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## Policy Briefing

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# For a Foreign Policy Based on Human Rights and Gender Equality

Need for action on the implementation of the agenda  
„Women, Peace and Security“ by the German Foreign Office

In January 2019, Germany will take up a non-permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations (UN) for a two-year period. Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas had agreed to make the issue of „Women, Peace and Security“ a priority of the policies he will represent during this period and to promote the issue actively in New York. In this regard, he expressly referred to the „close connection“ between “gender equality, the protection of human rights, sustainable development and the preservation of peace and security“.<sup>1</sup> Foreign policy such as this would contribute towards an appropriate participation of the majority of the population – in other words, women, children and the elderly – in efforts to prevent crises and build peace, while protecting them effectively from violence. Here, Germany can pick up the work started by Sweden. In 2014, Sweden was the first country to announce a „feminist foreign policy“ and represent this in the Security Council. However, in the view of the organisations authoring this paper, the following measures are necessary if practical impacts are to be achieved from a human rights-based, gender-equal and therefore peace-building foreign policy such as the one announced by the German Foreign Minister.

## International responsibility

### Germany's role as non-permanent member of the Security Council

The protection of women in armed conflicts and their equal participation in peace processes are significant contributory factors to the preservation and promotion of world peace and international security. This was the conclusion reached on October 31, 2000, by the United Nations Security Council when it passed Resolution 1325 on „Women, Peace and Security“. Since then the council has passed a series of subsequent resolutions,<sup>2</sup> creating a comprehensive agenda for „Women and Peace and Security“. However, this agenda has still to be implemented! In light of the current situation in the world, the Security Council needs to finally take itself seriously and implement its own agenda. In the past 18 years, it has mainly been civil society which has played the decisive role in calling for a consistent and politically coherent implementation of the Resolutions and voicing criticism of insufficient political willingness to do this. This courageous commitment needs to be recognised and provided with appropriate political and financial support. As a non-permanent member, during the next two years the German government will help to shape international security policy. In this role, Germany needs to represent policies

which are genuinely oriented towards human security, conflict prevention and women's rights. It should demonstrate decisive commitment to the needs of women and girls during armed conflicts. This is even more important because some members of the Security Council are actively undermining international law and the standards of human rights. For this reason, as a non-permanent member, the German government needs to:

- » take a political stance and openly declare its commitment to implement the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“. The speech by Federal Foreign Minister Maas at the UN General Assembly in October 2018 and the presidential statements of opinion from Germany will be good opportunities for this.
- » set the direction of the issues covered. In April 2019, Germany will preside over the Council and have an opportunity to ensure progress on specific issues. During the presidency of Germany, the Special Representative for Combating Sexualised Violence in Armed Conflicts will present her report. Discussions of this issue in the Security Council in previous years have mainly focused on the role of sexualised violence as a strategic means of warfare. However, this can be problematic because women and girls experience many forms of sexualised and gender-based violence, before, during and after armed conflict. So this violence is not always a question of military strategy. In order to ensure effective protection from violence for women and girls and appropriate support for survivors, the continuum of violence needs to be made a subject of consideration. For this reason, Germany should move the debate onto the issue of an integrated and transformative approach to combating sexualised violence during armed conflicts. The issues covered here include overcoming the underlying causes of sexualised and gender-based violence in armed conflict: discriminatory gender relations in patriarchal societies.
- » establish an obligation to consult women's rights defenders and activists as experts on the human rights situation in crisis- and conflict-affected countries. Side events and briefings for these Security Council debates need to be used to invite representatives of civil society so these important perspectives, and thus the interests of women in crisis and conflict cases, can be heard. These voices have to have an influence on discussions and decisions of the Security Council.
- » work towards anchoring the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ in the Resolutions of the Security Council. This

1 Speech by Foreign Minister Heiko Maas at the opening of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network Meeting, at: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-rede-frauen-frieden-sicherheit/1897650> [31.08.2018].

2 These are Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242. In the following text, any mention of the Resolution 1325 or the agenda “Women, Peace and Security” should be understood to include the subsequent Resolutions, too.

includes all resolutions on country contexts and peace-keeping missions as well as issue-based resolutions.

- » commit itself to ensuring the implementation of the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ by the Security Council as well as the United Nations in general. This has to include assigning sufficient financial resources. This is urgently needed since the financial cuts at the UN threaten these measures.

## Top-down and bottom-up

### Structural anchoring within the Foreign Office

With its Second National Action Plan on the implementation of Resolution 1325, the German government presented a strategy paper for a human rights-based and gender-equal foreign policy. If this is to succeed, all representatives of the German government are now called upon to actively work on the realisation of this Action Plan, at home and abroad. For the Foreign Office this means that the directorship has to actively promote the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ outwardly and shape a coherent policy.<sup>3</sup> At home, the Action Plan also now has to be anchored cross-sectorally. Only in this way can the German government maintain international credibility. For this, too, political will is called for on the part of the leadership of the Foreign Office. At the highest levels, the implementation of the inwardly-focussed aspects of the current NAPs has to be given priority and carried out in a sustainable way. A decisive influence of the agenda is needed on the strategic orientation of the Directorate-General S „Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid“. Country Directorates also have a responsibility to ensure coherent implementation of the Action Plan. In his function as head of the Foreign Office, the Federal Foreign Minister needs to ensure that:

- » the principles of Resolution 1325 are consistently anchored within the concept and strategy papers published by the Foreign Office. At present, the Ministry is working on, amongst other things, strategies to promote security sectors, constitutionality and transitional justice. There is a pressing need within these fields for a fundamental orientation on the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“.<sup>4</sup>
- » there is a close connection between the NAP 1325 and the implementation of the guidelines „Preventing crises,

coping with conflict, promoting peace“. For example, this would call for conflict analyses to be carried out in a gender-sensitive way as a standard, and appropriate early warning systems to be established.

- » gender analyses for the individual country contexts are regularly carried out and needs-based strategies on the promotion of women's rights are drafted.
- » appropriate knowledge and capacities are established and expanded systematically in the individual departments. The agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ has to be an integral part of the training at all levels in the German Foreign Office.
- » the Department OR-06 is strengthened. Staffed generally by one officer, this Department drafted the action plan and provides internal consultation on its implementation. The consultancy capacity of this department urgently needs to be expanded. For example, since the drafting of the first Action Plan in 2012, this role has already been assigned to seven different officers. This exceedingly high staff fluctuation is an obstacle to efforts seeking to implement the agenda „Women and Peace and Security“ within the Foreign Office. Continuity and an increase in the qualified staff in OR-06 are urgently needed here.
- » there is implementation of an equal opportunities staffing policy and staff development policy in the Foreign Office. For example, the attaché training in 2018/19 managed to recruit only one third females. A continued lack of gender-balance for these training places is simply no longer acceptable. There is also a need to implement measures designed to ensure the compatibility of profession and family within the diplomatic service.
- » implementation of the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ is made a promotion criteria for diplomats.
- » a monitoring procedure is installed on impact-oriented implementation of the Action Plan by the Foreign Office, so that the impact of the measures of the NAP can be (self-) critically assessed and transparent reporting can be made on this. For this, appropriate indicators need to be drafted in order to make changes measurable in an impact-oriented away.
- » gender is integrated as a category in the funding concepts and instruments of the Foreign Office, with sufficient financial resources made available to implement the Action Plan.<sup>5</sup>

3 See the chapter: Create credibility.

4 At this point it needs to be noted that the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ generally needs stronger meshing with other national and international processes, such as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

5 See here the detail in the Chapter: A gender-equal foreign policy is not voluntary work. Gender-equal project approval.

# Walking the talk

## Implementation of the Action Plan by diplomatic missions abroad

Diplomatic action is needed! In an age when women's rights are once again increasingly under pressure and there are vehement attacks on the room for manoeuvre of civil society, political effort is needed on behalf of women, peace and security. German diplomatic missions abroad play an important role in this. It is the diplomats themselves who can ensure that foreign policy is carried out in a manner which promotes human rights and gender equality. Their duties provide them with many opportunities to apply a variety of diplomatic pressure. To name but a few examples, these opportunities include monitoring legal processes against women's rights defenders, consistently including the topic in bilateral dialogues, and issuing emergency visas in cases of acute threat.<sup>6</sup> In order to ensure they are fully informed in this regard, regular discussion with local female activists is essential. So it is also a high priority to ensure that these activists are protected. Unfortunately, practical experience has shown us that embassies and consulates are often not living up to their international obligations. The main reason for this is that Resolution 1325 has not been implemented in a way that sufficiently anchors it within government and diplomatic institutions. One example of this is the under-representation of women in the diplomatic service: a mere 14% of German ambassadors are female and currently not one of these has been posted to a conflict region.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore necessary for the German government to undertake active efforts to ensure that all diplomats have the training and resources they need to fully exploit the opportunities available to them.

The German diplomatic missions abroad need to:

- » ensure that attention is drawn to the needs of women and girls during dialogue with governments. The enforcement of women's rights can be made a criterion of bilateral agreements between governments.
- » enforce a policy of gender balance in the appointment of staff at all levels, including management and ambassadors. This is particularly relevant to diplomatic missions in war and crisis regions, which also need to finally be guaranteed sufficient human resources.
- » provide diplomats with training on the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the context of the countries they are being posted to.

- » implement the Resolution 1325 Focal Points. These have to be mandated to implement the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ by embassies and consulates. For this, urgent support is needed from top management.
- » coordinate diplomatic efforts to achieve the goals of Resolution 1325 with the representatives of other countries, as well as international and regional organisations working locally. This can create synergy and increase the effectiveness of all these efforts.

The agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ could be made a prominent issue at the next Conference of Ambassadors. This would raise awareness and would be a clear expression of political will from the leadership of the Foreign Office.

## Gender-equal project funding

### A gender-equal foreign policy is not voluntary work

The German Foreign Office allocates funds from various budget points to support measures for crisis prevention, conflict resolution, stabilisation, democracy and peace-building and humanitarian aid. As one of the largest German institutional funders for international projects, the Ministry needs to implement its project funding in a gender-equal manner.

- » The Foreign Office should provide women's organisations and networks with targeted, transparent and long-term financial assistance. Priorities here should include the carrying out of activities on prevention of violence, the provision of humanitarian aid, the minimisation of risks during disasters, and the inclusion of women in all efforts to resolve conflicts and build peace. This also includes specific funding for advocacy activities.
- » All projects approved and funded by the Foreign Office should include obligatory gender mainstreaming. In order to guarantee this, gender-informed country analyses are necessary before the occurrence of natural disasters or war negotiations. Gender aspects are particularly needed within the strategy and guidelines on humanitarian aid. Annual context-specific Key Issues Papers also have to include these aspects. There should be an end to funding for gender-blind projects.
- » Emergency relief aid policy has to recognise that gender-informed project design can save lives in the case

<sup>6</sup> Further measures at the diplomatic level are described in, inter alia, the Swedish government's handbook on its feminist foreign policy. See: Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs Handbook. Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy, at: [https://www.govt.se/4a4752/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook\\_swe-dens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf](https://www.govt.se/4a4752/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook_swe-dens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de>

of crisis. For this reason, gender-specific needs need to be considered and included in a stronger way. Specifically, this includes targeted funding of projects in the field of sexual and reproductive health, as well as maternal health, and the support of survivors of sexualised and gender-based violence. It would also be desirable here to include gender-transformative approaches. These aspects need to be assigned a fixed proportion of all resources made available.

- » We welcome the fact that project applications for humanitarian aid already include the demand for data disaggregated according to age and gender. This is a good start, although it does not automatically ensure consideration of the varying needs of the different groups. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a specific needs and risk analysis on the basis of the data provided.
- » The Foreign Office needs to ensure that it provides logistical assistance, capacity building and financial support directly to ensure increased representation of women in peace negotiations during the implementation of Track 1 and 1.5. This applies to all phases of the peace negotiations.

## Create credibility

### Enact consistent foreign policy

The German government has issued two National Plans of Action on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 for women, peace and security. In this regard, the process determined by the United Nations foresees a consideration of criticism and suggestions from civil society during the drafting of action plans. As part of the civil society, we welcome the increased commitment of the Foreign Office to implement the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“ in practice. Now the issue at hand is to ensure that:

- I. women have equal access to rights,
- II. women are adequately represented during political processes,
- III. gender-specific needs are given sufficient funding, and
- IV. policies and measures are rooted in reality and aligned with the commitments of the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“.

In the specialist literature, this is referred to as the „Four Rs“: rights, representation, resources and ‘reality check’. So far, none of these four have been sufficiently implemented by the Foreign Office, and there has definitely been no consideration of the interdependencies between them. „Women’s issues“ are still primarily treated as an „add-on“, to be dealt with once the military security has been insured, rather than recognising it as a prerequisite for a peace-building foreign policy, which in the 21st century we should be able to take for granted. Funding individual projects or measures to strengthen women’s rights during armed conflicts is not enough. If the actions of the government domestically and internationally are genuinely intended to be based on human rights and gender equality, and thus peace-promoting, there is an urgent need for consistency between the different policies and, above all, for the recognition of the concept of „Human Security“. Actual measures undertaken as part of the government’s foreign policy have to be analysed in terms of their gender-specific impacts and their contribution to the fulfilment of obligations from the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“. One example of the lack of political consistency here is the arms export policy of the German government.

## No-go arms exports

The example of the export of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is very important to the German government, but it demonstrates tangibly and clearly the lack of consistency. In 2002, a study published by the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) already demonstrated the connection between the use of small arms and negative impacts on gender roles.<sup>8</sup> The study was able to demonstrate that women count as one of the groups which suffers the most from the use of armed force and that these exports lead to discriminatory gender relations becoming even worse. In addition, it determined that the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a constant threat and obstruction to development in any region affected. Almost 20 years later, this insight still fully applies. Nonetheless, there has been no practical consideration of these research results in policy measures. In the first half of 2018, there has been a reduction in German exports of small arms<sup>9</sup>, but this has been accompanied by a clear increase in light weapons. The continued export of SALW to war and crisis regions is not consistent with a foreign policy that is genuinely based on human rights and gender equality. The situation is not eased by noting that some of the increase is accounted for by exports of weapons to France and the USA, since it is common knowledge that weapons sent to these destinations then find their way to war and crisis regions. These exports simply have to be stopped!

<sup>8</sup> See BICC (2002): Brief 24, at: [https://www.bicc.de/uploads/ttx\\_bicctools/brief24.pdf](https://www.bicc.de/uploads/ttx_bicctools/brief24.pdf) [31.08.2018].

<sup>9</sup> <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/041/1904193.pdf> [17.09.2018].

# When, if not now?

We in the civil society observe momentum now that could lead to decisive progress in the implementation of the agenda „Women, Peace and Security“. Current developments in the world also make it imperative that the German government shapes its foreign policy in a manner that actively and sustainably enhances human rights and gender equality. Germany has a responsibility in this regard. We are convinced that this would make a decisive contribution to peace and security around the world.

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