



Bridging the Gap: Integrating Women, Peace & Security into the work of the 1540 Regime

Recommendations for the Open Consultations as part of the 2022 Comprehensive Review Process

Summary:

Integrating the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda into the regime surrounding the implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004) provides an opportunity to advance our collective efforts to create a safer, inclusive, and more secure future by enabling more effective implementation, bringing to light new opportunities for cooperation, and strengthening joint efforts on planning, monitoring, and implementation.

The WPS agenda—which promotes women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation and integration of gender perspectives into peace and security issues—has proven to be an advantageous approach to more effective disarmament, non-proliferation, and counterterrorism. Deliberate measures are needed now to bridge the gap between WPS and non-proliferation efforts to advance more inclusive and sustainable policy outcomes. As a key component of the global non-proliferation architecture, the work of the 1540 Committee and regime is a logical place to advance WPS integration by incorporating gender perspectives, enabling women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making processes at all levels, and strengthening the capacity of women and women’s organizations working in the field.

This paper encourages all delegates and participants in the Open Consultations on the Comprehensive Review of the implementation of Resolution 1540 to consider practical ways to incorporate WPS into the work of the 1540 Committee and regime through input to the upcoming mandate renewal.

Background:

WPS and the 1540 regime:

First enshrined in Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and advanced in subsequent resolutions, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda underscores the important contributions of women and their perspectives towards more sustainable, inclusive, and lasting peace and security. These resolutions call on the UN and Member States to increase the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding efforts; take into account the protection and particular needs of women and girls while recognizing their key role as agents of change in the maintenance of international peace and security; and incorporate a gender perspective into planning, disaggregated data-collection, training, and programming.

Resolution 1540 obliges States to refrain from supporting by any means non-State actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring, or using nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery. The WPS agenda has not yet been included in the work of the 1540 Committee, despite its relevancy and integration into related international efforts in non-proliferation and disarmament processes, as well as the counterterrorism field.¹

¹ Without directly dealing with counterterrorism, Resolution 1540 and the work of its Committee covers a broad range of non-proliferation activities, which are different from but complementary to counterterrorism efforts because they seek to reduce the risk of proliferation that could lead to the use of WMD for terrorist purposes. For this reason, it is useful to draw on lessons learned from enhanced integration of WPS into the UN’s CT/CVE efforts, as well as from the General Assembly’s First Committee.

The Secretary General's [Agenda for Disarmament](#) affirms that "empowering women and ensuring their equal and meaningful participation in disarmament and arms control decision-making processes can lead to more inclusive, effective and sustainable policy outcomes." The activities of the 1540 Committee's four working groups (monitoring and national implementation; technical assistance; international cooperation; and transparency and media outreach) offer robust opportunities to enhance interaction between the Committee, its Group of Experts, and women practitioners and women's organizations when developing strategies and policies to prevent the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery to non-state actors. Ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women at decision-making levels is central to harnessing diverse expertise, sharpening technical assistance, as well as building new areas for cooperation, capacity building, and training. Additionally, integrating gender perspectives as a cross-cutting issue throughout related activities undertaken by Member States, UN entities, international, regional, and civil society organizations, as well as academia and industry, can contribute to more comprehensive and strengthened implementation of UNSCR 1540.

There are a number of ways in which relevant stakeholders could begin to integrate WPS into 1540 related work to enable more effective and gender-responsive implementation. First and foremost, it is important for the 1540 Committee and the UN Security Council to look at ways to empower women and promote their participation in the design and implementation of WMD non-proliferation efforts, promote equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making processes and implementation at all levels, and strengthen cooperation with civil society, international organizations, and women's groups on these matters. Similarly, the incorporation of gender perspectives in both requests and offers for technical assistance facilitated by the 1540 Committee would promote greater cooperation, effectiveness, and sustainability. Furthermore, strengthening coherence and synergies in the development and implementation of 1540 national implementation action plans with national action plans on WPS and counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CT/CVE), could enable mutually reinforcing action towards common goals. Finally, stakeholders could begin collecting and monitoring sex-disaggregated data, in order to enable practitioners to better assess the differentiated impact of 1540 related policies and programs.

Lessons learned from related fields:

WPS & Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Women and women's organizations have been central actors in policy and advocacy on non-proliferation and disarmament. However, women have been systematically underrepresented in non-proliferation and disarmament forums. According to [research by UNIDIR](#), women represent one-third of delegates accredited to larger arms control and disarmament forums and one-fifth of delegates at smaller, more specialized forums. Nearly half of delegations include no women at all. As the Secretary General argues "the continued marginalization of women in these discussions is a loss for all. Involving more women will help revitalize disarmament discussions and advance our collective effort to create a safer and more secure future." Since 2010, the General Assembly in its resolution 65/69 and subsequent [resolutions](#) has encouraged "Member States, regional and subregional organizations, the United Nations and specialized agencies to promote the equitable representation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control".²

Greater participation of women alone is insufficient without a proper understanding of the ways in which the substantive issues dealt with by multilateral practitioners are often gendered, according to the [International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group](#). "Incorporating a gender perspective" refers to the process of analyzing the unique implications for women and men of any

² A/RES/65/69

policy or program. UNIDIR suggests that a gender perspective could prove useful in non-proliferation and disarmament, in order “to assess how the attributes, opportunities, and relationships associated with a gender identity may affect issues, such as the likelihood of being targeted by weapons systems, prospects of becoming a victim/survivor of armed violence, the ability to access medical attention in the aftermath of armed conflict, and the long-lasting biological and physiological impacts of weapons on individuals.”³ Similarly, scholarly research and civil society advocacy have illuminated key concerns, such as the differentiated impact on women and girls related to the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons,⁴ as well as the connections between harmful masculinities and the acquisition, possession, or use of weapons of mass destruction.⁵ Indeed, a 2021 report on the activities of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), showed that there were under-reported gender-related harms from ISIL’s use of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq.⁶

Recent progress has been made to incorporate WPS language and gender analysis into disarmament and non-proliferation policy. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has released a [Gender Policy](#) for 2021-2025 that centers the goals of enhanced gender parity, integration of gender perspectives, and strengthened gender mainstreaming and analysis. Additionally, the 2018 and 2019 Preparatory Committees for the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons discussed the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and encouraged the participation and leadership of women in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The OPCW has also made advances with the launch of a Gender and Diversity Audit and a group of ten Gender Focal Points within the Secretariat.⁷

WPS & Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CT/CVE)

Another area from which lessons can be learned is counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CT/CVE). Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) calls for enhanced integration between the WPS and CT/CVE agendas, including through integrating gender perspectives as a cross-cutting issue throughout UN and Member States activities by ensuring the participation of women and women’s organizations in developing strategies and policies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Security Council Resolution 2617 (2021) calls for the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue when facilitating technical assistance to Member States. This is based on the recognition that women have unique and differing roles in relation to violent extremist organizations (including as members, supporters, recruiters, or targeted victims), such organizations deliberately exploit gender dynamics and stereotypes to advance their aims, and CT/CVE policies and programs can have gendered impacts.⁸

Similarly, the UN’s Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly, calls on Member States to integrate into relevant programs gender analysis on the drivers of radicalization of women and men to terrorism, consider the specific impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women and women’s organizations and consult with them when developing strategies to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and enhance cooperation to combat terrorism in a gender-responsive manner.

³ [Gender Perspective | Gender and Disarmament | UNIDIR](#)

⁴ [Missing Links: Understanding Sex- and Gender-Related Impacts of Chemical and Biological Weapons | UNIDIR](#)

⁵ Carol Cohn, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals”

⁶ [Reports | Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL \(UNITAD\)](#)

⁷ [Stepping up Gender Equality at the OPCW 1.pdf](#)

⁸ [Integrating gender into counter-terrorism | Security Council; Gender Equality | Office of Counter-Terrorism; UNDP- JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf; feb_2019_cted_trends_report.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

In a recent Security Council Arria-formula meeting (2021) on “Preventing terrorism and violent extremism through tackling gender stereotypes, masculinities and structural gender inequality”, Member States made reference to the way terrorist organizations use negative hyper-masculine stereotypes directed at vulnerable groups in recruiting and identity formation, and further stressed the necessity of implementing policies in line with Security Council resolutions and the WPS agenda.⁹

Recommendations:

With the establishment of the 1540 Committee, the Security Council decided that both after five years and prior to the renewal of its mandate the Committee would conduct a [Comprehensive Review Process](#) and submit to the Security Council a report at the conclusion of the Review. Thus, the upcoming Open Consultations as part of the Comprehensive Review provide an opportunity for participants to raise the integration of the WPS agenda, as one aspect of their practical ideas to enhance effective implementation of Resolution 1540.

At the Comprehensive Review Open Consultations—Member State delegations, UN entities, representatives of international, regional, and civil society organizations, as well as academia and industry, could suggest concrete measures for WPS integration:

- Empower women and ensure their full, equal, and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making and implementation, regarding the prevention of proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and their means of delivery, to non-state actors;
- Engage in regular consultations with women practitioners and women’s organizations when developing strategies and policies to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and their means of delivery to non-state actors;
- Incorporate gender perspectives in the development of national legislation, regulations, and action plans on the prevention of proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and their means of delivery to non-state actors, including consideration of the gendered aspects of trafficking, ownership, use and misuse; the differentiated impacts of weapons on women and men; and the ways in which gender roles can shape non-proliferation policies and practices;
- Incorporate gender perspectives into all aspects of the 1540 Committee’s activities by providing it with gender and sex-disaggregated data, furthering cooperation on gender-responsive lessons learned and best practices, and supporting coherence in the development and implementation of national action plans on WPS, CT/CVE, and Resolution 1540;
- Encourage the incorporation of a gender perspective in 1540 related capacity building/assistance programs or offers by Member States, international, regional, and sub-regional organizations and provide enhanced training opportunities, ensuring participation of women;
- Facilitate dialogue within the 1540 regime and between practitioners, experts, and women’s organizations working on WPS and those working on disarmament, non-proliferation, and CT/CVE to build awareness and knowledge of the significance of gender issues in their field of work, as well as to exchange good practices promoting women’s participation;

⁹ S/2021/717.

- Support research that promotes a better understanding of the normative and practical overlaps between efforts carried out under the framework of UNSCR 1540 and the WPS agenda.