a Joint Communiqué to address conflict-related sexual violence. Engagement with non-state actors led to the signing of a unilateral communiqué by the Platform group (GATIA, CMFPR and MAA)

in June 2016 to address and respond to sexual violence crimes. With support from MINUSMA, political leaders and military commanders of the Platform developed an Implementation Plan to this Communiqué.

Accountability for conflict-related sexual violence crimes remains a main challenge. As at the end of August, only 37 victims from the backlog of 113 cases that were filed in the courts in Bamako since November 2014 and March 2015 have been heard by the investigative magistrates in Bamako. In June, the Secretary-General listed the following parties as credibly suspected of patterns of conflict-related sexual violence: Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad, Ansar Eddine, Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'ouest, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, and Groupe d'autodéfense Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés.

Other key updates

- Women's participation in the implementation of the peace agreement remains dismal. There is only one woman out of the 62 Malian members of the Comité de Suivi de L'Accord (CSA) and its sub-committees, made up of representatives of the signatory parties, and women's representation in the international mediation team is not much better. More progress has been made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has begun its work and six out of its 25 members are women. The number of women in government has slightly increased in the most recent reshuffling of the cabinet.
- Gender balance in the mission continues to worsen, particularly for both the military and the civilian component. As of May 2016, 1.78 percent of military personnel were women. The percentages of women in international, national, and volunteer posts has continued its downward trend, including some marked drops since 2014 (from 42 to 28 percent among UN volunteers since March 2014 and from 30 to 20 percent of national staff).
- There are five budgeted posts in MINUSMA for Women Protection and seven for Gender, but three of the vacancies in the gender unit, including the P-5, are currently vacant since March 2015 and filled by an Officer-in-Charge seconded by The Netherlands. Additional capacity and resources are needed to implement the new requirements and commitments in resolutions on women, peace and security and conflict-related sexual violence.
- The strategic review of MINUSMA recommended that the mission should enhance the inclusiveness of the peace process, particularly for women and youth, such as by supporting the convening of the *Conférence d'entente nationale*.
- The quota law requires a minimum of 30 percent of women on the lists of candidates for the upcoming communal elections scheduled for November 2016. It is not clear whether the quota applies to the technical commissions that are tasked with implementing the peace agreement.

Recommendations for the Security Council

As a follow-up to these two meetings on Mali in 2016, the members of the IEG could discuss the following options for action by the Security Council:

- A letter or demarche to Malian counterparts to express concern about lack of progress on women's participation in the implementation of the peace agreement and lack of accountability for conflict-related sexual violence.
- The Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) lists a number of Malian armed groups and individuals. The Council should ensure that this Committee and its Monitoring Team have capacity and expertise on gender and gross violations of women's rights.