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# Women, Peace, and Security Mandates for UN Peacekeeping Operations: Assessing Influence and Impact

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## Executive Summary

Peacekeeping mission mandates now routinely include language on women, peace, and security (WPS). Most mandates include language on protection of women from physical violence and human rights abuses; preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence; participation of women in political processes and institutions; or gender as a crosscutting issue. Other language is directed at peacekeeping missions themselves, including provisions on increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping; providing resources to support women's protection and the integration of gender considerations; and reporting on WPS.

If UN member states are to strengthen the language on WPS in peacekeeping mandates, it is essential to understand how this language gets to be included. In terms of the process, proposing language early in the Security Council mandating process and facilitating engagement between country experts and WPS experts in member states' permanent missions can increase the likelihood that WPS language is incorporated. The substance of the language also matters. Informal consultations to understand the needs of women affected by conflict can help ensure that mandates are more gender-responsive.

Beyond Security Council mandates, a range of other factors such as leadership and resources also drive the implementation of the WPS agenda in the field. Nonetheless, strong WPS language in mission mandates is an essential starting point and can have a meaningful impact for uniformed women peacekeepers. For example, strong language on WPS in peacekeeping mandates can help confront stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women in peacekeeping missions. In the face of disunity in the Security Council about the scope and application of the WPS agenda, it will remain essential to demonstrate the ongoing value of this language. To this end, the Security Council and other member states should consider the following:

1. Proposing WPS language early in the Security Council's mandating process;
2. Facilitating engagement between country experts and WPS experts in member states' permanent missions to the UN;
3. Using informal consultations to understand the needs of women affected by conflict;
4. Including language in mandates that reflects the contributions of both women and men to operational effectiveness; and
5. Ensuring that approaches to WPS in the Security Council consider the full spectrum of gender.

## Introduction

It has become standard practice for the UN Security Council to include language on women, peace, and security (WPS) in the mandates it adopts authorizing and renewing the deployment of peace operations. Over the last two decades, peacekeeping mandates have incorporated language from the council's ten thematic resolutions on WPS and several thematic peacekeeping resolutions.<sup>1</sup> Mandates have called on missions to further the role of women in conflict prevention, enhance the participation of women in peace processes and political life, protect women from physical violence and uphold their human rights, prevent sexual and gender-based violence, and adopt gender-sensitive approaches to all their work. This reflects the council's more comprehensive understanding of the changes required to advance the WPS agenda.

Peacekeeping mandates have also included provisions on how missions can deliver on their WPS objectives through their make-up and resources. They have encouraged increases in the number of women serving in missions, requested the deployment of specialized resources such as women protection advisers and gender advisers, and directed the secretary-general to report on the implementation of the WPS aspects of mandates. In many ways, UN peacekeeping has become an important mechanism for visibly advancing the WPS agenda.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this progress, negotiations in the Security Council on the inclusion of WPS language in peacekeeping mandates have at times been contested, with different views among the five permanent members (P5), as well as among some of the elected members that are major troop and

police contributors. Moreover, it is not always clear that more detailed or “stronger” language on WPS in mandates translates to changes in peacekeeping missions.<sup>3</sup> The language included in mandates can even perpetuate stereotypes, including the assumption that every uniformed woman is responsible for implementing a mission's WPS mandate.<sup>4</sup> These stereotypes can restrict women's access to opportunities in peacekeeping missions and place extra burdens on them.<sup>5</sup>

Mandates are not the only factor that drives change or impacts the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. At the strategic level at UN headquarters, there are other member-state-led processes for developing policies (e.g., in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations) and authorizing resources (through the General Assembly's Fifth Committee). In the field, the senior mission leadership team and mission-specific guidance can set the tone for the delivery of certain aspects of mandates related to WPS. And troop- and police-contributing countries—which deploy uniformed personnel—are expected to understand the WPS agenda, support efforts to increase the participation of women, and deploy personnel with gender expertise.<sup>6</sup>

This paper examines the factors that influence the inclusion of language on WPS in UN peacekeeping mandates and how this language influences the implementation of the WPS agenda in the field, focusing on the roles and expectations of uniformed women peacekeepers. First, it explores the different elements of the WPS agenda that are included in peacekeeping mandates. Second, it assesses the factors that influence the inclusion of language on WPS. Third, it examines the drivers behind the implementation of the WPS agenda in the field. And finally, it assesses the impact, if any,

1 The UN Security Council has adopted ten resolutions under the agenda item of women and peace and security: Resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2422 (2015); 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). The council has also adopted several thematic peacekeeping resolutions that address aspects of the WPS agenda, which have recently included Resolution 2538 (2020) on women's participation in peacekeeping; Resolution 2518 (2020) on capacity building and the safety and security of peacekeepers; Resolution 2436 (2018) on peacekeeping performance; and Resolution 2272 (2016) on sexual exploitation and abuse.

2 Lisa Sharland, “Women, Gender and the A4P Agenda: An Opportunity for Action?” International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, November 2019.

3 Sarah Kenny Werner and Elena B. Stavrevska, “Where Are the Words? The Disappearance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Language of Country-Specific UN Security Council Resolutions,” Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Centre for Women, Peace and Security,” May 2020.

4 Lotte Vermeij, “Woman First, Soldier Second: Taboos and Stigmas Facing Military Women in UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, October 2020.

5 Nina Wilén, “Female Peacekeepers' Added Burden,” *International Affairs* 96, no. 6 (2020).

6 The Core Pre-deployment Training Materials include lessons on WPS, human rights, and conflict-related sexual violence, although training varies significantly among troop- and police-contributing countries, depending on the priority they attach to the issue. See also: UN Department of Peace Operations, “Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028,” 2019.

that mandate language has on uniformed women peacekeepers. It concludes by considering the challenges to advancing the WPS agenda and how these should be addressed by the Security Council and other stakeholders.<sup>7</sup>

## Mapping WPS Language in Peacekeeping Mandates

Peacekeeping mandates now routinely include language on WPS. For the purposes of this paper, WPS language includes requests directed to the mission, host country, secretary-general, or troop- and police-contributing countries regarding women's participation in peace processes or peacekeeping missions, women's engagement in conflict prevention, and women's physical protection or the protection of their human rights as part of the work of a peacekeeping mission. It also includes language that refers to the integration of gender perspectives and the inclusion of gender analysis or gender-sensitive approaches throughout the work of a mission.

Of the twelve UN peacekeeping missions currently deployed, nine have mandates that explicitly include WPS language.<sup>8</sup> However, this is only a relatively recent development. Before the last two decades, peacekeeping mandates included few references to women or gender.<sup>9</sup> This started to change in 2000 with the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325—the first on women, peace, and security. This resolution, *inter alia*, urged the secretary-general to “expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations,” expressed willingness to including gender perspectives and gender components in peacekeeping operations, requested

training materials for member states “on the protection, rights and the particular needs” of women, and requested the secretary-general to include some of these aspects in his reports to the council.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequent WPS resolutions—as well as thematic peacekeeping resolutions—have gone on to expand, elaborate on, and articulate peacekeeping operations' roles and responsibilities when it comes to advancing the WPS agenda. Most recently, many of these roles and responsibilities have been codified and articulated in the secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative. In the A4P initiative's Declaration of Shared Commitments, more than 150 member states and regional organizations have agreed to “collectively commit to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda and its priorities.” This includes: (1) “ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all stages of the peace process”; (2) “systematically integrating a gender perspective into all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting”; (3) increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels and in key positions; and (4) “emphasising the protection of women and children” as part of peacekeeping approaches to the protection of civilians.<sup>11</sup> The A4P initiative offers a baseline for the WPS agenda, reflecting the aspects that member states—including those on the Security Council—are willing to support.<sup>12</sup>

Most current peacekeeping mandates include language on WPS in a range of areas, though some are more comprehensive and detailed than others. The WPS language in these mandates can be categorized by area of focus. Some language is targeted at improving the situation of women and

7 This paper draws on desk research, including analysis of UN resolutions, UN reports, and some academic papers, as well as three virtual workshops with peacekeeping stakeholders in New York in June and July 2020 and three in-depth interviews (two with member-state representatives and one with a UN official).

8 The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), and UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) do not include explicit language on WPS, as these missions' mandates are not regularly renewed or reviewed, and that were established prior to the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000. The mandates of special political missions also include explicit WPS language, but detailed analysis of their mandates is beyond the scope of this paper.

9 The 1999 mandate of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) underlined the importance of “including child and gender-related provisions” in training on international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law for personnel but made no other references to women's participation or their protection by the mission. See: UN Security Council Resolution 1270 (October 22, 1999). This language was mirrored in the mandate for the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), which included a single reference to the large number of women and children likely impacted by the humanitarian situation. See: UN Security Council Resolution 1272 (1999), para. 15.

10 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 13, 2000).

11 United Nations, “Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations,” available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>.

12 Sharland, “Women, Gender and the A4P Agenda.”

gender equality in the context where the mission is deployed. This can include areas such as the protection of women from physical violence and human rights abuses; preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence; participation of women in political processes and institutions; and gender as a crosscutting issue. Other language is directed at the peacekeeping mission, including provisions on increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping; providing resources to support women's protection and the integration of gender considerations; reporting on WPS; and measures to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.<sup>13</sup>

While several mandates include language on sexual exploitation and abuse, this has generally been about preventing harm to the local population. Mission mandates have included little language on the protection of peacekeepers inside the mission from sexual harassment, despite this remaining an ongoing problem.<sup>14</sup>

## Protection of Women from Physical Violence and Human Rights Abuses

Language on women's protection needs in peacekeeping mandates has often been more advanced than language on the other pillars of WPS, especially participation.<sup>15</sup> This reflects the heavy emphasis on protection—particularly protection from conflict-related sexual violence—in many of the WPS resolutions, as well as normative develop-

ments around the protection of civilians (POC) in armed conflict.<sup>16</sup> As a consequence, language on women's protection from physical violence is often included in the context of POC or under a heading on POC, which is a priority for many missions. For example, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is directed "to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, within its capacity and areas of deployment, with specific protection for women and children."<sup>17</sup> Similar formulations are included in other mandates.<sup>18</sup> In some cases, however, there may be no direct reference to women in the context of POC.<sup>19</sup>

Researchers have expressed some concerns about the Security Council's approach to referencing women's protection needs.<sup>20</sup> Women are often grouped together with children in the infamous phrase "women and children," conflating two groups with different needs and potentially suggesting that women, like children, lack agency. This perpetuates assumptions about women peacekeepers not being as capable as men, particularly in missions' uniformed components. Such assumptions can lead to uniformed women being marginalized and reassigned to roles that are "inside the wire"—that is, on base rather than out on patrol—as they are viewed as a "woman first, soldier second."<sup>21</sup> Focusing on women's protection needs also reinforces the "gender protection norm" that men are protectors and women require protection.<sup>22</sup>

13 Language on measures to respond to sexual exploitation and abuse are not explored in-depth in this paper, in part as they reflect efforts to address a problem introduced by peacekeeping missions, as argued by Sarah Kenny Werner and Elena Stavrevska. See: "Where Are the Words?" This is not to diminish the importance of preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse or the importance of zero-tolerance initiatives to fully implementing the WPS agenda. Others have more extensively analyzed the challenges of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. See, for example: Jeni Whalan, "Dealing with Disgrace: Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping," International Peace Institute, August 2017.

14 This problem is detailed further by Lotte Vermeij, drawing on interviews with peacekeepers. See: "Woman First, Soldier Second." Security Council Resolution 2538 on women in peacekeeping, adopted in 2020, acknowledges this problem in a separate operative paragraph that "requests the Secretary-General to strengthen efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment within peacekeeping operations." UNMISS's 2020 mandate included a new reference to implementing the secretary-general's zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment. Security Council Report, "UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Mandate Renewal," March 11, 2020.

15 The four pillars of WPS are participation; conflict prevention; protection; and relief and recovery.

16 The Security Council has adopted several resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, several of which offer direction to peacekeeping missions, including, for example, Resolution 1894 (November 11, 2009).

17 UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020), para. 5.

18 For instance, MINUSCA's mandate situates the reference to women's protection under the subheading on POC and calls on the mission "to provide specific protection for women and children affected by armed conflict." UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 31(a)(iii).

19 MONUSCO's 2020 mandate makes no reference to women under the subheading on POC, though it does refer to identifying and responding to threats to civilians including gender-based violence and references women's protection advisers elsewhere. UN Security Council Resolution 2556 (December 18, 2020), para. 29(i)(c).

20 See: Gretchen Baldwin and Sarah Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations: Challenging Assumptions and Transforming Approaches," International Peace Institute, June 2020, p. 11.

21 Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second."

22 See: Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Baldwin and Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations."



Mandates have tended to explicitly direct peacekeeping missions to undertake patrols and configure their geographic deployments to physically protect civilians, including women.<sup>23</sup> As a consequence, language around women's protection has tended to focus on physical or sexual violence rather than human rights abuses or attacks on women human rights defenders. While protection of women's human rights can have an element of physical protection, it remains a contentious issue in broader discussions on WPS.<sup>24</sup> This approach has started to shift marginally, however. The most recent mandate for UNMISS includes a provision in its preambular paragraphs recognizing "the need to protect women's rights organizations and women peacebuilders from threats and reprisals."<sup>25</sup> This is a positive development, reflecting the Security Council's broader approach to women's rights in the context of peacekeeping. However, it is unclear whether there will be pushback to similar language in other mandates, given the opposition of some council members to referring to women's human rights defenders.<sup>26</sup>

## Preventing and Responding to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Peacekeeping missions have often operated in environments where conflict-related sexual violence is all too common. Concerns about the widespread use of sexual violence as a tactic of armed groups, including in peacekeeping contexts, prompted the Security Council to establish more comprehensive structures and mechanisms to address this threat and the needs of victims,

including through Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2009) and 1960 (2010).<sup>27</sup>

Mandates now regularly incorporate language on the role of peacekeeping missions and host governments in deterring, preventing, and responding to sexual and gender-based violence. For instance, the mandate of the UN mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) "calls upon all parties to armed conflict in the CAR, including armed groups, to end sexual and gender-based violence, [and] further calls upon the CAR authorities to swiftly investigate alleged abuses in order to fight against impunity of those responsible for such acts."<sup>28</sup> Such language often references the needs of women and girls, recognizing that they are likely to be disproportionately impacted by sexual violence and rape. Yet mandates rarely acknowledge that sexual and gender-based violence may also be experienced by men and boys or by those who do not identify as either male or female. Sexual and gender-based violence is largely framed as an issue that peacekeeping operations should address by including uniformed women in the response and engaging directly with women in host communities.

Mandate language on sexual and gender-based violence increasingly refers to the importance of justice mechanisms and services and reparations for survivors.<sup>29</sup> For instance, UNMISS's 2020 mandate encouraged the government and opposition to "adopt a survivor-centred approach."<sup>30</sup> This reflects broader developments in the WPS agenda in the Security Council, with a greater focus on survivor-centered approaches following the adoption of Resolution 2467 in 2019.<sup>31</sup>

23 For example, UNMISS's mandate "requests UNMISS to continue to intensify and extend its presence and active patrolling in areas of high risk of conflict, or where there are emerging protection risks or threats." UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020), para. 19.

24 Security Council Report, "Arria-Formula Meeting on Reprisals against Women Human Rights Defenders and Women Peacebuilders," February 20, 2020.

25 UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020).

26 China and Russia opposed the inclusion of references to "women's human rights defenders" in Resolution 2493 on women, peace, and security. See: Security Council Report, "Arria-Formula Meeting on Reprisals against Women Human Rights Defenders and Women Peacebuilders."

27 Mandates include references to sexual and gender-based violence, or sexual violence in conflict. The UN Department of Peace Operations offers separate definitions of sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, noting that the latter takes place in situations of conflict or is linked to conflict, and may be "motivated by political, military or psychological objectives." See: UN Department of Peace Operations, "Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security: Resource Package," January 2020, p. 94.

28 UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 24.

29 One example is the 2020 mandate for UNMISS. Security Council Report, "UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Mandate Renewal," March 11, 2020.

30 UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020).

31 Security Council Report, "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2467 on Sexual Violence in Conflict," May 2, 2019.

## Women's Participation in Political Processes and Institutions

Compared to the other pillars of WPS, the Security Council has tended to focus overwhelming on protection, given its visibility in media and human rights reports, often at the expense of women's participation in peace processes. However, this has started to shift in the last few years.<sup>32</sup> Several multi-dimensional mandates include explicit language on women's participation in political processes. For example, MINUSCA's 2020 mandate calls for "the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women as voters and candidates" in presidential, legislative, and local elections.<sup>33</sup> The mandate for UNMISS welcomes the 35 percent quota for women's representation in the 2018 peace agreement and "calls on all parties to do more to ensure that these minimum commitments are achieved and to ensure the full, effective, and meaningful participation and involvement of women in all spheres and levels of political leadership, the peace process, and the transitional government."<sup>34</sup> The mandate for the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) reaffirms the participation of women as one of the benchmarks for the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement and urges the Malian parties to "implement the recommendations of the high-level workshop on participation of women in the mechanisms established by the Agreement."<sup>35</sup>

Some mandates have also encouraged host governments to work with missions to finalize the development of their national action plans on WPS. For instance, the Security Council encouraged the Lebanese government to work with the UN mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and women's civil

society groups to finalize its plan as soon as possible, noting how it can contribute to increasing women's participation "at all levels of decision-making."<sup>36</sup>

Some mandates explicitly encourage the increased participation of women in the security sector. For instance, MINUSCA's mandate acknowledges the need "to recruit women at all levels" as part of the mission's efforts to support the Central African authorities in training the police and gendarmerie.<sup>37</sup> The 2020 mandate for the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) calls on the Congolese government to uphold its national commitment to security sector reform (SSR), "taking into account women's full, effective and meaningful participation and safety."<sup>38</sup> In the case of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), the Security Council has had a varied approach. MONUSCO's mandate references "engaging women's networks" in what appears to be a vague reference to SSR and DDR programs.<sup>39</sup> Other mandates, including MINUSCA's, have requested "gender-sensitive" DDR programming.

There has been debate in the Security Council about the formulation of language on women's participation, with some resolutions using "full, equal and meaningful" and others using "full, effective and meaningful." The trend appears to be toward "equal" rather than "effective," which is already addressed by the term "meaningful."<sup>40</sup> This may also reflect the view that women's participation is integral to achieving gender equality, and it mirrors the language used in the A4P initiative's Declaration of Shared Commitments. While it is unclear what impact such a shift may have, if any, on implementation in the field, it forces discussions

32 UN Women, "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325," 2015.

33 UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 9.

34 UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020), para. 31.

35 UN Security Council Resolution 2531 (June 29, 2020), para. 3.

36 UN Security Council Resolution 2539 (August 28, 2020). This was referred to in the preambular language for the resolution, as well as paragraph 26. Language on WPS is scattered through resolutions in the preambular and operative paragraphs. Requests for action tend to be included in the operative paragraphs, which is where mandated tasks are generally listed, hence the shift to include the request in the operative paragraphs. UN editing guidelines note that preambular paragraphs "serve to present the background to the action part of the resolution," whereas operative paragraphs "express the opinions of Member States and contain the action that they are agreeing to take." See: United Nations, "Editing of Resolutions at the United Nations," available at <https://www.un.org/en/ga/second/72/editingguidelines.pdf>.

37 UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 32(b)(iv).

38 UN Security Council Resolution 2556 (December 18, 2020), para. 20.

39 Ibid., para. 32.

to focus on equality rather than only looking at women's added value to operational effectiveness.

## Gender Considerations and Gender-Sensitive Approaches

Several peacekeeping mandates now routinely reference “gender-sensitive approaches” or “gender considerations.” However, the Security Council has at times struggled to provide clear direction on integrating gender perspectives into the work of peacekeeping missions, with different approaches reflected across mission mandates and some mission mandates lacking any direction on the issue.

The council has explicitly requested peacekeeping missions to take gender considerations into account in the mandates for MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL, UNMISS, and the UN mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP). In some cases, including for UNFICYP, there is limited direction beyond the request to “take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate.”<sup>41</sup> For others, such as MINUSCA and MONUSCO, the Security Council has included a subheading on “gender” and sought to provide clearer direction to the mission on expectations. Increasingly, some multidimensional mandates reference gender-sensitive approaches in regard to several different mandated tasks throughout the mandate, including SSR and DDR. While the council has made progress in including language on gender considerations in peacekeeping mandates, most language is still included as part of paragraphs or references that refer to women's participation or needs, thereby retaining a focus on women rather than the full spectrum of gender.

The inclusion of language focused on considering

gender matters. It can strengthen arguments for the provision of resources (through the Fifth Committee) and accountability (through reporting and leadership).<sup>42</sup> The secretary-general has called for more specific mandates and instructions on integrating gender perspectives into some aspects of peacekeeping mandates.<sup>43</sup>

## Women's Participation in Peacekeeping

Beyond the above language on the contexts where missions are deployed, some language on WPS is directed at peacekeeping missions themselves. Language encouraging the secretary-general and troop- and police-contributing countries to increase the number of women serving in peacekeeping missions has continued to evolve and is now included in all peacekeeping mandates that require regular review. It is common for mandates to request “the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations.”<sup>44</sup> More recent formulations, including in MINUSCA's 2020 mandate, have called for the “full, equal and meaningful participation” of “uniformed and civilian women at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership positions” and for the implementation of relevant provisions of Resolution 2538 on women's participation in peacekeeping.<sup>45</sup> However, some major troop and police contributors on the Security Council have expressed reservations about strong language requesting more participation of uniformed women, raising concerns that it might commit them to deliver on unrealistic targets.<sup>46</sup>

In some mandates, the language on increasing women's participation in peacekeeping has been moved to paragraphs and sections focused on

41 UN Security Council Resolution 2506 (January 30, 2020), para. 14. Notably, the 2019 mandate for UNFICYP called on the UN “to conduct a gender-sensitive socio-economic impact assessment.” UN Security Council Resolution 2453 (January 20, 2019), para. 10.

42 The secretary-general has acknowledged that the inclusion of gender expertise in peace operations was attributable in part to member states raising the issue in Security Council mandates. UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2020/946, September 25, 2020, para. 27.

43 In the context of supporting inclusive political transitions, the secretary-general suggested the council “should consistently issue specific instructions and mandates to integrate a gender perspective into security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.” *Ibid.*, para. 26.

44 UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020), para. 21.

45 UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 39. The recent revisions to UNISFA's and MONUSCO's mandates also refer to Resolution 2538. See: UN Security Council Resolution 2550 (November 12, 2020), para. 27; and UN Security Council Resolution 2556 (December 18, 2020), para. 43. By contrast, MINURSO's recently revised mandate refers to Resolution 2538 in the preambular paragraphs. See: UN Security Council Resolution 2548 (October 30, 2020).

46 Virtual interview with representative of Security Council member, November 2020. This is one of the main reasons that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was unable to reach consensus on similar references in its 2020 report. See: Lisa Sharland, “Bouncing Back from Rock Bottom: A New Era for the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations?” International Peace Institute, October 2020.

performance or the mission's effectiveness.<sup>47</sup> While this placement emphasizes the potential benefits of increased women's participation to operational effectiveness, it may also instrumentalize the role of women in peacekeeping, placing an additional burden on women to deliver on certain aspects of the mandate that should be the remit of the entire mission.<sup>48</sup>

## Reporting and Resourcing

Some mandates include requests for resources to support gender-sensitive approaches. Several mission mandates request the use of uniformed and civilian gender advisers, with some noting the need for these posts to be filled expeditiously.<sup>49</sup> In the case of MINUSCA, gender advisers are identified as assisting with the full scope of the mission's mandate, including the political and reconciliation process.<sup>50</sup>

Some mandates also include comprehensive gender reporting requirements. UNMISS is requested to report on "steps taken to deter and prevent sexual and gender based violence," as well "the participation of women in peace processes, and an analysis of the mission's political engagement on this issue" (the latter part was added in 2020).<sup>51</sup> MONUSCO's mandate calls for "enhanced reporting" on the participation of women.<sup>52</sup> According to the secretary-general's 2020 report on WPS, "the mandate renewals of peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Mali and South Sudan were good examples of that reporting requirement."<sup>53</sup>

## Factors Influencing the Inclusion of WPS Language in Mandates

The Security Council's approach to including WPS language in mandates has been inconsistent over the last two decades. In the cases of the missions in the Golan Heights (UNDOF) and Lebanon (UNIFIL), the council only started to include more comprehensive language on WPS in 2018.<sup>54</sup> And for the mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO), it only started to include WPS language in 2017. This contrasts with the council's approach to multidimensional mandates, which have routinely included more detailed provisions on WPS for many years, reflecting their numerous priorities and complex tasks.<sup>55</sup>

While the council has expressed broad support for the WPS agenda, there are differing views among the P5 over the type of WPS language to include in peacekeeping mandates. While strong advocates for WPS in the council have sought to include more comprehensive references to women's protection and participation, these have at times faced resistance, particularly from China and Russia, which have argued that the language on WPS is "too prescriptive."<sup>56</sup>

A range of internal and external factors influence whether substantive language on WPS is included in the mandates of peacekeeping operations. These include dynamics internal to the Security Council and mandating processes such as the role of the

47 For example, the language in MINUSCA's mandate shifted from a paragraph on gender (in 2018) to a paragraph on performance (in 2019). See: UN Security Council Resolution 2448 (December 13, 2018), para. 57; and UN Security Council Resolution 2499 (November 15, 2019), para. 38. The language in the 2020 mandate was moved into a standalone paragraph following the one on performance. See: UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 39.

48 Nina Wilén, "What's the 'Added Value' of Male Peacekeepers? (Or—Why We Should Stop Instrumentalising Female Peacekeepers' Participation)," Egmont Institute, February 2020.

49 UNMISS, for example, is mandated "to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, within its capacity and areas of deployment, with specific protection for women and children, including through the continued use of the Mission's Child Protection Advisers, Women Protection Advisers, and uniformed and civilian Gender Advisers, the positions for which should be filled expeditiously." UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020), para. 8(a)(i).

50 UN Security Council Resolution 2552 (November 12, 2020), para. 44.

51 UN Security Council Resolution 2514 (March 12, 2020), para. 41.

52 UN Security Council Resolution 2556 (December 18, 2020), para. 32.

53 UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2020/946, September 25, 2020, p. 35.

54 The 2017 mandates for UNIFIL and UNDOF included language on addressing sexual exploitation and abuse but not other aspects of the WPS agenda.

55 See, for example, the resolution authorizing the deployment of UNMISS: UN Security Council Resolution 1996 (July 8, 2011).

56 Virtual interview with representative of Security Council member, November 2020.



penholder, the timing of the introduction of the language into the draft mandate, communication between WPS and country experts within permanent missions in New York, and the commitment of council members to WPS. There are also external factors that influence the process, including advocacy by civil society, the engagement of the council's Informal Expert Group, reporting from the secretary-general and the field, and efforts to streamline language in mandates.

## Dynamics Internal to the Security Council

The mandate penholders in the Security Council have considerable influence over whether there is new language on WPS, as they circulate the first draft for negotiation.<sup>57</sup> However, drafting usually commences with the previous resolution, meaning that WPS language included in the previous year's mandate is likely to make it through to the next year. If there is no WPS language in the previous resolution, it is more difficult to get it included. As with most negotiating processes, if there is more to bargain with, there is more scope to make progress, but it is a balancing act.<sup>58</sup>

Timing matters greatly when it comes to influencing the mandating process. The earlier in the process the language is included, the better. If substantive new WPS language is included in the first draft, it is likely to be included in subsequent drafts that are open for negotiation and is thus more likely to be seriously considered.<sup>59</sup> The first draft is shared with the P3 (France, the UK, and the US), then the P5, then the entire council.<sup>60</sup> Even if elected members wish to influence the process, they are more likely to get language on WPS included if they discuss it with the penholder prior to the circulation of the first draft.<sup>61</sup> While this is true of efforts to influence the drafting of peacekeeping

mandates in general, timing is particularly important for WPS, given that not all of the P5 support including more explicit language on the WPS agenda in peacekeeping mandates. Timing is also important because of the important role of civil society in advocating for WPS during the negotiations.

The proposed placement of language on WPS within the draft mandate can also determine whether it is likely to be included in the final version. Linking language on WPS to other elements of the mandate may make it more likely to be agreed to.<sup>62</sup> It may also be easier to agree on language that has already been included in another mission's mandate, setting a precedent for its inclusion elsewhere. For instance, language on "gender-sensitive community violence reduction programs" that was recently incorporated into UNMISS's mandate drew from language in MINUSCA's earlier mandate.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, language on women's participation in MINUSCA's mandate took inspiration from UNFICYP's mandate.<sup>64</sup> However, whether this approach works largely depends on the interest of other council members in the specific issue being negotiated and their political will to push for it. If members invest political capital, this may outweigh other factors influencing the mandating process.

Information sharing between WPS and country experts within permanent missions can also have an influence on how systematically council members incorporate WPS language into mandates. If the relationship between a permanent mission's WPS experts and country experts is good, they may share more information, and the WPS experts may have more input into peacekeeping mandates (of course, this is arguably true for any crosscutting issue dealt with by permanent missions).<sup>65</sup>

57 The penholders for different peacekeeping missions or country situations are: France (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL); the UK (UNFICYP); the US (MINURSO, UNMISS, UNISFA); and Russia and the US (UNDOF).

58 IPI workshop on inclusion of WPS in UN peacekeeping missions, June 29, 2020.

59 Ibid.

60 There are some exceptions to this process, notably the mandate for UNDOF, which is first negotiated between Russia and the US.

61 IPI workshop on inclusion of WPS in UN peacekeeping missions, June 29, 2020.

62 Ibid.

63 Security Council Report, "UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Mandate Renewal," March 14, 2019.

64 Virtual interview with representative of Security Council member, November 2020.

65 IPI workshop on inclusion of WPS in UN peacekeeping missions, June 29, 2020.

Similarly, the level of engagement by capitals may also influence the nature of amendments and proposals on WPS. If permanent missions share mandate drafts with the relevant WPS or gender equality sections in their capitals (if they exist), more nuanced language or approaches may be put forward. For instance, gender experts in London have informed the UK's approach to advocating for the term "equal" in the context of the "full, equal and meaningful" participation of women. The level of input by member-state officials based in diplomatic posts where peacekeeping missions are operating could also have an impact. Such contacts may overcome the limited, and at times delayed, reporting through official UN channels.

It is unclear whether the broader regressive debates on WPS in the Security Council will have an impact on peacekeeping mandates. For instance, during the negotiations on Resolution 2467, China, Russia, and the US tried to remove agreed language on the sexual and reproductive health rights of victims of sexual violence.<sup>66</sup> By contrast, Resolution 2538, which focused on the participation of women in peacekeeping, was adopted as a presidential text, meaning that it was co-sponsored by all members of the council. It is unclear whether negotiating and adopting this text as a peacekeeping resolution rather than a WPS resolution may have created a more conducive environment for negotiations.<sup>67</sup> Regardless, the resolution offers a useful framework to guide the inclusion of detailed language on uniformed women's participation in peacekeeping, particularly on how gender-balanced missions can contribute to operational effectiveness.

## External Influences on the Security Council

Efforts to advance WPS in peacekeeping mandates are often stymied by the limited flow of information to the Security Council.<sup>68</sup> Reporting cycles

often mean that the secretary-general's reports are released with little or no time to influence the first draft discussed among the P3.<sup>69</sup> And while the secretary-general's reports increasingly include sections on gender or WPS, they often refer to women as a "monolithic group" and fail to address intersectionality and masculinities.<sup>70</sup>

Briefings by mission leaders and representatives from civil society have offered greater opportunities for sharing information with council members. While these are generally formulaic formal briefings, the Informal Expert Group on WPS (IEG) has allowed for more substantive exchanges. Established following the adoption of Resolution 2242, the IEG provides a mechanism for WPS and country experts to engage on issues affecting women in select country contexts.

While the IEG is not exclusively focused on peacekeeping missions, it has considered several countries that host missions.<sup>71</sup> For instance, the IEG meeting on South Sudan in February 2019 ahead of UNMISS's mandate renewal resulted in the strengthening of language on "the mission's good offices role, prevention and response to [sexual and gender-based violence] and [conflict-related sexual violence] and the roles of Gender Advisors in gender mainstreaming across the mission mandated tasks."<sup>72</sup>

UN Women, as the secretariat of the IEG, has also recommended language to include in mandates. For instance, following a meeting of the IEG on Mali in May 2020, UN Women and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict called upon council members to retain all gender-relevant language in the previous mandate and emphasize the implementation of the recommendations emerging from a high-level workshop on the participation of women.<sup>73</sup> This language was subsequently included in the revised mandate for MINUSMA adopted the

66 Security Council Report, "In Hindsight: The Women, Peace and Security Agenda at 20," March 31, 2020.

67 Dustin Johnson and Gretchen Baldwin, "Women in Peacekeeping: Signs of Change at the United Nations?" *IPI Global Observatory*, September 17, 2020.

68 UN Women, "A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325," p. 328.

69 Virtual interview with representative of Security Council member, November 2020.

70 NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, "Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the Security Council: 2017," July 2018.

71 For instance, it has considered the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and South Sudan. See: Security Council Report, "Women, Peace and Security: The Agenda at 20," June 2020.

72 UNMISS, "Annual Progress Report on Women, Peace and Security (January–December 2019)," February 2020 (on file with author).

73 UN Security Council, *Summary of the Meeting on the Situation in Mali, Held by the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security on 27 May 2020*, UN Doc. S/2020/574, June 23, 2020, p. 4.

following month.<sup>74</sup>

While there has been a welcome increase in the number of civil society briefers taking part in council debates and Arria-formula meetings, these briefings are not always timely enough to influence council negotiations. Without such briefings to enable the flow of information from the field, the council is removed from the needs of women in host communities. In the words of one gender adviser, people have forgotten that WPS is about “local women,” not about the UN.<sup>75</sup> Informal mechanisms that connect the penholder and other council members with peacekeeping personnel in missions, including gender advisers, could strengthen the WPS language in mandates by bypassing the watered-down language of formal briefings and reports. It could also encourage missions to connect with local women and seek their input into the mandating process.<sup>76</sup>

There is also more scope for the Security Council to include uniformed women peacekeepers in briefings on peacekeeping. The briefing by police officer Nataliia Emelianova from UNISFA during the most recent debate on WPS offered a different perspective from those provided by civil society briefers. It also drew attention to the presence and work of women in UN peacekeeping missions. However, it was notable that Emelianova was a sexual and gender-based violence adviser to the mission, which could perpetuate stereotypes about the roles uniformed women should have in peacekeeping missions. Nonetheless, more regular engagement with uniformed women from a range of roles and backgrounds could better sensitize council members to women’s contributions to peacekeeping missions.

One of the Security Council’s challenges moving forward is how to balance efforts to consolidate language on WPS in peacekeeping mandates with efforts to streamline and better prioritize tasks. Concerns about the length and complexity of so-called “Christmas-tree mandates” have led some penholders to streamline language, including by prioritizing tasks, in line with the recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) from 2015.<sup>77</sup> But there are concerns that this may already have resulted in reductions in language on WPS.<sup>78</sup> There has been limited analysis on how to prioritize and sequence mandates while ensuring that there is sufficient language on WPS.<sup>79</sup>

Efforts to improve the structure of peacekeeping mandates and the direction they offer also raise questions about what constitutes “strong language” when it comes to WPS. Is it multiple references to “women” or “gender” throughout the mandate? References to WPS resolutions and the WPS agenda? Requests to integrate gender as a crosscutting issue across the mandate? In many instances, research and progress reports have sought to quantitatively capture progress on WPS by counting the number of instances of gender-related terms.<sup>80</sup> In some cases, these counts even include references to measures to address sexual exploitation and abuse, even though such language is addressing a problem that peacekeeping missions caused.<sup>81</sup>

Qualitative understandings of what constitutes strong language may be more useful. As noted by Sarah Kenny Werner and Elena B. Stavrevska, strong language is generally “more detailed, supported by direct citations to WPS [resolutions]

74 MINUSMA is mandated to “implement the recommendations of the high-level workshop on participation of women in the mechanisms established by the Agreement to support and monitor its implementation, by increasing the representation of women in the *Comité de suivi de l’Accord (CSA)* and the subcommittees, setting-up a steering committee of the workshop’s recommendations, as well as an observatory led by women with a clear mandate and mechanism to oversee progress towards women’s full, effective and meaningful participation.” UN Security Council Resolution 2531 (June 29, 2020), para. 3.

75 Interview with UN official, New York, July 2020.

76 IPI workshop on inclusion of WPS in UN peacekeeping missions, June 29, 2020.

77 UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People*, UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, June 17, 2015, para. 184.

78 Interview with UN official, New York, July 2020. The official noted that references to WPS in the mandate for MINUSMA were reduced when the penholder (France) streamlined the mandate.

79 IPI, the Stimson Center, and Security Council Report have conducted a series of meetings on prioritizing and sequencing the mandates of MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS. See: International Peace Institute, “Prioritization and Sequencing of Security Council Mandates,” available at <https://www.ipinst.org/program/peace-operations-and-sustaining-peace/security-council-mandates>.

80 These include the Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325; the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security; and the secretary-general’s reports on WPS.

81 Werner and Stavrevska, “Where Are the Words?”

and/or more specific (and which serve[s] to centre it).”<sup>82</sup> Or, put differently, it is language that is likely to be directly applied in the field rather than language that is included to tick a box. Improved qualitative analysis of WPS language in mandates—and its impact in the field—would assist in understanding what types of language may result in better outcomes.

The importance of retaining “strong language” on WPS in mission mandates has been acknowledged in some of the recommendations emerging from IEG meetings. For instance, UN Women urged the Security Council to retain strong language on WPS in several paragraphs of MONUSCO’s 2019 mandate, with special attention to the language that requested the mission “to take fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate.”<sup>83</sup> This suggests that a paragraph with a clear heading that comprehensively addresses many aspects of WPS might provide strong direction to missions. Such comprehensive language can be especially useful when there is limited “wiggle room” for the head of a mission to interpret the mandate. For instance, in the case of UNIFIL, which is a politically sensitive mission, the head of mission was constrained in taking forward work related to WPS without explicit language in the mandate to do so.<sup>84</sup>

## Implementation in the Field: Key Drivers

Beyond Security Council mandates, there is a range of other factors that also drive the implementation of the WPS agenda in the field. These include the availability of policies and training materials, the political will and accountability of mission leaders, the role of gender advisers, budgetary restrictions, cultural understandings of gender in the host

country, individuals’ understandings of WPS mandates, and stereotypes about uniformed women peacekeepers.

Some peacekeeping missions began working on WPS in the 1990s, well before there was WPS language in their mandates. For instance, the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor established a gender affairs unit prior to the adoption of the first WPS resolution. The mission grounded the establishment of the unit in a human rights approach, relying on international agreements and policies on gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and human rights, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>85</sup> Similarly, the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) still has no provisions on WPS in its mandate but was one of the first peacekeeping missions to deploy a gender adviser.<sup>86</sup>

These early efforts, along with the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations, informed the development of Resolution 1325.<sup>87</sup> The WPS resolutions, in turn, have informed and supported the development of guidance and reporting on WPS by some peacekeeping missions. For instance, UNMISS’s Strategy on Gender and Women, Peace and Security refers to the request in Resolution 1889 (2009) for the UN to “collect data on, analyze and systematically assess particular needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations” to support the inclusion of gender analysis in the conflict and political analysis undertaken as part of the mandate review process. The strategy also notes that it is grounded not only in the resolution mandating UNMISS but also in the suite of WPS resolutions, the HIPPO report, the A4P initiative, the Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, and policies

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> UN Security Council, *Summary of the Meeting of the Informal Group of Experts on Women and Peace and Security on the Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 25 March 2019*, UN Doc. S/2019/296, April 8, 2019. In particular, UN Women requested that the language in paragraph 39 of Resolution 2409 from the previous year be retained, which was included under the subheading “Gender, Sexual Violence, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” (though the latter part of the heading has been removed).

<sup>84</sup> Interview with UN official, New York, July 2020.

<sup>85</sup> See: “A Review and Evaluation of Gender-Related Activities of UN Peacekeeping Operations and Their Impact on Gender Relations in Timor Leste,” prepared by Sofi Ospina for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, July 2006, p. 20.

<sup>86</sup> Leanne Smith, “Peacekeeping and the WPS Agenda: ‘Less Talk and More Action,’” Australian Strategic Policy Institute, March 27, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Windhoek Declaration on the Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group*, UN Doc A/55/138-S/2000/693, July 14, 2000. See also: Barbara Crossette, “Five Months before UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Seminar That Set the Scene,” *PassBlue*, October 8, 2020.



such as the Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations Policy.<sup>88</sup> The inclusion of WPS language in peacekeeping mandates is therefore one of many factors that informs the development of WPS strategies in the field.

Mission leadership—and gender advisers’ level of access to the senior mission leadership team—is also critical to implementing WPS mandates.<sup>89</sup> The seniority and placement of the gender unit within the mission is particularly important.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, the size of the team responsible for providing direction on the WPS and gender aspects of peacekeeping mandates matters. If there are not enough staff to take on the required tasks, the mission is unlikely to be able to effectively respond to the demands and requests of the Security Council related to the WPS agenda. This challenge was reflected early on in the deployment of MINUSMA, whose gender unit was significantly under-resourced, contributing to mission leaders’ low level of attention to the WPS agenda in the face of competing priorities.<sup>91</sup>

However, resourcing for civilian posts in missions is at the behest of the UN General Assembly’s Fifth Committee, and gender adviser posts have been targeted for reductions both in number and in seniority. These reductions are part of efforts to undercut the ability of missions to implement their WPS mandates, which not all member states strongly support, as well as efforts simply to reduce costs, reflecting these mandates’ lack of priority across the UN system.<sup>92</sup> As a consequence, language requesting the deployment of uniformed and civilian gender advisers may be undercut by the Fifth Committee. Similarly, it can be undercut by member states’ limited availability of uniformed personnel with gender expertise.

Even if a mission is well-resourced with gender advisers, mission personnel may see the task of implementing gender and WPS language as falling

solely on the gender unit rather than as something all mission personnel are accountable for. The attitude that gender is not an essential part of mission planning or operations also remains prevalent. As a consequence, gender is sometimes viewed as a “cottage industry” with limited opportunities for career progression, which may contribute to long-term vacancies in gender adviser positions in some missions. Moreover, due to the lack of gender training and the failure to mainstream gender as a crosscutting theme, there is often an expectation that gender advisers should take the initiative to communicate with others about what their role entails—an expectation that does not exist for most other positions. That responsibility overwhelmingly falls on women. In some missions, these stereotypes about the gender unit and gender advisers seem to be more prevalent among civilian staff.<sup>93</sup>

Some of these challenges can be overcome with the support of leaders at headquarters and in the mission. Mission leaders play an important role in determining whether missions prioritize WPS and in shaping the way WPS mandates are implemented. However, there are few mechanisms to hold leaders accountable for implementing WPS mandates. While the HIPPO report recommended that compacts between the secretary-general and heads of mission should incorporate three gender-related indicators, the proposed indicator on mainstreaming gender across all mission tasks had yet to be included as of June 2019.<sup>94</sup>

The commitment of host-state authorities to WPS also has an impact on the ability of missions to act on the WPS language in their mandates. For instance, in the Central African Republic, the egalitarian approach of leaders such as President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, who has appointed women to several high-level government posts, could support the mission’s efforts to advance the

88 UNMISS, “Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Strategy,” June 29, 2020 (on file with author), p. 1. See also UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN Department of Field Support, “Policy: Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations,” February 2018; and UN Department of Peace Operations, “Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security: Resource Package”, January 2020.

89 IPI workshop on inclusion of WPS in UN peacekeeping missions, June 29, 2020.

90 This echoes the recommendations made in the Global Study on Resolution 1325, as well as in Resolution 2242.

91 Jair van der Lijn, “Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in Mali/MINUSMA,” Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019.

92 Between 2016 and 2018, gender adviser posts were defunded and downgraded in a series of missions. See: Louise Allen, “Mapping of the Gender Recommendations in the Three 2015 Peace and Security Reviews,” UN Women, June 2019.

93 IPI workshop on “Identifying and Conceptualizing ‘Gender’ Issues in the Field,” July 1, 2020.

94 Allen, “Mapping of the Gender Recommendations in the Three 2015 Peace and Security Reviews”; UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, para. 243.

equality of Central African women.<sup>95</sup> Overall, however, addressing cultural expectations and stereotypes about women's roles in society, which is ultimately the host state's responsibility, remains one of the most significant challenges for peacekeeping missions. Peacekeepers have to engage with their host-government counterparts, including leaders in the security sector and governance institutions, to influence the development of policies and laws that support gender equality and create environments conducive to women's meaningful participation. While WPS language in mandates can provide mission leaders with the leverage to engage in these discussions more substantively, doing so requires political will.

## Impact of Mandate Language on Uniformed Women Peacekeepers

WPS language in peacekeeping mandates can have implications for the way uniformed women are put forward for deployment and the roles they are assigned. Language around uniformed women's participation in peacekeeping is especially important. Such references are a welcome effort to pressure member states, in particular, to consider how they might increase the number of women they are deploying. However, these references could also have unintended consequences in missions and may result in unsustainable quick fixes within national security institutions that ultimately work against efforts to achieve gender equality.

Since the A4P initiative, references to "meaningful" participation have greatly increased. The inclusion of this term acknowledges that the goal is not simply to put more women in missions; it is also to ensure that women's skills are utilized appropriately, their contributions are valued, they are prepared to fulfill the roles to which they are

deployed, and they are not automatically directed to roles traditionally seen as more "feminine." For example, uniformed women may be expected to reach out to women in communities and facilitate responses to sexual and gender-based violence. For some women, fulfilling such roles is a positive way to gain trust and respect in the mission.<sup>96</sup> For others, however, it is not what they signed up for, and they may have skill sets they wish to contribute to other areas of work. Their mere presence in the mission is not meaningful.

The language in mandates is an opportunity to break down stereotypes about women's participation in peacekeeping. Most significantly, it can challenge perceptions that women are vulnerable and in need of protection and do not have their own agency. However, these biases persist even within the Security Council. For instance, in the recent negotiations on MINUSCA's mandate, there were concerns that some council members were seeking to include references to special accommodations for women rather than language reinforcing the need for gender-sensitive approaches.<sup>97</sup>

Similarly, there is a risk that placing language on women's participation in parts of the mandate focused on mission effectiveness and performance could perpetuate the stereotype that simply increasing women's participation improves performance. Some of these assumptions were addressed in Resolution 2358, which recognizes "that the presence of women and better balance between men and women among peacekeepers contribute to, among others, greater credibility of the missions among the population, more effective community engagement, and enhanced protection responses."<sup>98</sup> Importantly, it also recognizes some of the barriers to women's participation.<sup>99</sup> This resolution's acknowledgment that gender-balanced teams are more effective might prompt consideration of whether the UN should be accepting all-male contingents in missions.<sup>100</sup> Yet the language

95 Lise Morjé Howard, "Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic," Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2020, p. 110.

96 Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second," p. 16.

97 Virtual interview with representative of Security Council member, November 2020.

98 Security Council Report, "Women in Peacekeeping Operations: Adoption of a Resolution," August 27, 2020.

99 UN Department of Peace Operations, "Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028."

100 IPI workshop on "Deployment of Women and Mission Mandates," July 2, 2020. Some participants at this workshop questioned why the UN was accepting all-male contingents, when the UN argued that the participation of women enhanced operational effectiveness.

included in this resolution has yet to translate comprehensively into discussions on mandates in the Security Council. Mandates also do not address the timing of women's deployment, despite research showing that women are less likely to be deployed in the early stages of a mission.<sup>101</sup>

But mandates are only one of the challenges facing uniformed women peacekeepers. There are still perceptions in some missions that women can only fill certain roles and, in some cases, that they alone carry the responsibility for implementing the WPS agenda.<sup>102</sup> As Lotte Vermeij notes, "Women felt they were appointed to [gender- and protection-related] roles by virtue of their sex even though they have not been trained to perform such tasks."<sup>103</sup> This can put an extra burden on women peacekeepers, who may be expected to carry out these tasks in addition to their other duties.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, there is an assumption that uniformed women can be placed in military or police gender adviser roles with no specific training.<sup>105</sup> This "sets them up for failure and reinforces the stigma that women are incapable of successfully serving in UN peace operations," reinforces stereotypes about the roles that are suitable for women, and can lead to gender and protection being framed as "women's issues."<sup>106</sup> Such stereotypes make it harder for the people in these posts to carry out their roles effectively and can deny women access to equal opportunities in peacekeeping missions.<sup>107</sup> They also make it harder for missions to deliver on their WPS mandates, as the majority of uniformed peacekeepers are men, who also need to understand how to integrate WPS into their work.

To help change these perceptions, some women peacekeepers have argued that both women and men should be appointed to gender adviser positions and that there should be "male gender and protection advocates within mission leadership."<sup>108</sup> While the Security Council may have a limited role to play in mitigating these stereotypes,

its members could include language on the deployment of gender advisers and the use of gender-sensitive approaches that reinforces the value of both men and women undertaking such work in missions. This would be controversial, given the council's current dynamics, but it would send an important signal and could result in gradual change in the field.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

There has been considerable progress over the last twenty years in more comprehensively advancing the women, peace, and security agenda as part of peacekeeping mandates. The Security Council has had an influential role in shaping the expectations of peacekeeping missions when it comes to integrating WPS across their functions and areas of work. However, there is scope to address WPS more comprehensively and consistently in peacekeeping mandates. While language is not the only factor that determines whether a mission is likely to advance the WPS agenda, it is an important prerequisite and can provide greater direction and accountability. It can also address inaccurate stereotypes about the roles and contributions of uniformed women to UN peacekeeping.

This report offers five broad recommendations to the Security Council and other member states to strengthen language in peacekeeping mandates that supports the goals and aspirations of the WPS agenda and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of uniformed women.

1. **Propose WPS language early in the Security Council's mandating process.** Shaping WPS language in peacekeeping mandates requires the active engagement of the penholder or the early intervention of supportive member states or civil society during the mandating process.

101 IPI workshop on "Deployment of Women and Mission Mandates," July 2, 2020. See also: Kajsa Tidblad-Lundholm, "When Are Women Deployed? Operational Uncertainty and Deployment of Female Personnel to UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 27, no. 4 (2020).

102 Lotte Vermeij, "Addressing Taboos and Stigmas Military Women in UN Peace Operations Experience," *IPI Global Observatory*, October 9, 2020.

103 Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second," p. 15.

104 IPI workshop on "Deployment of Women and Mission Mandates," July 2, 2020.

105 Kleopatra Moditsi and Aditi Gorur, "Overcoming Hurdles for Women Peacekeepers in the Field," Stimson Center, May 29, 2020.

106 Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second," p. 15.

107 Karim and Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*.

108 Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second," p. 16.

Early engagement is especially important given council members' differing levels of support for some aspects of the WPS agenda.

2. **Facilitate engagement between country experts and WPS experts in member states' permanent missions to the UN.** If the relationship between these experts is strong, it can facilitate member states' more systemic engagement on WPS in peacekeeping mandates. This is one of the objectives of the Informal Expert Group (IEG), which offers an opportunity for country experts and WPS experts in permanent missions to hear directly from senior officials on particular country contexts about priority issues when it comes to WPS.
3. **Use informal consultations to understand the needs of women affected by conflict.** The IEG offers an opportunity for council members to hear directly from senior UN officials in some peacekeeping missions in an informal setting and offers peacekeeping missions an opportunity to influence the mandating process. Informal engagement and advocacy between council members, peacekeepers, and civil society organizations can help ensure that the needs and voices of women directly affected by and working to end conflict can be directly heard by the council and influence its mandates.
4. **Include language in mandates that reflects the contributions of both women and men to operational effectiveness.** The council should avoid perpetuating stereotypes about the role of uniformed women in missions and their suitability to serve. Mandates should refer to how both men and women contribute to the operational effectiveness and performance of missions, not only the need to contribute more women peacekeepers. The inclusion of such language in Resolution 2538 on women in peacekeeping provides a good example. Similar formulations should be considered for peacekeeping mandates to send the message that gender equality and WPS are at the core of the work of peacekeeping missions.

5. **Ensure that approaches to WPS in the Security Council consider the full spectrum of gender.** The WPS agenda is not just for women.<sup>109</sup> "Gender-sensitive approaches" require considering the full spectrum of gender and recognizing that women are not the only people who have a gender. The council could remind policymakers and mission leaders that men also have a responsibility to conduct gender-sensitive peacekeeping and that men in the host community may also have protection needs. This would not only support women but contribute to more gender-equal societies that are less prone to conflict.

The inclusion of WPS language in mandates alone is not a guarantee of progress in strengthening women's meaningful participation or ensuring their protection. Strong language needs to be complemented by leadership and resources to support the implementation of WPS mandates. While mandates can promote accountability through reporting and briefings, they also require the support of the Fifth Committee during the budgeting process and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in providing political support to policies and guidance. Troop- and police-contributing countries are also essential partners in furthering the participation of uniformed women in peacekeeping.

For peacekeeping mandates to have the greatest impact on advancing the WPS agenda in the field, there needs to be a greater understanding of how the inclusion of certain language links to mission-specific policies on, and approaches to, WPS. Some missions were already mainstreaming gender prior to the adoption of Resolution 1325, but the WPS resolutions have catalyzed further understanding and awareness of the need to increase women's participation and address their protection needs. At the same time, some council members are concerned about the growing length of peacekeeping mandates, and many view WPS as an important but at times unnecessary "add-on." Demonstrating the ongoing value of including language that advances the WPS agenda and contributes to building peace will remain essential.

<sup>109</sup> See: Ibrahim Bahati, "Masculinities, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and the WPS Agenda," *IPI Global Observatory*, October 19, 2020; and Albert Trithart, "The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda Is Not Just for Straight, Cisgender Women," *IPI Global Observatory*, October 13, 2020.



## Annex 1: Types of WPS Language in Peacekeeping Mandates

This table provides examples of different types of WPS language in current peacekeeping mandates (as of January 2021).

WPS LANGUAGE	EXAMPLE
<p><b>Protection of women</b></p>	<p><b>UNMISS (Resolution 2514)</b></p> <p>8(a)(i) To protect civilians under threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, within its capacity and areas of deployment, with specific protection for women and children, including through the continued use of the Mission’s Child Protection Advisers, Women Protection Advisers, and uniformed and civilian Gender Advisers, the positions for which should be filled expeditiously.</p> <p><b>MINUSMA (Resolution 2531)</b></p> <p>28(c)(iii) To provide specific protection and assistance for women and children affected by armed conflict, including through Protection Advisers, Child Protection Advisers, Women Protection Advisers and civilian and uniformed Gender Advisers and focal points, as well as consultations with women’s organizations, and address the needs of victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict.</p>
<p><b>Preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence</b></p>	<p><b>UNMISS (Resolution 2514)</b></p> <p>18. Requests UNMISS to strengthen its sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response activities, including by ensuring that risks of sexual and gender-based violence is included in the Mission’s data collection, threat analysis and early warning systems, by engaging with victims of sexual violence, and women’s organizations, further requests UNMISS to take fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate, and reaffirms the importance of uniformed and civilian gender advisors, gender focal points in all mission components, gender expertise and capacity strengthening in executing the mission mandate in a gender-responsive manner.</p> <p><b>MINUSCA (Resolution 2552)</b></p> <p>24. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict in the CAR, including armed groups, to end sexual and gender-based violence, further calls upon the CAR authorities to swiftly investigate alleged abuses in order to fight against impunity of those responsible for such acts, and to take concrete, specific and time-bound steps towards implementing the UN and government of CAR joint communiqué to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict and to ensure that those responsible for such crimes are excluded from the security sector and prosecuted, and to facilitate immediate access for all survivors of sexual violence to available services, calls on the CAR authorities and international partners to sustain adequate support to the Mixed Unit for Rapid Intervention and Suppression of</p>

WPS LANGUAGE	EXAMPLE
	<p>Sexual Violence against S/RES/2552 (2020) Women and Children (UMIRR), and further calls for the swift prosecution of alleged perpetrators.</p>
<p><b>Women’s participation in political processes and institutions</b></p>	<p><b>UNMISS (Resolution 2514)</b></p> <p>31. Welcomes the commitment to the inclusion of women in the Revitalised Agreement, including the 35% minimum for women’s representation, and calls on all parties to do more to ensure that these minimum commitments are achieved and to ensure the full, effective, and meaningful participation and involvement of women in all spheres and levels of political leadership, the peace process, and the transitional government, and requests UNMISS to assist in these efforts.</p> <p><b>UNFICYP (Resolution 2537)</b></p> <p>5(a) increase their support to, and ensure a meaningful role for, civil society engagement in peace efforts, in particular strengthening the participation of women’s organisations and youth in the process, including by empowering the Technical Committee on Gender Equality to meet and develop an action plan supporting women’s full, effective and meaningful participation in peace talks and providing direct support and encouragement to civil society organisations to enhance inter-communal contact and trust-building.</p> <p><b>MINURSO (Resolution 2548)</b></p> <p>13. Encourages the parties to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to identify and implement confidence-building measures, including to engage women and youth, and encourages neighbouring states to support these efforts.</p> <p><b>UNISFA (Resolution 2550)</b></p> <p>17. Urges the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to take steps to implement and facilitate confidence-building measures among the respective communities in the Abyei Area, providing for the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, regardless of area of origin, at all stages, including through reconciliation processes at the grass-roots level as well as through ongoing efforts of non-governmental organizations and by fully supporting UNISFA’s efforts in promoting community dialogue, further urges Sudan and South Sudan to consider the support of the UN and African Union to help facilitate dialogue amongst all parties in Abyei, and looks forward to the results of the joint investigation announced by the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to hold perpetrators accountable for violence in the Kolom area of Abyei in January 2020.</p>

WPS LANGUAGE	EXAMPLE
<p><b>Gender-sensitive approaches and gender as a crosscutting issue</b></p>	<p><b>UNFICYP (Resolution 2537)—Gender as a crosscutting issue</b></p> <p>15. Requests UNFICYP to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate; requests the Secretary-General and troop and police-contributing countries to increase the number of women in UNFICYP and ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of its operations.</p> <p><b>MONUSCO (Resolution 2556)</b></p> <p>32. Requests MONUSCO to take fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Government of the DRC and other relevant stakeholders in creating a legal, political and socio-economic environment conducive to ensuring the full, effective and meaningful participation and full involvement and representation of women at all levels, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, protection of civilians, including by engaging women’s networks as partners in protection, support to DDR and SSR efforts, and support to stabilisation efforts through, inter alia, the provision of civilian and uniformed gender and women protection advisers and focal points at headquarters and field levels, participation of women civil society leaders and organization members with regards to conflict prevention and resolution, public institutions and decision-making, requests MONUSCO support the government in advancing women’s political participation, in particular achieving the 30% constitutional quota and further requests enhanced reporting by MONUSCO to the Council on this issue.</p> <p><b>MINUSCA (Resolution 2552)—Gender in the context of DDR</b></p> <p>11. Urges the CAR authorities to address the presence and activity of armed groups in the CAR by implementing a comprehensive strategy that prioritises dialogue and the urgent implementation of an inclusive, gender-sensitive and effective DDR process, as well as repatriation (DDRR) in the case of foreign fighters, including children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, as well as continuing the implementation of community violence reduction projects, also urges the CAR authorities and signatory armed groups to accelerate the implementation of the interim security measures provided for in the Peace Agreement, including the special mixed security units following vetting, disarmament, demobilisation and training, to promote trust and confidence between signatory parties and as a platform for the deployment of State authority, in a manner complementary to DDRR and SSR processes.</p> <p><b>UNMISS (Resolution 2514)—Gender in the context of the protection of civilians and community violence reduction</b></p> <p>8(a)(vi) To exercise good offices, confidence-building, and facilitation in support of the mission’s protection strategy, especially in regard to women and children, including to facilitate the prevention, mitigation, and resolu-</p>

WPS LANGUAGE	EXAMPLE
	<p>tion of intercommunal conflict through, inter alia, mediation and community engagement in order to foster sustainable local and national reconciliation as an essential part of preventing violence and long-term state-building activity, as well as to provide support, within existing resources, for the relevant authorities and civil society organizations in developing and implementing gender-sensitive community violence reduction (CVR) programs, in cooperation and coordination with development partners and community representatives, especially women and youth.</p>
<p><b>Women’s participation in peacekeeping</b></p>	<p><b>MINUSCA (Resolution 2552)</b></p> <p>39. Requests the Secretary-General and the troop and police contributing countries to seek to increase the number of women in MINUSCA, as well as to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership positions, and to implement other relevant provisions of resolution 2538 (2020).</p> <p><b>UNDOF (Resolution 2530)</b></p> <p>13. ...requests the Secretary General and troop- and police-contributing countries to seek to increase the number of women in UNDOF, as well as to ensure the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations.</p>
<p><b>Resourcing (gender advisers and women protection advisers)</b></p>	<p><b>MINUSCA (Resolution 2552)</b></p> <p>31(a)(iii) To provide specific protection for women and children affected by armed conflict, including through the deployment of child protection advisers, women protection advisers and gender advisers and by adopting a gender-sensitive, survivor centred approach in this regard, especially to provide the best assistance to survivors of sexual violence</p>
<p><b>Reporting</b></p>	<p><b>UNIFIL (Resolution 2539)</b></p> <p>26. Requests UNIFIL to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Lebanese authorities in ensuring the full, effective and meaningful participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels of decision-making in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, as well as to support the implementation of the action plan on Women and Peace and Security, including to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence, further requests enhanced reporting by UNIFIL to the Security Council on this issue.</p> <p><b>MONUSCO (Resolution 2556)</b></p> <p>32. Requests MONUSCO to take fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Government of the DRC and other relevant stakeholders in creating a</p>



WPS LANGUAGE	EXAMPLE
	<p>legal, political and socio-economic environment conducive to ensuring the full, effective and meaningful participation and full involvement and representation of women at all levels, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, protection of civilians, including by engaging women's networks as partners in protection, support to DDR and SSR efforts, and support to stabilisation efforts through, inter alia, the provision of civilian and uniformed gender and women protection advisers and focal points at headquarters and field levels, participation of women civil society leaders and organization members with regards to conflict prevention and resolution, public institutions and decision-making, requests MONUSCO support the government in advancing women's political participation, in particular achieving the 30% constitutional quota and further requests enhanced reporting by MONUSCO to the Council on this issue.</p> <p><b>UNMISS (Resolution 2514)</b></p> <p>41. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on implementation of the UNMISS mandate and the obstructions UNMISS encounters in doing so in a comprehensive written report to be submitted within 90 days of the date of adoption of this resolution, every 90 days thereafter, and underscores that such reporting should include attention to the below listed issues and that perspectives should be gathered from all relevant actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific and detailed reporting on how UNMISS is working toward fulfilling its protection of civilian duties, including but not limited to troop responsiveness and performance and new patrol areas, proactive deployment and community engagement,</li> <li>• the consideration of gender as cross cutting throughout the mandate,</li> <li>• steps taken to deter and prevent sexual and gender-based violence,</li> <li>• the participation of women in peace processes, and an analysis of the mission's political engagement on this issue,</li> <li>• steps taken to enhance the safety and security of UN personnel,</li> <li>• analysis of troop and police performance and rotations, including progress in mission operations and accountability measures taken for underperformance, including any information on national caveats that negatively affect implementation of the mandate,</li> <li>• strengthened reporting on human rights issues, and</li> <li>• reporting on progress in implementing the HRDDP.</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Mapping WPS Language in Peacekeeping Mandates

This table maps the inclusion of different types of WPS language in operative paragraphs across current peacekeeping missions.

WPS LANGUAGE	MINUSMA (Resolution 2531)	MINUSCA (Resolution 2552)	UNMISS (Resolution 2514)	MONUSCO (Resolution 2556)	UNISFA (Resolution 2550) <sup>110</sup>	UNFICYP (Resolution 2537)	UNIFIL (Resolution 2539)	MINURSO (Resolution 2548)	UNDOF (Resolution 2530)
Protection of women									
Preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence									
Women's participation in political processes and institutions									
Gender-sensitive approaches and gender as a cross-cutting issue									
Women's participation in peacekeeping									
Resourcing (e.g., gender advisers and women protection advisers)									
Reporting									

<sup>110</sup> The language in UNISFA's mandate differs from many of the other missions. For instance, it requests the secretary-general "to implement a gender mainstreaming plan in line with resolution 1325" rather than to consider gender as a "cross-cutting issue." Similarly, it "calls upon UNISFA to sustain adequate expertise on women and child protection" rather than referring to specific roles in the mission.



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