

GUIDANCE NOTE

# BALANCING PRIORITIES: LESSONS FROM IRAQ, JORDAN AND PALESTINE FOR NAP-1325 DRAFTING TEAMS



An Analysis of the Text of the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security.



**About this study**

This guidance note was commissioned by the UN Women Regional Office for Arab States, and is part of a series of reports on issues of peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa.

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FOR NAP-1325 DRAFTING  
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An Analysis of the Text of the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security.



UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States, Cairo

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
LAS	League of Arab States
NAP-WPS	National Action Plans on WPS
UNSCR 1325	UN Security Council Resolution 1325
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three National Action Plans on WPS (NAPs-WPS), in addition to an emergency NAP-WPS in Iraq<sup>1</sup>, have recently been adopted in the Arab States region: Iraq (2014-2018), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2018-2021), and Palestine (2017-2019),<sup>2</sup> while the League of Arab States (LAS) has also adopted a 'Regional Strategy'<sup>3</sup> on WPS. Further developments within the region are expected: Iraq is in the process of evaluating its 2014-2018 NAP-WPS, and beginning the process of developing its NAP-WPS II; the Governments of Lebanon and Tunisia are in the process of finalising action plans; while there are calls from women's rights and human rights actors in additional other countries across the region for the further adoption of NAPs-WPS. The specific processes of development and implementation of these NAPs-WPS have varied. The Jordan NAP-WPS process is noteworthy for its degree of consultation; it was passed after two years of dialogues in all governorates of the Kingdom. The Palestine NAP-WPS is unique in its efforts to address the impact of occupation, while the Iraq NAP is hailed both as the first in the region, and for the cross-sector governance mechanisms set up to support and monitor its implementation.

To support the ongoing development of actionable and effective NAPs-WPS in the region, it is important to analyse and draw lessons from the three first-generation action plans to inform those that are coming after them. This paper presents the findings of a review of the text of the three existing action plans of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine. The review analyses the NAP-WPS planning documents in order to document areas of good practice that can then inform the future development and adoption of NAP-WPS in the Arab States region. The review is limited to an analysis of the text of the documents, and does not include an analysis of their development, financing, monitoring frameworks or implementation as a guidance tool specifically on NAP-WPS drafting for NAP-WPS drafters.

## BACKGROUND

The Arab States have seen peace and security issues at the forefront of the regional agenda since the advent of the so-called 'Arab Spring'. To this end, political and humanitarian crises have become intertwined, with political crisis driving humanitarian crisis – and in some contexts, issues of climate change fuelling conflict. To resolve these conflicts, political talks remain ongoing in Yemen, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine – and large-scale humanitarian responses operate within and around these countries to address the immediate needs created by political crisis.

Iraq and Palestine are countries that are witnessing active conflict within their borders. This is not the case in Jordan, where any internal peace and security challenges relate primarily to social tensions between refugee and host community populations and to the refugee population that it is hosting threats by violent extremists. Each country is experiencing the impacts of regional insecurities, whether internally or externally located, in ways very specific to each context and responses will be tailored accordingly.

The 'Women, Peace and Security agenda,' founded by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in 2000

- 1 In early 2014, Iraq became the first country in the region to launch a 1325 NAP. Less than a year later, ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) surged out of eastern Syria to seize Mosul and other key cities and towns in Iraq. In May 2015 an Emergency NAP to implement 1325 was passed by the government. The Emergency NAP focuses primarily on including women in all peacebuilding efforts and providing legal, psychological, and health support for affected women and girls. It consists of three pillars—prevention, participation, and protection—and it focused on the conflict with ISIS.
- 2 Federal Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government. Iraq National Action Plan For Implementation Of The United Nation Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security 2014 – 2018. 2014; The National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325: Women, Peace and Security, Palestine 2017-2019. State of Palestine Ministry of Women's Affairs. 2017; Jordan National Action Plan 1325, Jordan National Commission for Women, 2018.
- 3 League of Arab States, Regional Strategy: Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security, General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, Arab Women Organization, UN Women, 2012.



and followed by seven additional resolutions,<sup>4</sup> outlines UN, state and partner obligations for ensuring that the needs and priorities of women and girls impacted by conflict are addressed, and that peace is brokered in an inclusive and sustainable manner. Specific WPS issues arise for women and girls in the Arab States region. The LAS Regional Strategy on WPS highlights that women in the region encounter: gendered violence, including sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors in conflicts taking place in the region; lack of access to basic services such as education and health; arbitrary detention and experiences of physical and psychological harm while in detention; refugee status that contributes to vulnerability to harm, lack of basic service provision and insecure status in asylum countries.<sup>5</sup>

## REVIEW OF NAPS-WPS: IRAQ, JORDAN AND PALESTINE

The three Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS assessed in this analysis vary in terms of their content and scope, while setting out a clear aims and priorities for implementing key aspects of the WPS agenda within their jurisdictions. A 'Gender Planning for Peace and Security' framework, which focused on assessing whether and how these planning documents responds to women and girls gendered needs and rights was used to review the plans, focusing on the text of the documents (rather than their design development processes or their implementation status). It The analysis analytically assessed the following:

- What are Arab States region NAPs-WPS specifically planning for? What are good practices in how women and girls' rights and needs are framed in these action planning documents?
- How are the three NAPs-WPS responding to the different demographics of women residing in each country and their different needs and rights?

A textual analysis of the NAPs-WPS narratives and action matrices was undertaken. First the actions were assessed

4 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) S/RES1325/2000; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008) S/RES1820/2008; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009) S/RES1888/2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1889 (2009) S/RES1889/2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010) S/RES1960/2010; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013) S/RES2106/2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) S/RES2122/2013; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) S/RES2242/2015.

5 League of Arab States, Regional Strategy.

according to whether they meet the practical needs (every-day basic needs) of women and girls; the strategic needs (longer-term rights and equalities) of women and girls<sup>6</sup>; and also identified actions that focus on the 'Institutional needs and priorities' of the state implementing the plan. Second, an 'Inclusivity Analysis' was undertaken to assess whether the plans take full account of and respond to the diversity within the populations subject to the plans.

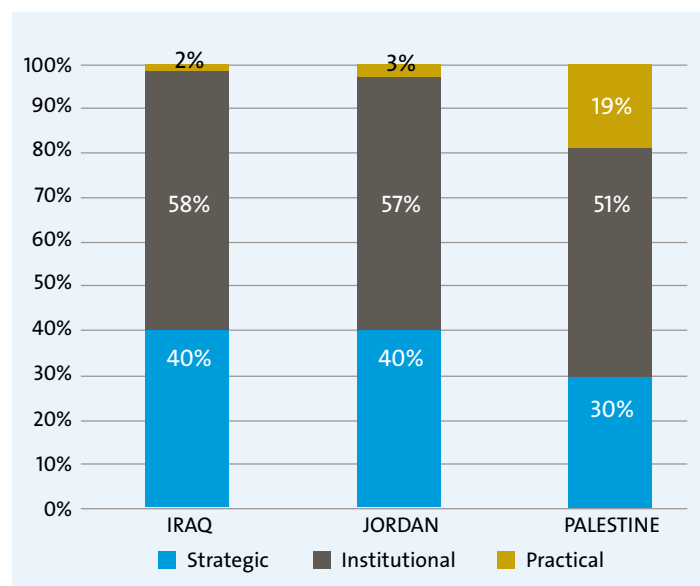
## FINDINGS

The three NAPs-WPS assessed in this study all individually include action points that can be categorised as meeting women and girl's practical and strategic needs and interests. The degree to which they address these different sets of needs varies significantly within the three plans (see Figure 1 below):

The action plans include actions that are focused on meeting the strategic rights of women and girls. Iraq and Jordan's plans contained roughly 40% of actions which focused on strategic needs, while Palestine's plan contained 30% of actions focused on strategic needs.

The action plans also include actions meeting the practical needs of women and girls. Two percent of the Iraq action plan, 3% of Jordan's actions and 19% of Palestine's plan addressed these kinds of needs.

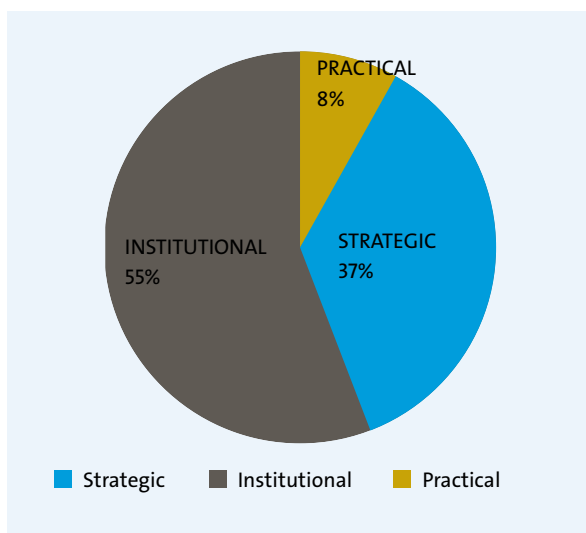
**FIGURE 1**  
Distribution of Practical, Strategic and Institutional Needs and Priorities actions across the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS (i.e per country).



6 Examples of these listed on pages 23-24 of this report.

Across the three plans, the focus of the majority of the action points are on the states' own institutional needs and priorities. Working under the assumption that all 'actions' are equally important, the analysis of the three NAPs-WPS evidences that on average, 55% (over half) of all actions across the three plans were dedicated to Institutional Needs and Priorities. Actions that related specifically to women and girls' strategic needs made up 35% across the plans, while 8% focused on women and girl's practical needs (see figure 2).

**FIGURE 2**  
**Proportion of Practical, Strategic and Institutional Needs and Priorities across the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS.**



*The action plans varied significantly in their attention to and use of a frame of 'inclusivity' in the design and articulation of the action points.*

- The degree to which different identities of women and girls feature within the plans varies substantively. There is less mention of different identity factors within the general narrative of the NAP-WPs across the three plans, and much more likelihood for those references to appear within the action plan matrices which is very positive as that is where the actions and commitments of the plans are located.
- The Iraq plan is the only plan that elaborates reference to different identities of women within the narrative that frames the NAP-WPS document. It mentions the relevance of the NAP-WPS to 'rape

and assaulted women' and to 'Female heads of households and other vulnerable groups as the poor, the unemployed, the widows, and the internally displaced.'<sup>7</sup>

## IN SUMMARY

- The three NAPs-WPS must be commended for their strategic focus on women's rights concerns. Of particular note is the inclusion of issues of violent extremism in the Jordan NAP-WPS, which is unique for in the region. This strategic focus should be balanced with additional targets that also address women and girls' everyday practical needs, which could bolster effective implementation.
- Across the three plans, the focus on actions that respond to Institutional Needs and Priorities of the states in question (making up 55% of all actions across the plans) ensure that the institutions responsible are equipped to implement the action plan. Ensuring that the majority of actions of the NAPs-WPS are weighted towards women and girls practical and strategic needs will ensure that the plans focus on the realities of women, as well as equipping the states' institutions to fulfil the intentions of the plan.
- The plans could be strengthened by tailoring actions and indicators towards different women and girls, such as disaggregating actions to age, disability, geographic location. Inclusion of actions tailored to increasing or supporting women in specific roles (professional and other) would also ensure that the plans are strategically advancing women's leadership.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The NAPs-WPS of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine are strategic and important contributions to ensuring accountability for the WPS agenda, and to address and fulfil the human rights and needs of women and girls in each country. As planning documents, they fulfil critical roles in providing each context with a set of clear interventions to take forward and demonstrate clear political will on the part of states and civil society actors to do so. Going forward, the planning processes across the region can take account of the following recommendations.

<sup>7</sup> Iraq NAP-WPS, pg. 8, 12.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. NAPs-WPS should be weighted towards specifically addressing the rights and needs of women and girls and achieve a balance in terms of addressing their practical and strategic needs, and the intersection between the two.** As plans for Lebanon and Tunisia are under development, and Iraq will be drafting its second NAP this year, there is an excellent opportunity for those involved in drafting NAPs-WPS to incorporate a balance between practical and strategic needs, and the need for capacity and institutional engagement by state actors in their frameworks.
- 2. A framework of inclusion and diversity should underpin the development of all NAPs-WPS.** Reference to how variant identity factors give rise to discriminations that impact women and girls and determine their rights and needs should form part of the narrative framing the NAP-WPS, as well as inform how actions in the matrix are tailored to diverse populations.
- 3. NAPs-WPS should achieve a balance between highlighting the victimhood of women to violations and providing responses to those, while also including provisions that attempt to prevent such violations and that also promote women's empowerment as actors.** A disaggregated approach to planning that provides for a balance of identifying victimhood and responses to this, and that also advances empowerment approaches to that issue is needed. The pillars of the WPS agenda on protection, prevention and participation should be reflected within the NAPs-WPS.
- 4. NAPs-WPS should be linked with national commitments to CEDAW and other human rights frameworks:** Linking NAPs-WPS to CEDAW allows for cross-linkages to reinforce key areas of action. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 can be used as a framework in this regard.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, plans overall could strengthen linkages with existing policies and frameworks to promote more coordinated approaches to implementation of provisions for gender equality at national levels.
- 5. NAPs-WPS serve as an effective policy and accountability tool only when they are monitored and implemented.** While it was beyond the scope of this study to examine NAP implementation, investing in oversight and implementation is critical after the development of a strong NAP-WPS. For effective implementation, NAPs-WPS should be developed in a participatory manner, include clear indicators to monitor progress, and be adequately costed.

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<sup>8</sup> For guidance on its use, see: O'Rourke, C. and Swaine, A. (2015). Guidebook on CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 and the Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. New York: UN Women.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Arab States region has become increasingly engaged in the implementation of the United Nations Security Council women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. Three National Action Plans on WPS (NAPs-WPS) have been adopted in the region since 2014: Iraq (2014-2018), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2018-2021), and Palestine (2017-2019),<sup>9</sup> while the League of Arab States (LAS) has also adopted a 'Regional Strategy'<sup>10</sup> on WPS. To complement the Iraq NAP-WPS, an emergency NAP-WPS was passed in 2015 to address the specific issues related to the threats of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The NAPs-WPS adopted by Iraq, Jordan and Palestine are an important signal of commitment and accountability for the implementation of the WPS agenda and will contribute to ensuring that critical security issues facing women and girls in the region are addressed. Further developments within the region are expected: Iraq is in the process of evaluating its 2014-2018 NAP-WPS, and beginning the process of developing its NAP-WPS II; the Governments of Lebanon and Tunisia are in the process of finalising action plans; while there are calls from women's rights and human rights actors in additional countries across the region for the further adoption of NAPs-WPS. To support the ongoing development of actionable and effective NAPs-WPS in the region, it is important to analyse and collect lessons from the three first-generation action plans to inform those that are coming after them. This paper serves as one part of a larger body of work by international actors to examine NAP-WPS effectiveness and best practice. It analyses NAP-WPS texts (rather than design processes or implementation), to bolster the work of NAP-WPS drafters and stakeholders.

Building on previous UN Women analysis of NAPs-WPS through a 'gender planning' lens,<sup>11</sup> this paper presents the findings of a review of the texts of three existing action plans of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine. The review analyses the NAP-WPS planning documents themselves, rather than their implementation, in order to document areas of good practice that can then inform the future development and adoption of NAP-WPS in the Arab States region.

The paper begins by providing a brief overview of issues of WPS in the Arab States region, followed by an overview of the NAPs-WPS of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine. The concept of 'gender planning' is then introduced as the basis for the analysis and review of these plans. The findings of the review are then elaborated, focusing on how women and girls' rights and needs are addressed in the plans. A final section offers conclusions and recommendations derived from the review that can be taken into consideration in future WPS action planning in the region.

9 Federal Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government. Iraq National Action Plan For for Implementation Of The United Nation Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security 2014 – 2018. 2014; The National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325: Women, Peace and Security, Palestine 2017-2019. State of Palestine Ministry of Women's Affairs. 2017; Jordan National Action Plan 1325, Jordan National Commission for Women, 2018.

10 League of Arab States, Regional Strategy: Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security, General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, Arab Women Organization, UN Women, 2012.

11 See: Swaine, A. Furthering Comprehensive Approaches to the needs of Victims/Survivors of Conflict-related Sexual Violence: An Analysis of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security in Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Timor-Leste. Bangkok: UN Women, 2017; Swaine, A. Making Women and Girls' Needs, Wellbeing and Rights Central to National Action Plans in the Asia-Pacific Region, Bangkok: UN Women, 2016.

## 2. WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY IN IRAQ, JORDAN AND PALESTINE

Iraq and Palestine are both situations on the agenda of the UN Security Council and have consistently featured in global decision-making relating to peace and security by that body.<sup>12</sup> Jordan, as a country both hosting 1.4 million Syrians (661,859 of which are registered refugees<sup>13</sup>) and annually contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions, is a generous contributor to regional and international peace and security. Critical peace and security issues arise for each context and for the region as a whole: in Iraq, the enduring impact of the US invasion and the recently ended occupation of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have had significant impacts on national and regional stability and in particular on the lives of civilians in that context,<sup>14</sup> including the displacement of 3.2 million people and 11 million in continued need of humanitarian aid;<sup>15</sup> in Jordan, the Syrian refugee crisis is acutely felt – with more than 78% of refugees residing in Jordan facing food insecurity<sup>16</sup> and state services overstretched in their efforts to meet the needs of

refugees and their own population;<sup>17</sup> in Palestine, the 50 year occupation characterised by violations of international law has had devastating impacts on the lives of Palestinians, now numbering 2.5 million people in need of humanitarian protection and services.<sup>18</sup>

The ‘Women, Peace and Security agenda,’ founded by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in 2000 and followed by seven additional resolutions,<sup>19</sup> outlines UN, state and partner obligations for ensuring that the needs and priorities of women and girls impacted by conflict are addressed, and that peace is brokered in an inclusive and sustainable manner. The 2015 review of fifteen years of implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000), and two further UN-led reviews of the UN’s peacekeeping and peacebuilding work,<sup>20</sup>

12 For example, see: United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2367, S/RES/2367 (2017), 14 July, 2017 (the situation in Iraq). New York: United Nations Security Council; United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2334, S/RES/2334 (2016), 23 December, 2016 (the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question). New York: United Nations Security Council; United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2332, S/RES/2332 (2016), 21 December, 2016 (the situation in the Middle East, Syria). New York: United Nations Security Council.

13 UNHCR. Operational Portal: Syria Regional Refugee Response. Accessed May 5, 2018

14 Dietrich, Luisa, Carter, Simone E. Gender and Conflict Analysis in ISIS Affected Communities of Iraq. Oxfam, UN Women, Afkar, Government of Japan, 2017.

15 IOM. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), 26 February 2015, p. 1.

16 UNWFP. Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise: Registered Syria Refugees in Jordan. 2016. [http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp291175.pdf?\\_ga=2.246930244.1972192982.1525079544-1736308603.1525079544](http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp291175.pdf?_ga=2.246930244.1972192982.1525079544-1736308603.1525079544)

17 See: UNHCR. Syria Regional Refugee Response (figures up to March 2018). <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria> Accessed April 18th, 2018; Francis, Alexandra. Jordan’s Refugee Crisis, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2015; CARE International. 7 Years into Exile: How Urban Syrian Refugees, vulnerable Jordanians and other Refugees in Jordan are being Impacted by the Syrian Crisis. Amman: CARE International, 2017.

18 UNOCHA. 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Occupied Palestinian Territory. UNOCHA, 2017.

19 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) S/RES1325/2000; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008) S/RES1820/2008; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009) S/RES1888/2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1889 (2009) S/RES1889/2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010) S/RES1960/2010; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013) S/RES2106/2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) S/RES2122/2013; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) S/RES2242/2015.

20 Coomaraswamy, Radhika. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, UN Women, 2015; Advisory Group of Experts, The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (2015); High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations; Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people; United Nations General Assembly, Security Council, A/70/95, S/2015/446 (2015).

found that provision of support for the wellbeing and personal and political security of women and girls is lacking in complex humanitarian situations globally, and that fulfilment of their human rights and basic everyday survival needs is a significant gap. Further, the reviews identified that approaches to conflict and peacebuilding need to become more ‘people-centred’ and to better respond to the lived realities of those populations affected by conflict. In particular, it is imperative that conflict-affect populations, including women and girls, are not treated as a homogenous group. Rather recognition must be given to the different identities that women and girls may have, such as their gender plus their age, race/ethnicity, ability, marital status, religious affiliation, refugee status, as well as where they are located socially, such as geographic location (rural/urban) and economic status. Peace and security-related initiatives must avoid “a one-size-fits-all policy”<sup>21</sup> and instead tailor policy and programming to the ways that different identity factors, such as a disability or marital status. This will determine the kinds of discrimination or exclusion that may be experienced by different women’ and girls. Neglect of these differences may impact women and girls’ ability to play major roles in peace and security and hinder their access to and decision-making power over resources.<sup>22</sup>

The Arab States have seen peace and security issues at the forefront of the regional agenda since the advent of the so-called ‘Arab Spring’. To this end, political and humanitarian crises have become intertwined, with political crisis driving humanitarian crisis – and in some contexts, issues of climate change fuelling-fuelling conflict. To resolve these conflicts, political talks remain ongoing in Yemen, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine – and large-scale humanitarian responses operate within and around these countries to address the immediate needs created by political crisis.

Specific WPS issues arise for women and girls in the Arab States region. This includes the negative impacts of the ongoing crises on their lives and the ways that women and girls may engage with these crises, whether actively involved in armed violence and/or in

the decision-making over the humanitarian response, peace settlements and peacebuilding in the region. The LAS Regional Strategy on WPS highlights that women in the region encounter: gendered violence, including sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors in conflicts taking place in the region; lack of access to basic services such as education and health; arbitrary detention and experiences of physical and psychological harm while in detention; refugee status that contributes to vulnerability to harm, lack of basic service provision and insecure status in asylum countries.<sup>23</sup>

A brief overview of key WPS issues specific to the country contexts of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine is set out in Box 1. It must be emphasised that Iraq and Palestine are countries that are witnessing active conflict within their borders. This is not the case in Jordan, where any internal peace and security challenges relate primarily to the refugee population that it is hosting threats of violent extremism. Each country is experiencing the impacts of regional insecurities, whether internally or externally located, in ways very specific to each context and responses will be tailored accordingly. There are however some broad commonalities that can be summarised here to evidence the ways that full implementation of the WPS agenda can be advanced through action plans in the region:

*Fulfilment of basic needs:* In all three contexts, women and girls and their families (primarily with regards to the refugee population in Jordan) face acute shortage of their right to basic needs such as food, shelter, water and sanitation and healthcare, as well as basic protection and personal security.<sup>24</sup> The region has large numbers of widowed and female headed households as a result of the conflicts who face specific risks and

21 Coomaraswamy. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace, pg. 24.

22 Coomaraswamy, Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace; Advisory Group of Experts, The Challenge of Sustaining Peace; High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

23 League of Arab States, Regional Strategy.

24 Oxfam International. In Her Own Words: Iraqi women talk about their greatest concerns and challenges, A Survey. 2009; Kaya, Zenap N. Women, Peace and Security in Iraq: Iraq’s National Action Plan to Implement Resolution 1325. London: LSE Middle East Centre Report, 2016; League of Arab States, Regional Strategy; CARE International. 7 Years into Exile; Zaatari, Zeaina. Unpacking Gender: The Humanitarian Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan. New York: Women’s Refugee Commission, 2014; UN Women. International Legal Accountability Mechanisms Palestinian Women Living Under Occupation. Palestine: UN Women, 2016; United Nations. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/ISR/CO/5, 5 April 2011, Geneva: United Nations.



vulnerabilities. Women of varying age, ability and ethnic identity experience these gaps in need in differentiated and acute ways that require specific tailored responses.

*Fulfilment of women's human rights:* The conflicts in the region have resulted in human rights violations impacting women and girls, such as sexual violence, forced marriage and displacement that require prevention and response. Specific rights, such as the right to fair and safe employment and livelihoods and to freedom of movement are curtailed in different ways across each context. Women's ability to participate in decision-making relating to their everyday needs and rights, such as oversight of humanitarian services, to influence local and broader national political decision-making that impacts their lives, and their involvement in peace processes and peacebuilding initiatives are hampered in different ways.

*Address structural inequalities and negative social beliefs and practices that impact women's rights:* In all three contexts, women and girls have experienced or in the case of the Jordanian refugee population, are living with the impacts of conflict-related violations that have directly infringed on their rights, such as conflict-related sexual violence. In addition, recognition must be given to the ways that existing socio-cultural norms and social attitudes and practices within their own and host communities also infringe on women and girls' rights and freedoms. For example, lack of laws to prevent violence against women or to guarantee women's equal access to political participation will influence the ways that women may cope with crises as well as whether and how they can take roles in responding to it.

## Issues of Women, Peace and Security in Iraq, Jordan and Palestine

A number of significant developments with respect to gender equality and women's rights have advanced across the Arab States region in recent times. Palestine recently ratified CEDAW in 2014, while Jordan has been a signatory since 1992 and Iraq since 1986, with progressive changes made to existing reservations on CEDAW in 2009 by Jordan that have eased restrictions on women's freedom of movement.<sup>25</sup> Jordan has instituted quota provisions for reserved seats for women in parliament and at municipal

levels;<sup>26</sup> Palestine has included a 20% quota for women's political participation in electoral laws, while in Iraq, the 2005 constitution set out provisions for guarantees of equality for women and instituted a quota of 25% for women's representation in political bodies.<sup>27</sup> Since the advent of the so-called 'Arab Spring,' amendments to the penal codes in Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia and Lebanon have enhanced accountability and strengthened protections for women from sexual violence,<sup>28</sup> with further regional developments, including the adoption of NAPs-WPS a clear indicator of regional progress towards formal recognition of gender equality and women's rights.

### Iraq

Iraq has instituted a range of national legal and policy initiatives to further women's rights and address structural inequalities. The creation of a Ministry of State for Women's Affairs has enabled national level coordination of approaches to women's rights, though this has since been abolished (in 2015). This has included the adoption of a National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in 2013 and the NAP-WPS in 2014. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq adopted a law on Domestic Violence in 2011 and has made amendments to legislation in line with legal provisions of CEDAW.<sup>29</sup>

As a result of the ongoing cycles of conflict in Iraq, women and girls have however experienced restrictions to their daily liberty and personal freedoms and endure challenges to meeting their basic needs, personal security and potential for broader public leadership roles and employment. Post 2003 Iraq is estimated to have stalled progress on women's rights. For example, women seeking employment outside the home have experienced threats and as a

25 UNICEF. MENA Gender Equality Profile. Status of Women and Girls in the Middle East and North Africa, UNICEF, 2009.

26 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention. Sixth periodic report of States parties due in 2016, Jordan, CEDAW/C/JOR/6, 25 June 2015.

27 UN Women. Country Gender and Economic Profiles. Euromonitor International and UN Women, 2016.

28 United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights. Press briefing notes on Iraq, Lebanon /Tunisia / Jordan and Uzbekistan. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21988&LangID=E> Accessed May 2nd, 2018.

29 Kaya, Zeynep. Gender equality in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. Middle East Centre Blog. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2017/12/21/gender-equality-in-iraq-and-iraqi-kurdistan/> Accessed May 2nd, 2018.

result reduced potential for income and employment opportunities; while violence against women, such as domestic violence has impacted their personal security (in a 2009 survey in post US invasion era Iraq, 55% of women respondents noted experiences of violence – including violence in public spaces, domestic violence and sexual abuse<sup>30</sup>). As a result of decades of conflict there are over 1.6 million widows in Iraq,<sup>31</sup> with no specific financial support or pensions available to widows or those injured through the conflict.<sup>32</sup> Since 2014, women and girls in ISIL controlled areas experienced sexual violence, capture and sexual slavery, trafficking, severe restrictions to movement and dress, honour killings, pressures to marry, with adolescent girls in particular in coercive marriages and facing constraints on livelihoods. Some women played active and multiple roles in countering ISIL – in leading countering and de-radicalization efforts and as armed actors in military confrontation with ISIL. Those women within ISIL have also played critical roles in fulfilling ISIL's philosophy for the caliphate, such as teaching and moral instruction roles. In the post-ISIL era, women who were victims of violence by ISIL continue to live with the shame and stigma of the violence perpetrated upon them, with little hope of justice or reparation. Within families, increased tensions contributed to domestic violence, while suicide by women in violent households has been documented.<sup>33</sup> Women who were married to sympathisers or members of ISIL, or who were captured and assumed to have experienced sexual assault, face stigma and ostracization. In displacement sites within Iraq, women have sought increased roles in decision-making over humanitarian assistance delivery, while also contending with familial resistance to their seeking livelihoods outside the home.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, in many sites, many of the decision-making fora have none or little representation of women. There are noted increases in early marriage, risks of gendered violence within households and in the general camp setting, restrictions to privacy, personal security, and mobility and access to humanitarian services in

camp settings.<sup>35</sup> Women's roles in peace process and peacebuilding in the region faces particular structural as well as socio-cultural challenges and resistance.<sup>36</sup> Women's human rights activists who have established advocacy and support services in response have experienced violence, kidnapping, assassination, threats and intimidation and have still managed to eke out space to make visible the harms that women are experiencing.<sup>37</sup>

### Jordan

Jordan has recently advanced progressive changes for women's equality, including raising the legal age of marriage to 18, establishing specific judicial responses to so-called 'honour' killings,<sup>38</sup> and has reduced the gap in health and educational attainment for women and girls.<sup>39</sup> The Jordanian National Commission for Women was created in 1992 and implements the National Strategy for Women (2013-2017).<sup>40</sup>

The Syrian refugee crisis has presented critical challenges for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan however. For the Jordanian population, the influx of refugees has placed stresses on existing services and facilities and has contributed to growing resentment of that population by host communities.<sup>41</sup> For the refugee population, from contexts such as Syria, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, access to state services varies. For example, the Kingdom generously extends a wide range of services to Syrian refugees, including health and education, and enables free access to state-led schools for Yemeni refugees. However some refugee groups experience restrictions in access to basic services and fulfilment of basic needs, such as water, health and food.<sup>42</sup> Lack of employment

30 Oxfam International, In her Own Words.

31 OCHA. 'Key Figures.' Available at: <http://www.unocha.org/iraq>. Accessed on 30 October, 2017.

32 Oxfam International. In Her Own Words.

33 Dietrich and Carter, Gender and Conflict Analysis.

34 Dietrich and Carter, Gender and Conflict Analysis.

35 International Organization for Migration (IOM). A Gendered Perspective Safety, Dignity and Privacy of Camp and Camp-Like Settings in Iraq. Baghdad: International Organization for Migration, 2016.

36 O'Driscoll, Dylan. Women's participation in peacebuilding and reconciliation in Iraq. K4D Helpdesk Report, 2017; United Nations Country Team Iraq. Inputs to the Universal Periodic Review, 2014.

37 Dietrich and Carter, Gender and Conflict Analysis.

38 UNICEF. MENA Gender Equality Profile.

39 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention. Sixth periodic report of States parties due in 2016, Jordan, CEDAW/C/JOR/6, 25 June 2015.

40 UNICEF. MENA Gender Equality Profile.

41 Francis, Alexandra. Jordan's Refugee Crisis.

42 Francis, Alexandra. Jordan's Refugee Crisis.



opportunities, child labour, family separations and fears of deportation are a reality.<sup>43</sup> Gendered violence is a feature in women's lives, including domestic violence, sexual harassment in public places, early marriage and limited mobility due to personal security concerns.<sup>44</sup> For Syrians who form the majority of the refugee population, women's protection needs are acute, including prevention of early and child marriage for girls, protection from sexual violence and the ability to seek safe employment, particularly in a context where less women than men have received work permits.<sup>45</sup> Women face risks of radicalisation and play roles in countering radicalisation among their communities, often placing them in precarious positions. Generally, limited representation of women in leadership in areas of peace and security, lack of access to justice are challenges faced by women from host and refugee populations.<sup>46</sup>

### **Palestine**

The Palestinian Authority has advanced provisions for gender equality within its governance structures. The 2003 Amended Basic Law (its defacto constitutional document) provides for equality and non-discrimination for all. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was created in 2003, and 22 gender units have been established across governmental sectors. In recent times, there have been a range of progressive measures adopted, including the reforms of laws relating to 'honour' killings, the creation of specialist civil policing units to address family violence, the adoption of a 'Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promote Gender Equality and Equity' (2017-2022), and in 2012, the creation of a 'National Committee on Gender-Responsive Budgets.'<sup>47</sup>

The structural inequalities and violence of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, including the expansion of

settlements and confiscation of land and property, the resulting displacement and loss of livelihoods, as well as separation of families, harassment at security checkpoints by military and attacks by settlers have had specific impacts on women and girls' security and safety, potential for education and economic independence and their mobility.<sup>48</sup> The demolition of homes has repercussions in terms of psychological trauma, loss of home-related and subsistence livelihoods and physical disabilities as a result of conflict-related injuries. Separation of families and blocks to reunification infringes on women's right to a family life.<sup>49</sup> Specific aspects of the occupation impact women in specific ways. The 2014 conflict in Gaza for example left over 700 women widowed and these and other lone female heads of households' struggle to provide for their families. Violence associated with the occupation affects at least half of the population,<sup>50</sup> while large numbers of women have been imprisoned and experience violation of rights while in prison.<sup>51</sup> The United Nations estimates that 'the Israeli occupation remains the major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development of their society.'<sup>52</sup> The broader socio-cultural and economic inequalities within Palestinian society itself adds another dimension to women and girls' experiences of violence, insecurity and lack of fundamental rights. A survey in 2011 found that 37% of ever-married women had experienced violence from intimate partners, which was 29.9% in the West Bank,

43 UN Women. A National Dialogue on UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace, and Security in Jordan: A Resolution in Action. Jordan: UN Women, The Jordanian National Commission for Women. 2016; CARE International. 7 Years into Exile: How Urban Syrian Refugees, vulnerable Jordanians and other Refugees in Jordan are being Impacted by the Syrian Crisis. Amman: CARE International. 2017.

44 UN Women. A National Dialogue on UNSCR 1325.

45 CARE International. 7 Years into Exile..

46 UN Women. A National Dialogue on UNSCR 1325.

47 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure, Initial reports of States parties due in 2015, Palestine, CEDAW/C/PSE/1, 24 May 2017.

48 UN Women. International Legal Accountability Mechanisms; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Israel, CEDAW/C/ISR/CO/5, 5 April 2011, Geneva: United Nations.

49 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Israel.

50 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure, Initial reports of States parties due in 2015, Palestine, Para 80.

51 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure, Initial reports of States parties due in 2015, Palestine.

52 United Nations Economic and Social Council. Resolution on the Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, E/RES/2015/13, 19th August, 2015. New York: United Nations. OP 1.

and 51.1% in Gaza Strip.<sup>53</sup> 'Honor killings' are a feature of Palestinian society and contribute to the murders of women.<sup>54</sup> Women face specific challenges with accessing justice due to discriminatory laws, stigma attached to violence, economic dependency and lack of knowledge on their rights.<sup>55</sup> Women experience little authority in terms of decision-making over familial or humanitarian resources due to gendered practices of family decision-making.<sup>56</sup> Much of the ability of Palestine to make progress towards gender equality is reliant on and shared with Israel and its occupation of the Palestinian territories. The CEDAW Committee for example has recommended that the state of Israel ensure participation of Palestinian women in peace and conflict resolution processes.<sup>57</sup>

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53 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic (PCBS). Violence Survey in the Palestinian Territory. Ramallah: Palestinian National Authority, 2011.

54 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure, Initial reports of States parties due in 2015, Palestine.

55 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women: Report of the Secretary-General, E/CN.6/2016/6, 22 December 2015. New York: UNECOSOC.

56 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women.

57 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Israel.

# 3. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS: IRAQ, JORDAN AND PALESTINE

Member states of the United Nations have increasingly adopted National Action Plans as a means to implement the WPS agenda.<sup>58</sup> While 38% of UN member and observer states have adopted NAPs-WPS, adoption in the Arab States region is the lowest globally.<sup>59</sup> Iraq, was the first in the region to adopt an action plan (2014-2018), followed by Palestine (2017-2019) and Jordan (2018-2021). These three states lead the region in demonstrating their commitment to this agenda, and must be recognised for this. They have presented strong and innovative action plans that provide important model approaches to how the region can work towards implementation of the WPS agenda.

A NAP-WPS is essentially a planning document. It is the outcome of a process of establishing priorities, identifying key actions to address those priorities and provision of resources to implement stated action points. While the three Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS vary in terms of their content and scope, they set out a clear set of aims and priorities for implementing key aspects of the WPS agenda within their jurisdictions, ensuring that state policies take specific account of the rights of women and girls.

The next subsections provide a summary of the NAPs-WPS in Iraq, Jordan and Palestine.

## Summary of NAPs-WPS: Iraq, Jordan, Palestine

### Iraq NAP-WPS (2014-2018):

The Iraq action plan was produced by the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. It was prompted by women's civil society organisations (the Iraqi NAP1325 Initiative) and jointly developed, with financial and technical support from UN Women, by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense in Baghdad, and the Ministry of Interior and Women's High Council in Kurdistan. The narrative of the action plan links it to provisions in the constitution for women's equality, with domestic legislation such as anti-trafficking laws and the Anti-Violence Against Women Strategy, while also noting problems with the penal code in respect of women's rights and access to justice. The NAP-WPS is framed around six pillars: Participation; Protection and Prevention; Promotion; Social and Economic Empowerment; Legislation and Law Enforcement; Resource Mobilisation, Monitoring and Evaluation. An estimated budget required for implementation was included in the draft NAP-WPS. However, the budget was omitted from the draft endorsed by the Government, and no funds have been allocated through the national budget for its implementation. The NAP-WPS comes to an end in 2018.

### Jordan NAP-WPS (2018-2021):

The development of the Jordan NAP-WPS was led by the Jordan National Commission for Women, with financial and technical support from UN Women through the Governments of Finland, Japan and Sweden. Dialogues, priority setting and validation were large and consultative, and covered all Governorates of the country. Civil society organisations were a driving force behind the NAP-WPS development process, and were a central partner in the National Coalition on 1325. Notably the NAP-WPS makes a link to UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, and includes a pillar on issues of violent extremism. The plan is framed around four

<sup>58</sup> UN Security Council Resolutions 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015) 'welcomed' state-level implementation of the WPS agenda, including through the adoption of action plans. For example, Resolution 2242: 'Welcomes the efforts of Member States to implement resolution 1325, including the development of national action plans, further welcomes the increase in national action plans in recent years, and calls upon Member States to further integrate the women, peace and security agenda into their strategic plans such as national actions plans and other planning frameworks, with sufficient resources,' OP 2.

<sup>59</sup> These figures are correct as of April 2018.

priority areas of action: Gender responsive security sector reform; Preventing violent extremism and gender responsive peacebuilding; Gender-sensitive humanitarian services; Building a culture of peace and gender equality. Budget estimates for total costs of implementation is included in the action plan matrix.

**Palestine NAP-WPS (2017-2019):**

The development of the Palestinian NAP-WPS was overseen by The High National Committee which was established in 2012 for this purpose, again through financial and technical support from UN Women through the European Union. The committee includes Palestinian authority ministries and civil society organisations. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs led the development of the plan, including consultations and reviews of existing national policy relevant to the action plan. The plan sets out the context of the Israeli occupation as critical to women and girls lives and to implementation of the plan. The NAP-WPS focuses on the following strategic objectives: the protection of women and girls from the violence of the Israeli occupation; holding the Israeli authorities accountable; and enhancing the participation of women and girls in decision-making. Estimated costs were identified at the time of drafting although are not included in the plan document.

# 4. GENDER PLANNING FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

For the purposes of analysing and reviewing the three existing NAPs-WPS of the Arab States region, the concept of ‘gender planning’ is used as an analytical framework for assessing the plans. Gender planning is an approach that aims to ensure that the gendered norms, practices and behaviours that determine women and girls’ enjoyment of their human rights and their access to and decision-making power over resources, is taken account of and addressed in state-based policy and resulting planning documents and operations.<sup>60</sup> Where NAPs-WPS set out the planning framework for how the situation of women and girls will be addressed at national levels in relation to conflict and humanitarian crises, gender planning tools become relevant to ensure that planning is responsive to the gendered reality of their lives. Gender planning should promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Gender planning was developed as a method to respond to how ‘current development policy, because of incorrect assumptions, often, if inadvertently, discriminates against or ‘misses’ women, while even correctly formulated policy too often fails to get translated into practice.’<sup>61</sup> It identifies that men and women play differing gendered roles and often hold differing formal rights, and as a result, at household and broader community and societal levels, will have differing and specific gendered needs that require response. While originally developed for the development field, it is applicable to the peace and security field, to ensure that gender is fully mainstreamed in all policy and programming as required under the WPS agenda. Gender planning provides a specific set of tools and frameworks to identify gender disparities impacting

women and girls and to ensure that planned actions respond to these.<sup>62</sup>

## 4.1 GENDER NEEDS ANALYSIS TOOL

One of the tools used in gender planning approaches is a ‘Gender Needs Analysis.’ This tool is used to specifically identify the differing gendered needs, concerns and priorities that arise in women and girls’ lives because of the context of gendered inequalities in which they live.<sup>63</sup> It also provides a way to counter the idea that women and girls are a homogenous group, rather the tool allows for identification of the different needs that women and girls will have because of where they are located, their age, ability etc.

The Gender Needs Analysis tool sets out a framework to meet both the practical and strategic needs and interests of women and girls:

**Practical Needs:** These are the immediate everyday practical needs that respond to a specific practical necessity and arise within women and girls’ everyday roles in society. These include ‘basic’ or everyday humanitarian needs that arise as a result of conflicts in the Arab States region, such as access to basic resources such as food, water and health-care; basic income and livelihoods; secure housing and shelter. Addressing women’s practical needs requires attention to how the gendered inequalities within their social context constrains their ability to access these resources, creates specific insecurities as a result and reinforces inequalities. Interventions would include provision of services in gender responsive ways and ensuring safe access to these services.

<sup>62</sup> For an overview of the frameworks, see: March, Candida, Smyth, Ines, Mukhopadhyay, Maitrayee. *A Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks*. Oxford: Oxfam, 1999.

<sup>63</sup> See: Caroline Moser, *Gender, Planning and Development*, chapter two for an applied understanding of the tool. Earlier scholarship set out this framework: Molyneaux, Maxine. 1985. ‘Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women’s Interests, the State and Revolution in Nicaragua.’ *Feminist Studies*, 11, 2: 227-254.

<sup>60</sup> See for example: Caroline O. N. Moser, *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, London, New York: Routledge, 1993;

<sup>61</sup> Caroline O. N. Moser, *Gender Planning and Development*. Summary section.

Strategic Needs: These are the longer-term interests and needs that relate specifically to longer-term fulfillment of the human rights of women, including addressing structural inequalities, such as in divisions of labour, decision-making power and control/decision-making power over resources. In the context of women and girls' experiences in Iraq, Jordan (primarily refugees, given the WPS focus) and Palestine, strategic interests and needs refer for example to their exclusion from decision-making roles over humanitarian services and peacebuilding work, to inability to secure employment, and exclusion from political decision-making at all levels. Addressing women and girl's specific strategic interests requires tackling broader structural inequalities and transforming gender power relations so that longer term discrimination and rights infringements are addressed. Interventions would include reforms of discriminatory legislation, social change processes to transform negative social practices and behaviours, guarantees of equal and fair access to employment and pay.

The relationship between practical and strategic needs and interests is important: Each category of needs/rights is not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are inter-related so that changes in practical needs will inevitably contribute to enabling change in broader strategic interests. For example, ensuring that women have safe access to food and shelter will enable them to have time and resources to then participate in broader community-level roles; ensuring access to

basic livelihoods can contribute to longer-term income security and ability to pursue stable and safe employment or business development. In addition, this inter-relationship underlines that unless planning addresses practical needs, then women and girls will experience ongoing barriers to securing their strategic needs and rights. Unless both sets of interests and needs are addressed, planning and actions will do little to tackle the root causes of women's distinctive basic needs and exclusions, i.e gender inequalities.


The Gender Needs Analysis tool aids planners in identifying whether they are addressing practical needs, strategic needs or both (or indeed none). Table 1 sets out a 'Gender Needs Analysis for Peace and Security' framework that adapts gender planning to peace and security settings such as those in Iraq, Jordan and Palestine.<sup>64</sup> This framework sets out examples of the kinds of issues and responding interventions that would meet the practical and strategic interests and needs of women and girls in the Arab States region. It is used as a basis to review the three Arab States region action plans set out in the next section.

<sup>64</sup> Note: this table is taken from previous UN Women reviews of Asia-Pacific NAPs-WPS. The full background to the development of this framework and the original table that is cited here may be found as follows: Swaine, *Furthering Comprehensive Approaches to the needs of Victims/Survivors of Conflict-related Sexual Violence*; Swaine, *Making Women and Girls' Needs, Wellbeing and Rights Central to National Action Plans*.

**TABLE 1:**  
**Gender Needs Analysis for Peace and Security Framework: Example of practical and strategic needs analysis**

PRACTICAL NEEDS	STRATEGIC NEEDS
<b>DIMENSION 1: Basic life needs in crisis, displacement, recovery and post-conflict</b>	
Access to food items: water and food.	Decision-making role and power in household use of resources and provisions.
Access to non-food items: adequate shelter, and basic material goods, such as clothing and cooking instruments.	Decision-making role and power in how humanitarian and peacebuilding programming in response to basic needs provision is designed and delivered.
	Employment of gender inclusive policy approaches to humanitarian aid and peacebuilding.

<b>DIMENSION 2: Basic services and rights (e.g. health, education) in crisis, displacement, recovery and post-conflict</b>	
Access to health and reproductive health care services.	Guarantee of reproductive rights; provision of sexual and reproductive rights services; and access to abortion services within displacement and post-conflict contexts.
	Availability of reproductive specialist experts and services, e.g. for fistula.
	Completion of basic education; and provisions to enable further education for women and girls.
	Education linkages to fair and equal employment opportunities.
Access to public transport.	Safe mobility rights guaranteed within public transport provision.
DDR programmes provide practical protection and care services to women and girl ex-combatants.	DDR programmes and services are tailored to support women and girl ex-combatants' rights within reintegration processes.
<b>DIMENSION 3: Livelihoods, income-generation needs, economic independence and entrepreneurship opportunities in crisis, displacement, recovery and post-conflict</b>	
Access to income-generating opportunities in conflict and post-conflict (e.g. countering economic disparities that give rise to conflict).	Sustainable independent livelihood specifically designed for women and girls during and post-conflict.
Access to micro-credit schemes.	Strategies to ensure equal pay and fair remuneration, and equal opportunity in the formal work sphere.
Access to state welfare and development programming.	Creation of policies to ensure equal opportunities and address disparities in access to formal sphere employment.
Access to tailored livelihoods support for women and girl ex-combatants, widows, and lone heads of households.	Changes to macroeconomic systems towards more equitable ways and means of operating.
	Decision-making power within national development initiatives.
	Right to inheritance of resources: land, material resources, etc.
<b>DIMENSION 4: Formal rights guarantees in crisis, displacement, recovery and post-conflict</b>	
	Formal rights guarantees established for women and girls.
	Reform of discriminatory legislation and policy that disadvantages women and girls.
	Creation of specific initiatives tackling structural inequalities, and use of temporary special quotas/ measures.
	Right to identity cards for women and girls and new-born children, including children born of rape, fulfilled.
	Laws and policies for child care provision.

	Laws and policies addressing and re-distributing the burden of care and specifically the added burden of caring for those impacted by conflict, returning family and community members, etc.
	Equal participation rights in the political sphere fora, governance structures and decision-making power and influence over public-sphere systems e.g. peacekeeping processes; transitional administrations; elections and new governance structures; and committees and decision-making bodies interfacing with the international community.
	Inclusion of issues impacting women, including violence against women, in processes to deal with the past and in peacebuilding measures.
	Behaviour change communication programming to identify and change negative behaviours, attitudes, and social and cultural barriers to gender equality.
	Laws and policies regulating public media reporting on equalities, tackling stereotypes, and reporting of violence against women.
	Women's broader contributions to conflict/liberation struggles recognised and status of veteran/combatant and associated benefits conferred on an equitable and tailored basis.
	Reparation specifically tailored to women and girls and to survivors of sexual violence.
	Specific rights of women with children born of rape fulfilled to those children.
<b>DIMENSION 5: Protection rights and needs in crisis, displacement, recovery and post-conflict</b>	
Services to respond to violence against women and girls.	Strategies to tackle the root causes and prevent violence against women and girls.
	Adoption of laws and policies guaranteeing women and girls right to live free of violence.
	Adoption of laws and policies with provisions to tackle and prosecute violence against women and girls.
	Provisions to ensure multi-sectoral strategic rights-based responses through the justice and security chain included in peacebuilding reforms.
	Specific actions tailored to sexual violence by armed actors.
	Measures to protection from SEA by international actors, and protection from trafficking in displacement camps.
	



## 4.2 GENDER PLANNING-BASED REVIEW OF ARAB STATES REGION NAPS-WPS

The earlier discussion of WPS issues relating to Iraq, Jordan and Palestine identified that common across the contexts are challenges in respect of meeting the basic needs of women and girls (i.e practical needs), the broader human rights of women and girls (strategic interests and needs) and in tackling the broader structural and gendered inequalities that determine these rights gaps and needs.

The following questions were identified to frame the review of the NAPS-WPS in respect of these realities in the region:

- What are Arab States region NAPS-WPS specifically planning for? What are good practices in how women and girls' rights and needs are framed in these action planning documents?
- How are the three NAPS-WPS responding to the different demographics of women residing in each context and their different needs and rights?

To respond to these questions, two sets of analysis were undertaken of the three NAPS-WPS:

## 4.3 APPLICATION OF GENDER NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY FRAMEWORK TO ARAB STATES NAPS-WPS

The Gender Needs Analysis for Peace and Security Framework is used to assess whether the planned actions in each of the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPS-WPS address the gendered realities of women and girls i.e their practical and strategic needs and interests.

For the purposes of the review, the NAPS-WPS were assessed as follows:

- A textual analysis of the NAPS-WPS narratives was undertaken: the textual analysis entailed a review of the narrative text of the documents. Thereby the analysis of the plans took place at the level of the document itself (not the implementation of the stated actions). This level of review offers insight into what the planning documents themselves commit to and contain in respect to the gender planning framework.

- Review of NAP-WPS matrices: Each plan has a matrix which sets out the objectives and the stated actions of the plan. Each action point was analysed and determined as meeting either practical or strategic needs categories, or both. Through this textual analysis, it was also found that some actions did not strictly fit either practical or strategic needs. Rather, some actions do not focus specifically on women and girls, but are focused on the institutional needs of the state and its entities. These actions include, for example, actions that commit the state to take steps to develop gender mainstreaming, or refer to training and capacity development of state actors, or are advocacy actions focused on international levels (not women and girls directly per se). A third category of analysis was thereby added to the framework, entitled 'Institutional needs and priorities.'

The overall application of the framework to the three NAPS-WPS thereby assessed whether each action within each planning matrix fit either practical or strategic needs (or both), as well as institutional needs. Table 2 provides an example of the application of the framework. Specific actions are taken from each of the action plans and copied into the table to demonstrate how they are categorised as practical, strategic or institutional:

**TABLE 2:**

**Examples of Application of the Gender Needs Analysis for Peace and Security Framework to the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS:**

Practical Needs	Strategic Needs	Institutional Needs and Priorities
<b>IRAQ NAP-WPS</b>		
Pillar 2/ Strategic Objective 2/Specific Action 3. Establishing shelters and safe spaces for psychosocial support and free legal services for women victims of violence in accordance with international standards.	Pillar 1/Strategic Objective 1/Specific Action 3. Provision of gender trainings and capacity building for women candidates and raise public awareness.	Pillar 6/Strategic Objective 1/Specific Action 3. Conduct capacity building programmes for effective monitoring and evaluation of the NAP and develop capabilities in reporting.
<b>JORDAN NAP-WPS</b>		
Strategic Goal 3/3.2 Proposed Initiatives: Organize free promotional medical days in refugee camps and host communities to familiarize refugees, particularly women with the available medical and psychological services, and how to access the services.	Strategic Goal 2/2.1 Proposed Initiatives: Select and train suitable women, in negotiation, mediation and dialogue facilitation, to become members of existing mediator networks which can be engaged in local communities, especially hosting communities, and in the region.	Strategic Goal 1/1.1 Proposed Initiatives: Conduct trainings for military personnel of all ranks on UNSCR 1325, subsequent resolutions and gender awareness. Also, gender mainstreaming and GBV policies to be integrated in to the institution’s plans and programmes
<b>PALESTINE NAP-WPS</b>		
Strategic Objective 1/Policy2/Activities: Provision of food and drinking water.	Strategic Objective 3/Policy 2/Activities: Enhance the participation of Palestinian women and girls in student councils at Palestinian universities.	Strategic Objective 1/Policy 1/Activities: Develop legal training manuals.

**4.4 INCLUSIVITY ANALYSIS OF THE ARAB STATES REGIONAL NAPS-WPS**

As discussed before, women and girls are not a homogenous group and experience conflict, displacement and crises in ways that are influenced by their age, ethnicity, ability, refugee status, rural or urban location etc. It is thereby important that the NAPs-WPS that are developed and implemented across the Arab States region take account of these different lived realities of women and girls.

Therefore an ‘Inclusivity Analysis’ of the three Arab State actions plans was undertaken in tandem with the gender needs analysis. It sought to better understand the degree to which the plans are inclusive in addressing the specific diversity of the populations the NAPs-WPS are aiming to support, and to highlight good practices from this. For the purposes of this review, ‘inclusivity’ is understood as an approach within planning that would take full account of and responds to the ways that diversity within the population is

addressed.<sup>65</sup> The Inclusivity Analysis assessed inclusion through two lenses:

Identity factors and social characteristics attributed to individuals and social ‘groups’ that arise from cultural, political, and economic positioning and status. These include for example ethno-national identities, age, ability, sexual orientation etc.

Public professional roles and identity attributions that are attributed in positive and/or negative ways and whether women in these roles or the promotion of women to such roles are included in the NAPs-WPS. These include for example public professional roles and titles, such as politician, community leader, police officer, etc.

The textual analysis of the NAPs-WPS was used to develop a ‘mapping’ of ‘who’ appears in the NAPs-WPS and observations are made on how and where such attributions of identity feature in the action plans.

<sup>65</sup> This frameworks is taken from the earlier UN Women reviews of NAPs-WPS, see: Swaine, A. (2016). Making Women and Girls’ Needs, Wellbeing and Rights Central to National Action Plans in the Asia-Pacific Region, Bangkok: UN Women.

# 5. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW OF IRAQ, JORDAN AND PALESTINE NAPs-WPS

The findings of the review are first set out for each of the plans, followed by a discussion of learning from these findings:

## 5.1 SPECIFIC FINDINGS RELATING TO EACH NAP-WPS AND ACROSS THE ACTION PLANS

The review of the three Arab States region NAPs-WPS through the Gender Needs Analysis for Peace and Security Framework found the following:

*The three NAPs-WPS all individually include action points that can be categorised as meeting women and girl’s practical and strategic needs and interests. The degree to which they address these different sets of needs varies significantly within the three plans (see Figure 1 below):*

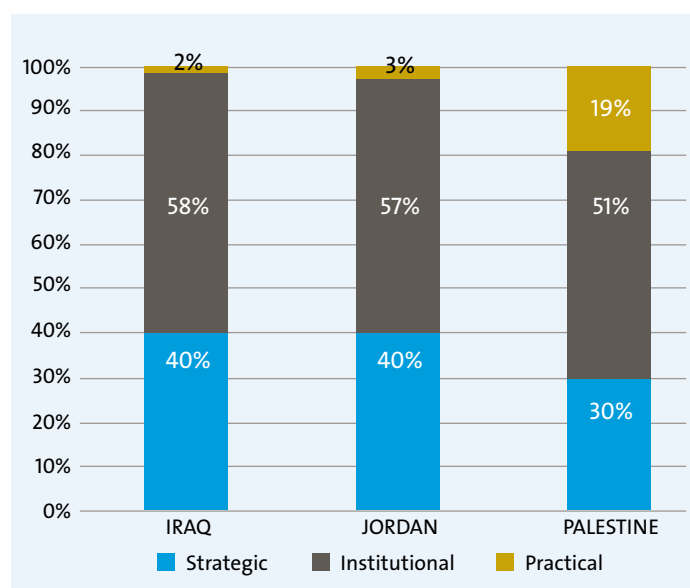
- The action plans include actions that are focused on meeting the strategic rights of women and girls. In this they demonstrate vision and a desire to address structural gender inequalities. Iraq and Jordan’s plans contained roughly 40% of actions which focused on strategic needs, while Palestine’s plan contained 30% of actions focused on strategic needs.
- The action plans also include actions meeting the practical needs of women and girls. This category accounted for the least number of actions within each of the three plans. Two percent of the Iraq action plan and 3% of Jordan’s action included targeted action for addressing the practical needs of women and girls, while 19% of Palestine’s plan addressed these kinds of needs.

*Actions relating to Institutional Needs and Priorities were included in all three NAPs-WPS of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine.*

- Actions meeting Institutional Needs and Priorities formed the majority of actions planned within the three NAPs-WPS. Both Iraq and Jordan’s plans contained 58%

and Palestine’s plan contained 30% of actions focused on its reform and institutional development.

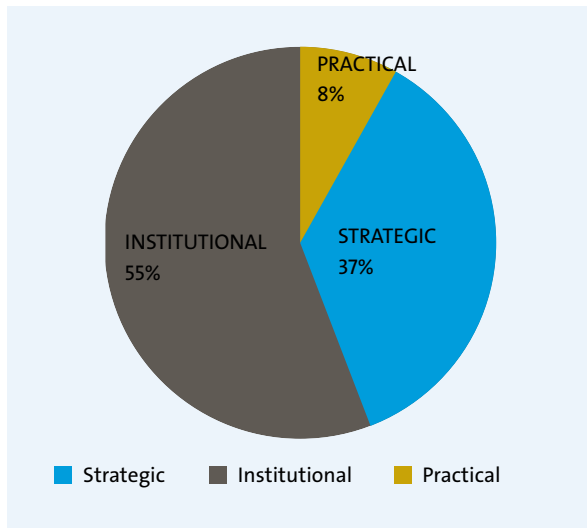
**FIGURE 1**  
Distribution of Practical, Strategic and Institutional Needs and Priorities actions across the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS (i.e per country).



*Across the three plans, the focus of the majority of the action points are on the states’ own institutional needs and priorities. Working under the assumption that all ‘actions’ are equally important, the analysis of the three NAPs-WPS evidences that on average, 55% (over half) of all actions across the three plans were dedicated to Institutional Needs and Priorities. Actions that related specifically to women and girls’ strategic needs made up 35% across the plans, while 8% focused on women and girl’s practical needs (see figure 2).*

FIGURE 2

**Proportion of Practical, Strategic and Institutional Needs and Priorities across the Iraq, Jordan and Palestine NAPs-WPS.**



*The action plans varied significantly in their attention to and use of a frame of 'inclusivity' in the design and articulation of the action points.*

- Specific notation or reference to 'who' the plan is aimed towards was fairly uniform across the plans i.e the majority references to the subject of the plans were 'women,' 'women and girls' and in the case of the Palestine plan, 'Palestinian women and girls.'
- The degree to which different identities of women and girls feature within the plans varies substantially. There is less mention of different identity factors within the general narrative of the NAP-WPS across the three plans, and much more likelihood for those references to appear within the action plan matrices which is very positive as that is where the actions and commitments of the plans are located.
- The Iraq plan is the only one that elaborates reference to different identities of women within the narrative that frames the NAP-WPS document. It mentions the relevance of the NAP-WPS to 'rape and assaulted women' and to 'Female heads of households and other vulnerable groups as the poor, the unemployed, the widows, and the internally displaced.'<sup>66</sup>
- None of the plans specifically noted the need to ensure that through implementation, the action

plan practically responds to the varied needs and differing discriminations that women of differing identities experience e.g women of differing ethnicities, sexualities, age or ability.

*Within the action plan matrices, all of the NAPs-WPS reference different identity 'labels' attached to women or roles that women and girls may occupy relative to the context and purpose of the action plan. References were sporadic within the plans however, and not always consistent.*

**(i) Identity factors and social characteristics:**

- All three plans make specific reference to '**victims**' and/or '**survivors**' of **sexual violence, gender based violence or rights 'violations'** (and specifically violations of the occupation are referenced in the Palestine NAP-WPS). This is the only common 'identity' or 'group' that is mentioned across the three action plans.
- Iraq: The Iraq plan makes the most references to the different experiences of women and related 'group' identities that are used in policy and planning. For example, the plan makes reference to '**widows,**' '**victims of trafficking,**' '**victims of the conflict,**' '**vulnerable women**' and '**mothers.**' Its highlights the importance of specifically identifying and delineating who the plan should be addressing. For example, under Pillar 2/Strategic Objective 2, there is a 'Specific Action' that requires 'Identifying the actual women affected by the conflicts, widows, victims of trafficking and prostitution.'
- Jordan: The Jordan plan makes strong and clear references to '**refugees**' and the refugee population that strategic goal 3 addresses, with the indicators disaggregated to capture that identity group. (Note that the Iraq plan also mentions '**displaced**' populations).
- Palestine: As noted the Palestine plan makes reference to 'victims of the occupation,' while otherwise it specifically mentions '**female prisoners**' and '**ex-prisoners.**' For example, under Strategic Objective 1, the following provision is included: 'Legal support services offered to female victims of all forms of violations, and to female prisoners and ex-prisoners, especially during and after incursions and arrests.'
- The Iraq and Jordan plans makes reference to age disaggregation. The Iraq plan mentions '**orphans,**'

66 Iraq NAP-WPS, pg. 8, 12.

‘street children’ and ‘minors’. The Jordan plan mentions ‘youth’ and as noted, also makes a cross-reference to Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security in the narrative of the plan. For example, the Iraq plan includes the following ‘Specific Action’ under Pillar 4/Strategic Objective 1: ‘Designing rights based programs for street children, minors and orphans.’

## (ii) Public professional roles and identity attributions

Women in professional roles were less commonly featured across the three plans.

- The Iraq and Palestine plan do not make specific reference to women in professional title roles per se.
- The Jordan plan references ‘military women,’ ‘retirees,’ women as ‘peacekeepers,’ ‘female community leaders,’ ‘teachers’ and ‘professors.’ For example, under Strategic Goal 1, a ‘Proposed Initiative’ is: ‘Participation of military women (workers or retirees) in the educational lectures held by representatives of civil society organisations on the role of military women, as a living example and role models of enhancing the role of women in peace & security;’ and under Strategic Goal 2, a ‘Proposed Initiative’ is to: ‘Train female community leaders, mothers, teachers, professors and youth to become constructive voices in efforts to address violent extremism, including through promoting non-securitised responses to challenges of violent extremism.’

## 5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the review of the action plans points towards some of the key strengths as well as opportunities for forthcoming second-generation NAPs-WPS in the region:

### (i) All three NAPs-WPS are responsive to the contexts which they are addressing and capture a wide range of positive, constructive and much needed actions addressing the realities of the lives of women and girls.

Iraq, Jordan and Palestine are all dealing with the impact of regional conflict and related acute humanitarian crises. They are all under intense pressure to respond to critical and life-saving measures for the populations in their territories. All three do so in ways that are tailored to their contexts. For example, Jordan tailors set of actions towards refugee populations, while Palestine tailors its actions towards the reality of the occupation and how it impacts the lives of Palestinian

women and girls. There has been slower up-take of the development of NAPs-WPS globally by states who are experiencing conflict. These plans demonstrate good models for how NAPs-WPS can be developed for states that are experiencing conflict and/or managing the impact of crises that spill over into their territories. The plans demonstrate how action planning can be used to direct limited national resources to where they are needed and in so doing, fulfil state commitments to the implementation of the WPS agenda.

### (ii) The three NAPs-WPS must be commended for their strategic focus on women’s rights concerns. This should be balanced with additional targets that also address women and girls’ everyday practical needs, which could bolster effective implementation (only 8% of actions across the plans are directed towards practical needs).

Evident in the discussion of the background context to each of the plans above (section 2 of this paper), is that certain groups of women and girls (refugees, internally displaced, those living under occupation, female headed households, etc) can find access to basic services, such as shelter, water and sanitation a challenge. As found by the fifteen year review of the implementation of the WPS agenda, ‘[p]rovision of basic needs like security, water, access to food and health— including sexual and reproductive health—have deep implications for women and girls’ and a focus on these basic needs is imperative if longer-term changes to women’s rights and status is to be achieved.<sup>67</sup> It is imperative that implementation of the WPS agenda through NAPs-WPS is used to fulfil these basic needs in ways that are responsive to the context of women and girls in different locations (e.g camp/urban setting) and of different identities, age or abilities and that contribute to fulfilling their strategic rights.

Balance between addressing practical and strategic needs and interests is important, particularly given the inter-relationship between the two. It is particularly important if transformative approaches to advancing women’s rights are to be achieved, as strategic gains (e.g women in elected positions) must go hand in hand with supporting women’s ability to meet their everyday needs. This allows NAPs-WPS to speak to the full range of women and of women’s rights which they are seeking to address.

67 Coomaraswamy. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace, pg. 17.

**BOX 1:**

**Achieving Balance in Practical and Strategic Focused Actions – Example of the Iraq NAP-WPS:**

The Iraq plan demonstrates an example in addressing a balance in both practical and strategic needs with respect to the issue of violence against women. For example, under Pillar 2 – Protection and prevention, Strategic Objective 1 includes the following actions:

- Specific Action 2: Amendment of the rape legislation to preserve dignity and confidentiality
- Specific Action 3: Amendment of legislation on VAW (PSL and Penal Code) to ensure women's rights and to compensate the victims of violence.

These actions demonstrate clear commitments to addressing structural inequalities with respect to violence against women and to undertake the reform legislation for the fulfillment of women's right to live lives free of violence. It also establishes that where violence does occur, the state fulfills its human rights duties and obligations by providing reparation where it neglects to protect women.

The next area of action under this pillar, Strategic Objective 2, then contains the following actions:

- Specific Action 1. Identifying the actual women affected by the conflicts, widows, victims of trafficking and prostitution.
- Specific Action 3. Establishing shelters and safe spaces for psychosocial support and free legal services for women victims of violence in accordance with international standards.

These actions are focused on the level of the practical needs of women and girls. Specific Action 1 ensures that all responses are tailored to the different realities and needs of different women who may experience violence. Specific Action 2 provides for the practical needs of those experiencing violence, providing shelter and the support necessary to deal with an experience of violence.

Both sets of strategic objectives and corresponding actions ensure a comprehensive and complementary approach within the plan i.e actions aimed at the level of strategic needs to ensure legal protection from violations of human rights, with complementary actions to address the needs that arise where rights are violated.

Gender planning for peace and security through NAPs-WPS needs to recognise that both practical and strategic needs are intricately interlinked and requires a balance of actions that meet both practical and strategic needs. The dismantling of structural inequalities is required as a basis for all actions so that women who are in need of essential basic needs may access those in safe and equitable ways and advance to having strategic rights and decision-making over those resources. This is how gender planning for peace and security can advance transformation for women.

**(iii) Across the three plans, the focus on actions that respond to Institutional Needs and Priorities of the states in question (making up 55% of all actions across the plans) ensure that the institutions responsible are equipped to implement the action plan. Ensuring that the majority of actions of the NAPs-WPS are weighted towards women and girls practical and strategic needs will ensure that the plans focus on the realities of women, as well as equipping the states' institutions to fulfil the intentions of the plan.**

Over half (55%) of all actions across the plans are focused on developing institutional capacity on WPS and in implementing the action plan itself. This demonstrates very strong commitments by the states in question to ensuring that those charged with implementing the NAP-WPS are enabled to do so and that the action plan serves as a means to further learning on gender mainstreaming across state institutions. It is acknowledged that it is important that NAPs-WPS include and set out these kinds of actions to ensure that those responsible for implementing it fully understand its provisions and that the implementation stage of the NAP is as effective as possible.

It is also imperative that NAPs-WPS fulfil the gaps that were identified in the review of the WPS agenda i.e directly meeting women's needs and rights who are experiencing conflict. Actions that specifically address the practical and strategic needs and rights of women and girls (whether in conflict-affected populations, in public policy roles, etc.) should be central to the NAPs-WPS and in balance with those focused on state institutions. In that way, the action plan can provide a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the WPS agenda tailored to each specific context.

**(iv) The plans could be strengthened by tailoring actions and indicators towards different women and**



**girls, such as disaggregating actions to age, disability, geographic location. Inclusion of actions tailored to increasing or supporting women in specific roles (professional and other) would also ensure that the plans are strategically advancing women's leadership.**

There is limited diversity of identity of women in any of the three plans. In part this is because all three plans have sparse framing 'narratives' that precede the action matrices, which allows for less room for references to 'who' the women and girls are that the action plans are aimed at (less so for the Iraq plan). Lack of disaggregation, or an inclusivity or diversity approach does matter, particularly in terms of implementation and allocation of resources under the plan.

The Jordan NAP offers a good example of disaggregation, in its specific reference and action targeting refugees. For example, under Strategic Goal 3/Outcome 3.2 there is a 'proposed initiative' as follows: 'Organize free promotional medical days in refugee camps and host communities to familiarize refugees, particularly women with the available medical and psychological services, and how to access the services.' This is a clear articulation of tailoring of services to refugee populations. However, Jordan is host to refugees from at least five different countries and its discussion of refugees could include further disaggregation to ensure that a range of ethnicities/nationalities of refugee women and girls, e.g from Somalia or Yemen, are specifically tailored to and not accidentally omitted from programming. Inclusion of specific identities like this, particularly in the indicators, will ensure that when the plan is reviewed, it will be clear if implementation met the needs of all of those who require such assistance. In terms of professional roles, the Jordan plan also includes specific references to the need to promote women into and increase their leadership roles within the security sectors, within peacekeeping and wider political and social leadership. For example, the Jordan NAP-WPS contains an action under Strategic Goal 1 as follows: '1.1.3 Women and men have increased awareness of the importance of women's participation in the security sector, and women are encouraged to engage in the security sector.' This is a very positive inclusion and ensures that through implementation, the participation of women in the security sector is addressed.

The Iraq plan also provides good examples of tailoring actions to differing demographics of people.

Under Pillar 4 – Social and Economic Empowerment, Strategic Objective 1 aims to 'Ensure the enjoyment of equal access of women and men to resources and opportunities during the transitional period. Among a range of specific actions, it contains the following:

- Specific Action 4: Introducing employment policies, allocating small project grants for establishment and development of development of cooperatives to support widows, especially those heads of households.
- Specific Action 5: Updating government support to victims of war and human trafficking.
- Specific Action 7: Designing rights based programs for street children, minors and orphans.

These actions are clearly tailored to specific groups of people – women, those subject to trafficking, children, minors and orphans. These kinds of disaggregated actions will ideally be used to guide those who are implementing programmes, to ensure that through implementation, these specific demographics of people are benefitting from the resources available through the action plan. This level of disaggregation can also be used in monitoring and evaluation, to establish whether these communities of people had their needs met, and lessons learned for the next iteration of the NAP-WPS. It is thereby important to ensure that the disaggregation of who the plan addresses is included within the planning matrices, and especially the indicators.

**(v) It is important to highlight the risks women and girls face to rights violations such as sexual and gender based violence. In doing so, the reality of women and girls' specific vulnerability to harms can be highlighted, though language around agency, empowerment and survival should be equally prioritised.**

Women's victimhood to rights violations is a reality within armed conflict, displacement and crisis. It is thereby incredibly important that the NAPs-WPS identify the harms that women and girls are subject to and provide for specific and tailored responses. It is also however imperative that while the victimhood is addressed, that the positive roles that women can play is both highlighted and enabled through the actions within the plan.

A good example is the Palestine Plan which combines language around addressing the victimhood of

women, while at the same time ensuring that empowering approaches characterise approaches to that victimhood. For example, under Strategic Objective 1 which aims to 'Enhance the protection of Palestinian women and girls, especially from the violations of the Israeli occupation,' there are two activities that demonstrate a balance in approach:

- Provision of legal, social, psychological and health support for women and girls who are victims of violations and discrimination, particularly violence.
- Enhance the capacities of (male and female) service providers to empower women and girls who are victims of violations and discrimination.

In this way, the approaches taken to protection and provision of practical support (practical needs) also entail approaches that are based in longer-term empowerment of women and girls (strategic needs and interests).

The WPS agenda provides for addressing the violence that women experience, putting in place strategies to prevent it, as well as advancing a pillar of action focused on prevention and women's participation. NAPs-WPS can thereby include actions that entail a comprehensive approach that both meets the reality of women's gendered victimhood to specific violations, while at the same time tailoring approaches in ways that are empowering of women and furthers their human rights.

The plans set out time-bound concrete and actionable areas of progress for women's rights concerns within the region. Especially important is the allocation of resources to ensure that the planning document translates into effective changes to the gaps in practical and strategic needs and interests of women and girls in the region.

Each of the plans is set out around a specific implementation period, varying from 3-4 years. This allows for a substantive period of implementation and the future opportunity of a review to assess progress made, and if and where necessary make adjustments to the content, balance of focus of the actions and the overall implementation approach. It is important that such an approach is taken forward, like that of the review of the NAP-WPS which Iraq is undertaking.

Imperative in successful implementation of the action plan is also allocation of resources. The Iraq plan sets out an estimated budget required for full

implementation of the plan. The Jordan NAP-WPS also sets out a specific nominated budget of \$7,820,000 for implementation of the plan. The budget is attributed across the plan to each specific goal/area of action in the matrix. This is a unique approach, not common across NAPs-WPS globally. It demonstrates commitment to fulfilment of implementation of the plan and is a model approach for other plans in the region and globally.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The NAPs-WPS of Iraq, Jordan and Palestine are strategic, thoughtful and important contributions to ensuring accountability for the WPS agenda, and to address and fulfil the human rights and needs of women and girls in each country. As planning documents, they fulfil critical roles in providing each context with a set of clear interventions to take forward and demonstrate clear political will on the part of states and civil society actors to do so.

The development and implementation of NAPs-WPS globally is a relatively new development and states and civil society actors are in cycles of learning how to improve on future iterations of plans. This analysis and review seeks to contribute to that learning, to ensure that subsequent NAPs-WPS build on the best elements of these first-generation NAPs and address any areas for strengthening.

It is imperative that the WPS agenda is implemented in ways that fulfil the rights of women and girls. Action plans, as instruments that can enable implementation to take place, can thereby be used to ensure that, in a balanced way, the practical everyday needs of women and girls with diverse identity, ability and social status are addressed, while at the same time ensuring that longer-term strategic rights are also achieved.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. NAPs-WPS should be weighted towards specifically addressing the rights and needs of women and girls and achieve a balance in terms of addressing their practical and strategic needs, and the intersection between the two.** Actions to enhance state engagement with WPS issues and implementation of the action plan should be balanced with actions and resources for ensuring improvements in the everyday lives of women and girls affected by conflict.

As plans for Lebanon and Tunisia are under development, and Iraq will be drafting its second NAP this year, there is an excellent opportunity for those involved in drafting NAPs-WPS to incorporate a balance between practical and strategic needs,

and the need for capacity and institutional engagement by state actors in their frameworks.

**2. A framework of inclusion and diversity should underpin the development of all NAPs-WPS.**

Reference to how variant identity factors give rise to discriminations that impact women and girls and determine their rights and needs should form part of the narrative framing the NAP-WPS, as well as inform how actions in the matrix are tailored to diverse populations.

Using inclusivity and diversity as a frame to disaggregate out some of the actions helps to ensure that through implementation, exclusions are not entrenched, and that plans account for (e.g through disaggregated indicators) the ways in which planned actions fulfil the rights and needs of diverse populations of women. These factors should include age, gender, ethno-national identity, refugee/displaced status and disability should be given specific attention in these plans.

**3. NAPs-WPS should achieve a balance between highlighting the victimhood of women to violations and providing responses to those, while also including provisions that attempt to prevent such violations and that also promote women's empowerment as actors.**

In line with the recommendation on inclusivity, a disaggregated approach to gender planning that provides for a balance of identifying victimhood and responses to this, and that identifies women's professional capacities and roles and provides specific interventions to advance women's agency is needed. The pillars of the WPS agenda on protection, prevention and participation should be reflected within the NAPs-WPS.

**4. NAPs-WPS should be linked with national commitments to CEDAW:**

Linking NAPs-WPS to CEDAW allows for cross-linkages to reinforce key

areas of action. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 can be used as a framework in this regard.<sup>68</sup>

5. **NAPs-WPS should be linked with national commitments to CEDAW and other human rights frameworks:** Linking NAPs-WPS to CEDAW allows for cross-linkages to reinforce key areas of action. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 can be used as a framework in this regard.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, plans overall could strengthen linkages with existing policies and frameworks to promote more coordinated approaches to implementation of provisions for gender equality at national levels.
6. NAPs-WPS serve as an effective policy and accountability tool only when they are monitored and implemented. **While it was beyond the scope of this study to examine NAP implementation, investing in oversight and implementation is critical after the development of a strong NAP-WPS. For effective implementation, NAPs-WPS should be developed in a participatory manner, include clear indicators to monitor progress, and be adequately costed. Related to the above, it is important to link NAP-WPS with other national frameworks:** The narratives of the action plans are, perhaps by necessity, brief and to the point in respect of the contextual background to the adoption of the NAP-WPS and its national position. The plans overall could strengthen linkages with existing policies and frameworks to promote joined-up approaches to implementation of provisions for gender equality at national levels.

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68 For guidance on its use, see: O'Rourke, C. and Swaine, A. (2015). Guidebook on CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 and the Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. New York: UN Women.

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