Overview

On July 19th, 2016 the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) organized a roundtable dialogue to discuss the integration of gender perspectives as part of the Defence Policy Review, chaired by the Honourable Patty Hajdu. The discussion focused on a number of themes including personnel, health and wellness, procurement, threat analysis, international peace operations, training, and opportunities for Canadian leadership. These themes highlighted two broad requirements: changing military culture and of integrating gender considerations into processes and policy development.

The recommendations presented in this brief are informed by the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada’s (WPSN-C) ongoing research and analysis of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and its implementation in Canada, as well as dialogues between government representatives and Network members.

Recommendations include:

1. Develop a comprehensive policy that defines the commitments to mainstreaming gender equality perspectives across DND and CAF. This should include goals related to the full integration of gender perspectives in defence planning, policy and operations (including Gender-Based Analysis Plus – GBA+ and skills to deal with conflict-related sexual violence), increased diversity of the CAF (including greater participation by women), and establishment of an organizational culture that is respectful for all (including a safe, effective and independent mechanism to deal with complaints of sexual abuse and harassment).

2. Ensure the successful implementation of this policy through the clear commitment from senior levels, additional and dedicated resources, investments in technical expertise,

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1 The Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C) is a network of over 65 organizations and individuals. Given the diversity of our membership, this brief may not represent the view of every member; however, there is broad consensus on the overall direction and recommendations. We have 2 objectives: 1) promote and monitor the efforts of the Government of Canada to implement and support the United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security; and 2) provide a forum for exchange and action amongst Canadian civil society on this same theme. We can be reached at http://wpsn-canada.org/ or wpsncanada@gmail.com
development of a capacity building strategy and a public accountability strategy (including public reporting on progress). Political support (including specific dedicated funding in the next budget) is essential to move this issue forward.

3. Make gender equality perspectives and Women, Peace and Security commitments an explicit cornerstone of Canada’s involvement in international peace support operations.

4. Engage with civil society organizations, researchers and activists on gender dimensions in defence policy and implementation, as well as Canada’s commitments to the international Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Context: Linking Gender Perspectives and the WPS Agenda to Defence Policy

Gender perspectives in defence policy and operations involve multifaceted and diverse issues. These range from women’s participation in the military (at all levels) to the use of GBA+ in planning operations to knowledge of International Humanitarian Law to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers.

Gender relations, inequalities, norms and roles have shaped both military traditions and cultures. There is a growing body of research and theory on ‘militarized masculinities’ that explores how images of male warriors or soldiers are mobilized to support armed forces and war efforts. Gender differences and inequalities are intricately tied to conflict and conflict resolution. Gender relations shape the impact of conflict on civilians, they affect how decisions on conflict prevention and resolution are taken and they even define how hostilities are prosecuted.

The United Nations Security Council resolutions on WPS highlight the link between human and state security. The WPS Agenda acknowledges that women’s security is tied to the security of states and vice versa. It calls for the meaningful participation of women, women’s organizations and women’s movements at all levels on conflict prevention, management and resolution as a strong contribution to sustainable peace. This includes increasing the percentage of women in security institutions such as the police and the military. But the WPS Agenda also challenges us to rethink these institutions, asking whether they deliver peace for women, men, girls and boys. Most importantly, the WPS Agenda is not focused on “making war safe for women” (for example, by responding to sexual violence in conflict only), but on pushing for greater attention to conflict prevention and on stopping wars before they start.

There are also crucial gender dimensions across many peace and security issues including the motivation of insurgent forces (including female suicide bombers, for example), gender-based violence as a military tactic (including sexual violence against both women and men), and countering violent extremism. Cutting-edge research also identifies key gender dimensions in preventing and responding to the use of

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5 The WPS Agenda commonly refers to the series of United Nations Security Council Resolutions dedicated to women, peace and security: 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2422. Together, these resolutions form the basis for advocacy, education, reform and capacity building on gender equality and women’s rights, as they relate to peace and security. Many activists also push the agenda further, making links among gender equality, climate change and armed conflict as well as resource extraction and armed conflict and gender inequalities. As well, even though the Agenda is known as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, the vast majority of advocates use a gender analysis or gender approach to understand dynamics, impacts and issues.
These insights are important in assessing threats and dealing with civilian populations in theatres of operation.

It is interesting to note that many defence professionals have stressed the “operational effectiveness” rationale for the consideration of gender perspectives and increasing the number of serving women in contemporary armed forces. The current Chief of Defence Staff, General Vance, has been particularly clear in making the case for the incorporation of these issues on the basis of improved effectiveness. For example, he spoke of the importance of talking to more than male English-speakers in Afghanistan (when trying to understand the security situation). While this is can be a powerful argument, it is crucial that it not lead to the instrumentalization or the securitization of women’s rights. The Global Study on 1325 made a very strong case that attempts to ‘securitize’ issues and to use women living in conflict-affected countries as instruments in military strategy must be consistently discouraged.  

Normative framework

There is a broad range of Canadian and international commitments that can be used to inform a gender equality policy for DND/CAF:

**International commitments:**

- United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security
- NATO Directive 40-1
- NATO/EAPC Policy for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and Related Resolutions

**National commitments:**

- Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms
- Policy commitments to Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) across federal government departments
- Canadian National Action Plan (C-NAP) for the Implementation of the UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security

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9 These include 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2242.  
Departmental commitments and reports:

- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Relating Resolutions in CAF Planning and Operations\textsuperscript{14}
- External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces (Deschamps Report)\textsuperscript{15}

Taken together, these provide an important platform for bringing attention to gender perspectives and the women, peace and security agenda.

Needed: A Comprehensive Policy Framework on Gender Equality

Our overarching recommendation for the Defence Policy Review is that DND and the CAF develop a comprehensive policy that defines the full range of commitments relating to gender equality and WPS. The policy would include commitments related to increasing the number of women in the CAF, using GBA+ across policy and operations, and eliminating sexist and homophobic attitudes and practices, as well as other relevant issues identified during the Policy Consultations. This policy would fit nicely with the current discussions underway on a feminist approach to Canadian foreign policy\textsuperscript{16} – whether DND explicitly adopts this label or not.

It is crucial that gender equality issues not be reduced to one element of this agenda. It cannot just be seen as human resources issues (with a focus on increasing the number of women serving in the CAF). Nor can the only focus be on GBA+ or on WPS issues in peace support operations.

We believe that progress on gender equality can only be achieved if there is a clear commitment at the policy level. This commitment is critical for accountability purposes, but also to ensure that progress is made in a consistent and timely manner. A cutting-edge policy would also contribute to Canada’s identification as a global leader in this area, consistent with our other domestic and international commitments to gender equality and women’s rights. Furthermore, it could add considerable credibility to our campaign to win a seat on the UN Security Council for 2021.

Success factors for this policy include:

- Robust and unequivocal support from DND/CAF leadership;
- Clear direction that the commitment to the full range of gender equality issues is relevant across all of CAF/DND and not just a marginal add-on. (For example, it should be clear that the issues are not limited to actions to increase the number of women in CAF.);
- Clear, jargon-free language;
- Accountability structures to ensure implementation (including annual public progress reports);
- Capacity building strategy;
- Dedication of financial and human resources (gender advisors, etc.).

It is also crucial to note that new initiatives on gender equality (be they GBA+ or increasing women’s participation or another element) will face an uphill battle in a context of scarce resources and multiple and increasing demands on the CAF. If the new normal is ‘do more with less’ then opposition to new


requirements and new initiatives related to gender equality issues should be expected. Thus it is important that policy implementation plans come with new resources and budget line items so that units do not have to sacrifice or give up something to implement new gender equality related initiatives.

The commitments in the policy should be inserted into the updated Canadian National Action Plan on WPS. The C-NAP provides a whole of government response to Canada’s commitments to the WPS Agenda and a framework for Canada’s approach implementing the suite of UNSC resolutions. With appropriate indicators, it can also function as an accountability tool. We have outlined our vision and recommendations for Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in our brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.17

As part of the follow-up development and adoption to this policy we recommend that DND/CAF engage in regular discussions with civil society organizations, researchers and activists. The fields of women, peace and security and feminist security sector studies are now sites of vibrant discussion and practical recommendations. Increased interaction between DND/CAF and these practitioners and academics could yield fruitful insights to advance gender mainstreaming objectives in Canada’s defence structures.

**Gender Equality Policy Components**

A gender equality policy could have two general objectives:

1) Increased diversity of the CAF (including greater participation by women at all levels) supported by an organizational culture that is accountable, non-discriminatory, and respectful of the human rights of all.

2) Consistent and explicit attention to gender perspectives across DND/CAF planning, policies and operations.

In order to do this, we propose the following recommendations in three interdependent areas: 1) personnel; 2) planning and operations; and 3) participation in international peace support operations. These three areas would be supported by a capacity building strategy.

1. **PERSONNEL**

   a) **Support the existing targets to increase the participation of women (and overall diversity) in the CAF with timeframes and accountability structures.** While women’s participation in the CAF has grown to 15% overall and just under 4% in CAF Combat Arms, this still falls far short of the CAF goal of one in four members being female in ten years. Strategies in these areas must cover recruitment, advancement, retention, and transition to civilian life, as well as ensuring a safe work environment for all Forces members.18

   Strategies to increase women’s participation should also be linked to initiatives to ensure equipment and health & wellness requirements are adequate for all personnel and meet the specific needs of women (including uniforms, equipment and vehicles) as well as to broader efforts to ensure that the CAF is representative of the diversity of Canadian society.

   One expert submission to the Defence Review noted the importance of addressing military organizational culture. Questions here include which strategies are deployed by the organization...

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17 Available at [https://wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/wpsn-c-faae-brief.pdf](https://wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/wpsn-c-faae-brief.pdf)

to support healthy gender dynamics? Do women and men benefit from the same opportunities and treatment? What is the typical model of leadership in the organization?^{19}

\textit{b) Redouble efforts on eliminating sexist and homophobic attitudes and practices at home and abroad.} While steps have been taken to respond to the findings of the \textit{External Review on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces} (Dechamps report), more needs to be done to ensure that all Canadians that serve their country can do so in a respectful, professional and harassment free environment. Public accountability on progress is paramount. Operation Honour is a good step, but progress requires leadership, sustained commitment, innovative solutions and resources.\textsuperscript{20}

Progress on this front will require credible and effective training at all levels. For example, DND should review the current anti-sexual harassment training to understand why it is not effective and how to craft a more effective alternative. An independent agency to handle reports of sexual misconduct and provide support to victims (as recommended by the Dechamps Report) is also essential.

\textit{c) Improve family support for all CAF members.} A gender analysis often draws attention to household dynamics and focuses on the unpaid care work done within families. This is relevant to DND/CAF given the work (unpaid and generally done by women) that military families do to support a serving member. Recent reports have highlighted the challenges faced by family members in supporting members transitioning from military to civilian life and the need for more work in this area.\textsuperscript{21}

Particular attention should focus on the supports required by serving female members, single parents and single members. It cannot be assumed that all military are men with stay-at-home female spouses.\textsuperscript{22}

\section*{2. PLANNING AND OPERATIONS}

Given the interweaving of gender roles, norms and inequalities with security, armed conflict and military operations, bringing a gender perspective to defence planning and operations makes sense. This case has been aptly made in the \textit{CDS Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions into CAF Planning and Operations}.

A key tool in this process is GBA+. However, in order to be effective DND/CAF must adapt and adopt GBA+ frameworks and tools to the DND/CAF context. Generic GBA+ tools are insufficient. Experience has shown that this requires tailoring GBA+ to the work of specific staff members and unit. Despite the convincing arguments from the CDS that there is a strong operational effectiveness rationale for the increased use of GBA+, there will be scepticism and resistance from many within the CAF and DND. A clear and convincing strategy will be required to counter these attitudes and demonstrate the relevance


\textsuperscript{22} One submission to the July 19th Roundtable notes that the challenges facing servicing couples led to her decision to leave the military. It can be assumed that this is not an isolated case. Eva Martinez (2016) \url{http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/defence-policy-review/docs/ottawa/martinez-submission.pdf}
of this analysis. The ability to incorporate GBA+ as part of policies and operations is a competency that is
developed over time; it is not something that can be taught in a 1-day awareness-raising course.

One submission to the July 19th Roundtable points out that responding to conflict-related sexual
violence is a separate knowledge and skill area that also requires specific attention and investment.23

Gender analysis is also vital when CAF personnel and equipment are deployed in humanitarian
emergencies. It is clear that women, men, girls and boys experience natural disasters differently. The
response of humanitarian actors must understand and respond to these differences if they are to be
effective at saving lives and supporting the efforts of communities to rebuild.24 For example, if the DART
is deployed, then it must be capable of responding to the health needs of women and girls, as well as
men and boys. Serving military personnel must also understand how to interact with diverse local
populations during humanitarian emergencies.

We also recommend that DND/CAF review the experience of other institutions that have adopted
gender mainstreaming strategies and tools. Key lessons include the importance of strong leadership,
clear policy direction, expert technical support at high levels, accountability mechanisms, time-bound
targets and milestones, a robust and practical capacity building strategy, and public reporting on
progress.

3. PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

There has been increasing focus and commitment to Canada’s participation in international peace
support operations under UN auspices. Canada can play a leadership role in strengthening global
attention to and implementation of commitments to gender perspectives in these initiatives.

Specific areas of focus include:

a) Continuing Canada’s championing of the WPS Agenda in international forums in particular as
it relates to military participation in peace support operations: This includes ensuring attention
to gender perspectives is a crucial dimension of mandates and operations of peace support
operations. It also includes strong support for the effective implementation of WPS
commitments by DPKO and other UN institutions. Canada should continue its strong position on
zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping forces.

b) Increasing the number of women participating in peace support operations deployments:
Canada can lead by example by increasing the number of women deployed to international
peace support operations. However, current practices must be improved to ensure that these
women are sufficiently supported by overall improved conditions for women serving in these
deployments: protection from sexual abuse and harassment, adequate healthcare, and safe and
secure working and living environments. This will involve listening to women who have served in
this capacity and responding to the issues and concerns that they raise. It also involves working
with UN authorities to ensure that all troop contributing countries adopt working practices that
are supportive of deployed women (respect, harassment free and zero-tolerance for abuse).

c) Making gender equality and women, peace and security issues a primary focus of training and
capacity building initiatives for other militaries, peacekeeping training centres and
international and regional organizations (including UN, AU, NATO): This includes ensuring

23 Susan Johnson (2016). A Canadian Red Cross paper submitted as part of the 2016 Public Consultations for the Defence Policy
http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/assets/pdfs/funding-
financement/ge_humanitarian_assistance_eng.pdf
attention to gender equality is part of our engagement with other institutions, from calling for a
greater representation of women to ensuring appropriate policies are in place to ensure a
respectful and harassment free environment. This also includes putting the WPS Agenda front
and centre as part of capacity building efforts and training undertaken with or for other
organizations. For example, future support to the African Standby Force could include key
requirements for meeting gender objectives.

d) **Strengthening gender and women, peace and security training for Canadian military
peacekeepers:** A renewed commitment to international peacekeeping will require upgrading
skills sets and robust attention to gender equality issues across all peacekeeping initiatives
(including women’s participation, sexual and gender-based violence, protection of civilians,
sensitive security reform, DDRR, etc.). All training programs should include explicit and
consistent attention to gender equality issues. Given recent reports of egregious abuse by
United Nations peacekeepers, attention to codes of conduct and the prevention of sexual
exploitation and abuse (SEA) should also be key elements in all capacity building initiatives.25

4. **CAPACITY BUILDING**

The need for improved capacity within DND/CAF cross-cuts all the above three priority areas. There is a
need to understand the various capacity needs across DND and the CAF and develop a capacity building
strategy to meet these needs. Not everyone needs the same skills, therefore capacity building must
understand and respond to different needs across DND/CAF. For example, while all staff (civilian and
military) should have a basic understanding of GBA+ and how it applies to defence policies and
operations, there is an additional need for technical experts who specialize in this area and bring
advanced knowledge and skills.

**Figure 1** Types of training for gender equality26

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25 For just one example, see BBC News (2016). UN Sex Abuse Scandal: Rise in Allegations Against Peacekeepers. March 4
Therefore a complete DND/CAF curriculum should be developed, rather than relying on generic GBA+ training materials. Ensuring the correct training for the right people will require identifying the kind of skills and competencies different members of DND/CAF require as per the five broad types of training for gender equality (see figure 1). In addition, curriculum should use concrete case studies where people work and answer key questions such as: *what do you want me to do differently? What does it mean for my work? What does it look like in practice?*

Training should be built on adult learning good practice and involve discussion-based and problem-solving methodologies. Exploring gender issues can be confrontational and it is crucial to explore multi-faceted and multi-dimensional learning options to reach diverse staff, including those who are resistant and reluctant to explore these issues.²⁷

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