

## Written evidence submitted by the SecurityWomen (INR0074)

SecurityWomen welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Foreign Affairs Committee regarding the FCO and the Integrated Review. There is an overlap with the recent Review on the role of the FCO (May 2020) to which SecurityWomen provided a written contribution regarding '*Strategy in UK foreign policy*'... '*the priorities for UK foreign-policy strategy*'. The focus here is the same.

### 1. Introduction

Further to SecurityWomen's previous submission, we recognise the UK Government's advantageous position as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and the prime opportunity to influence global affairs. The importance of global cooperation to tackle and maintain peace in parts of the world cannot be overstated as a way of ensuring in turn the UK's safety and security. We would like to see gender equality as a core value and driving imperative to all of the UK's efforts, activities and actions within the UNSC and throughout all the government departments included in the Integrated Review. The premise being that in societies where there is greater gender equality, there is less likelihood of conflict and violence, and the converse to this is also borne out by evidence<sup>1</sup>. It is recognised that some resistance to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (of which the UK is the penholder) is displayed within the UNSC, however, we wish to see the UK Government continue to stand up to any proposed erosion to women and girls' rights.

### 2. UK contribution

The UK approach to security is one that should be grounded in human rights and the elimination of conflict and violence. It is with this in mind that we make the following points and reiterate key issues made in our previous submission:

#### a) Peacekeeping

- A greater physical contribution to UN Peacekeeping, alongside financial contributions, can be seen as an opportunity to illustrate the UK's global leadership and to be a role model to other countries<sup>23</sup>
- As part of this contribution, the UK to embrace gender equality by striving for women's equal participation in peacekeeping. The UK National Action Plan on WPS states that '*the UK will support... increased numbers of women deployed in peace operations*'<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Hudson, Bowen & Nielsen (2020) 'The First Political Order: How Sex shapes Governance and National Security Worldwide', New York, Columbia University Press

<sup>2</sup> Diplomatic leadership (FCO foreign policy priority outcome 4) FCO Single Departmental Plan 2019/20: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-and-commonwealth-office-single-departmental-plan/foreign-and-commonwealth-office-single-departmental-plan-2019-20> accessed 20 April 2020

<sup>3</sup> UN SG's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) launched 28 March 2018

<sup>4</sup> UK NAP on WPS: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-national-action-plan-nap-on-women-peace-and-security-wps-2018-to-2022-report-to-parliament-december-2018>

- To support the above action, we wish to see the UK Government tackle within the Integrated Review, the establishment of a pipeline of talented female officers (both military and police), ranging from supporting female cadets and attracting women into security careers, to ensuring an enabling and welcoming work environment, and the necessary training, mentoring and coaching for women to succeed and advance to leadership positions. This applies to reservists as well as to full time personnel.
- Collaboration between the MOD and Home Office, as well as the FCO is required to establish the 'pipeline of talent'.
- The public needs to know about peacekeeping. Currently there is very little understanding. A communications strategy which incorporates public awareness of peacekeeping and encourages young people to service is required.
- We support the work being done with multilateral organisations, for instance, the African Union, and the training conducted by the British Peace Support Team, much of which is gender training. Gender mainstreaming is recognised as an important tool to establishing gender sensitivity throughout all operations in whatever capacity. However, it should be noted that mainstreaming a gender perspective does not match the embodiment of gender equality with female personnel on the ground.
- The drive to move towards gender parity in all aspects of peacekeeping should be front and centre of the UK's approach within the UNSC and, not only to push, encourage and support the UN's efforts in this regard<sup>5</sup>, but to challenge and drive for greater commitment from all TCCs and PCCs<sup>67</sup>. The deficit of female security personnel is recognised as a global problem.
- WPS needs to become institutionally embedded. As stated in a recent UN DPO document, *'Peace operations are uniquely positioned to advance gender equality and WPS standards given their mandates, extensive field presence and strategic access to senior leadership of national governments.'*<sup>8</sup>
- Within UN peacekeeping, there is a requirement for mixed patrols, consisting of men and women, which act as teams to conduct community-based patrols, as seen, for instance, in the Central African Republic<sup>9</sup>. A step forward would be if the UK could create a mechanism (that would act as a model for every TCC) that would result in, when UK peacekeepers are deployed, there being **at least** 2 women in every platoon/patrol. This would facilitate the much needed formation of mixed patrols which UN DPO is so keen to achieve.

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<sup>5</sup> UN Gender Parity Strategy for Uniformed Personnel sets targets for female police peacekeepers to be 25 percent by 2028, and female military peacekeepers to be 15 percent by 2028.

<sup>6</sup> UN SG's Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, dated 16 August 2018: see point 8 ref to WPS

<sup>7</sup> The overall percentage of women's participation in UN peacekeeping missions has increased from under 4 percent for military peacekeepers in 2015 to 5.3 percent in January 2020; and for female police peacekeepers, from 10 percent to 14.9 percent: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender>

<sup>8</sup> Page 3: [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo\\_wps\\_2019\\_digital\\_1.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo_wps_2019_digital_1.pdf) accessed 4 May 2020

<sup>9</sup> <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/un-news/brazilian-officer-stellar-example-of-why-more-women-are-needed-un-peacekeeping> accessed 7 May 2020

## b) UK approach

- Whilst the focus has been on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI) and much has been achieved, SecurityWomen would like to see more emphasis on women's empowerment, in particular in the security sector, and a call for women and girls to build a career in conflict resolution and peace keeping.
- The merger of DFID and FCO presents an opportunity to bring together the WPS agenda with an emphasis on 'prevention'. Development is only possible where peace exists. The gendered nature of conflict and understanding its root causes are critical to the work of conflict prevention going forward. The merger could present a much clearer pathway for conflict analysis to be undertaken and used to create a more peaceful world and the development of sustainable communities. Women from all stakeholder groups must be central to the strategy and involved in decision making at all levels. The involvement of women in parliaments is particularly important to ensure women's voices are represented and policies shaped with gender parity as central. As women make up 50% of the population it is critical women are treated as equal partners if the best possible outcomes are to be achieved for everyone. Going forward with the merger we would expect the highest levels of transparency and accountability.
- SecurityWomen welcomes regular meetings with civil society representatives and members of GAPS<sup>10</sup> on WPS with FCO Minister, Lord Ahmed (May 2019) and previously with Gavin Williamson, then Minister for Defence (July 2018). The UK could share this as best practice to other countries.
- We call for more action on Security Sector Reform (SSR) which follows a human rights approach and encompasses a 'service' element, and of course, better gender balance. The spotlight on excessive use of force in policing following recent events<sup>11</sup> has highlighted the public abhorrence to this. The power and equality imbalances in so many countries leads to many such incidences which go unreported and unnoticed. We would like to see the UK Government take a lead in advocating for law and order<sup>12</sup> which is restrained in its use of force, and treats every person with respect and fairness. Increasing the participation of women in policing and security sector organisations, and ensuring a safe and enabling working environment, may help catalyse change within the security sector.
- SecurityWomen applauds the UK's financial support to the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations<sup>13</sup>.
- In 2017, the FCO established the role of Special Envoy for Gender Equality. We would like to see this role either expanded, or a new role established - the Ambassador for WPS - in order to have more responsibility and accountability for WPS, with an across-departments remit to enable better joined up working and strategic planning

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<sup>10</sup> Gender Action for Peace and Security: a civil society network

<sup>11</sup> George Floyd: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52861726>

<sup>12</sup> UK NAP, Strategic Outcome 5 is about Security and Justice.

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/gender\\_equality-egalite\\_des\\_genres/elsie\\_initiative-initiative\\_elsie.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng)

in the FCO/DFID, MOD, Home Office and Cabinet Office. In having a more 'helicopter' role, the Ambassador would ensure that each department was contributing to the overall strategy. Currently, for instance, there is little evidence that the Home Office is actively working with the FCO on supporting the increase in numbers of women deployed in peace operations: there are no UN female police peacekeepers from the UK.

- Also in 2017, SecurityWomen welcomed the establishment of the Women, Peace and Security Chiefs of Defence Network, by the UK and Bangladesh and Canada, which brings together powerful military leaders to discuss the challenges and best practice for implementing WPS.
- SecurityWomen would like to see a specific UK commitment to promoting the participation of women as peacekeepers in this anniversary year for UNSCR 1325.

### c) UK Action Points to be developed

- Arguments for use of quotas/targets to achieve better gender balance
- Creating larger recruitment pools and sustainable career pipelines, ensuring women-friendly recruitment messaging
- Strategic planning to work towards the gender tipping point - *each rank* in the armed forces to have at least 30 percent women by 2025
- Specific recommendations for changing working culture - flexible working, shared parental leave etc with targets (women friendly work places)
- Changing patriarchal cultures
- Strategies for involving men to champion gender equality
- Creating a mentoring scheme: take 10 women from different junior ranks in the armed forces and pair with 10 senior male military officers – will enable a transfer of information as to the lived experience for women.

### d) Recommendations

1. UK to use its position at the Security Council as a global leader for WPS.
2. The UK to broaden its approach on WPS and shift its strategic focus on PSVI.
3. Place gender equality in the centre of the Integrated Review, and the WPS agenda as a top priority in the new FCO/DFID strategy. Become gender champions.
4. Ensure women's representation (at least 30%) throughout the Integrated Review process, on panels, boards and research groups, and at senior levels, not just in support roles.
5. Greater public messaging on the importance of UK's contribution to UN Peacekeeping.
6. Create a mechanism for mixed patrols to ensure **at least 2** women in every platoon/patrol deployed on peace operations, as a model for other countries and moving towards gender parity.

7. Establish the role of WPS Ambassador which will provide the necessary leadership for all Whitehall departments to work domestically and internationally together to achieve the UK NAP.
8. Fund and expand training of female military officers
9. Work in partnership with civil society on WPS and ensure regular meetings. To provide as best practice example to other countries.
10. Grow UK's talent and consider strategies to improve the gender balance in UK security services and the development of future female peacekeepers.
11. Ensure the implementation and development of the National Action Plan for WPS is fully embedded in cross-Whitehall Policy planning.

SecurityWomen is an advocacy and research-based non-profit organisation, calling for greater awareness of gender equality issues within the security sector globally. It promotes the inclusion of more women in the security sector - policing, private security, armed forces, cybersecurity and peacekeeping - which globally are overwhelmingly male dominated. The premise being that better security for all parts of society can be created through a better gender balance, and the likelihood of a less violent and conflict-ridden world.

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