



DALLAIRE CENTRE
OF EXCELLENCE

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STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

PREPARED BY

Muhi Bakini

Claudia Kobetitch

Travis Liu



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Public Policy and Global Affairs

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BREB.....	Behavioural Research Ethics Board
CAF.....	Canadian Armed Forces
CDA.....	Canadian Defence Academy
CDS.....	Chief of Defence Staff
CIDA.....	Canadian International Development Agency
C-NAP.....	Canadian National Action Plan
COE.....	Dallaire Centre of Excellence
CSO.....	Civil Society Organization
CWINF.....	Committee on Women in the NATO Forces
DND.....	Department of Defence
FAITC.....	Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
FIAP.....	Feminist International Assistance Policy
GAC.....	Global Affairs Canada
GBA+.....	Gender-Based Analysis Plus
MPPGA.....	Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs
NAP.....	National Action Plan
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMI.....	NATO Mission Iraq
RCMP.....	Royal Canadian Mountain Police
SGBV.....	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSR.....	Security Sector Reforms
UNSCR.....	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS.....	Women, Peace, and Security

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KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

- There are differing perceptions of the Canadian Armed Forces and other Canadian institutions from local Iraqis and civil society organizations; however, the Canadian Armed Forces are viewed favourably.
- While local women need to participate in peacebuilding processes, their expertise and living experiences is undervalued. Societal, cultural, and logistical barriers undermine the peacebuilding processes resulting in inadequate participation in implementing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.
- There is an urgent humanitarian need to support and provide resources for Iraqi survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Yet, the Iraqi government has failed to address these needs effectively.
- The 2017-2022 Canadian National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security consulted extensively with domestic civil society organizations, but international civil society organizations were overlooked in the consultation process.
- There are limited and insufficient communication channels and engagement opportunities between the Canadian Armed Forces and Iraqi local civil society organizations.
- Participants identified a need to discard the two-hatted structure for Canadian gender advisor positions.
- There are limited access and a lack of domestic options for gender training courses for Canadian Armed Forces personnel.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to analyze the relationship between the Canadian Armed Forces and civil society organizations within Iraq through the lens of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. The results of the report will assist the Dallaire Centre of Excellence in developing and informing how the Canadian Armed Forces can strengthen its Women, Peace, and Security commitments and relationships with local stakeholders.

The report draws on the Canadian Armed Forces mission to Iraq (dubbed Operation IMPACT) and the four key pillars of UNSCR 1325: prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery. While the Canadian Armed Forces are gradually reducing the number of personnel deployed to Iraq, Operation IMPACT provides an illustrative case study that can provide lessons applicable to NATO Mission Iraq and future Canadian Armed Forces operations.

Following the defeat of Daesh, many Iraqi women remain politically and economically excluded from society. Human security has neither been prioritized by the Iraqi government nor the military. While UNSCR 1325 promotes women's formal participation in peacebuilding processes, such as increasing the representation of women in elected government seats, a knowledge gap exists in understanding the working relationships between the Canadian Armed Forces and local women's civil society organizations.

The crucial role of civil society organizations in implementing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda is explored through a literature review on the securitization of UNSCR 1325. A need to situate relationships between foreign actors and civil society organizations in local contexts is identified. The research draws on the concept of human security and the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 as an interpretation framework. While each pillar is of equal importance, an examination of literature recognizes that there are significant barriers to increase participation in the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Subject-matter expert interviews were conducted during a two-week period with international and local civil society organizations, academic researchers, journalists,

Canadian government officials, and former gender advisors in Iraq with the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mountain Police.

Finally, the report provides a set of recommendations addressed to the Canadian Armed Forces designed to improve their engagement strategies in collaborating with local civil society organizations. Ultimately, these recommendations will contribute to the full implementation of the participation pillar of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Informed by an initial consultation with the Dallaire Centre of Excellence and preliminary research conducted, the research team has hypothesized the presence of barriers preventing the Canadian Armed Forces (the CAF) from engaging in meaningful partnerships and consultations with women’s civil society organizations (CSOs). The research team has identified the following three research questions:

1. What is the role of human security in achieving the objectives of the 2017-2022 Canadian National Action Plan by the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq, and what barriers, if any, exist in the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda?
2. Why are the relationships between the CAF and women's CSOs resulting in a disconnect of goals for engendering Iraq's peace and stabilization?
3. How can barriers to engagement be eliminated? And how can relationships be better facilitated between Canadian gender advisors and Iraqi CSOs?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create communication strategies and informational and transitional channels between local CSOs and the CAF to support the consistent involvement of local CSOs in the planning and execution of CAF operations
2. Establish pre-deployment background learning requirements, at-deployment outreach commitments and reporting mechanisms for gender advisors

3. Improve the quality and increase the availability of gender-based and cultural training courses for gender advisors
4. Discard the double-hatted structure of gender advising, and establish co-leadership positions consisting of civilian and military gender advisors to work in tandem on missions.
5. Establish a Canadian Centre for Gender Advising Training

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this section is to provide readers with a brief overview of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. It will dive into the Government of Canada's adoption of the agenda across various departments through National Action Plans, the implementation of the Feminist International Assistance Policy, and the Department of Defence's directive and subsequent policies on Women, Peace, and Security. Finally, Operation IMPACT will be examined alongside information against the backdrop of recent conflicts in Iraq to provide readers with a contextual understanding of the Government of Canada's whole-of-government approach to the region.

UNSCR 1325

Adopted unanimously in October of 2000, [United Nations Security Council Resolution \(UNSCR\) 1325](#) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) reaffirms women's vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. The resolution urges signatory countries to increase women and girls' participation and to include diverse gender perspectives in all peacekeeping activities. UNSCR 1325 consists of eighteen commitments, including calling for a formal report on women and girls' involvement in peace processes and conflict resolutions. In 2004, the President of the Security Council called on states to create national action plans (NAPs) by October 2005 to implement UNSCR 1325.

In the preamble of UNSCR 1325, the resolution recalls the twelve commitments put forth in the [1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), which provides a strategic framework for achieving gender equality. The Beijing Declaration addresses the needs of women and girls in armed conflicts, promotes non-violent forms of conflict resolution, provides protections to refugee women, and calls for a reduction in excessive military expenditures. Based on the twelve commitments, UNSCR 1325 outlines four key pillars:

Prevention

This pillar requires integrating a perspective that accounts for men and women's differential experiences, boys and girls in conflict situations, into all conflict prevention and resolution strategies and activities. It also requires strengthening efforts to prevent violence, including sexual violence, against civilian populations, particularly women and girls, in peace operations, fragile states, and conflict-affected situations.

Participation

This pillar advocates for the active and meaningful participation and representation of women and local women's organizations in peace and security activities. It includes peace processes and greater involvement by women in peace operations as soldiers, police, and civilian representatives.

Protection

This pillar intends to promote the safety and security of populations at risk in armed conflicts, humanitarian and emergency situations. It incorporates a requirement to promote and protect women and girls' human rights progress. Furthermore, it encompasses preventing conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and protecting against sexual exploitation and abuse by coalition forces.

Relief and recovery

This pillar promotes women's equal access to humanitarian and development assistance and advocates for aid services that support all populations at risk. It addresses the specific needs of women and girls in all relief and recovery efforts.

CANADA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

Initially drafted in 2006, Canada officially launched its first national action plan (C-NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security in 2010. The C-NAP encompassed [UNSCR 1325](#), the [1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#), and the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) for

the period of 2011-2016. The plan provided a framework for a whole-of-government approach after feedback and development from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (now Global Affairs Canada), the Canadian International Development Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Public Safety Canada, Status of Women Canada (now Women and Gender Equality Canada), Justice Canada, and Canadian civil society organizations. The C-NAP consisted of four thematic areas: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. An intergovernmental working group on WPS was set up by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, consisting of members from the Canadian International Development Agency, RCMP, and the Department of Defence. The group met quarterly to coordinate implementation plans and collect data for the annual report on the C-NAP progress. The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces also met twice a year with domestic civil society organizations to discuss the plan's progress and implementation.

In October 2015, the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced that the C-NAP “will guide the way Canada develops policy, how we select, train and deploy Canadian personnel and how we will steer Canada’s interventions abroad” (PeaceWomen, 2011). The Minister further announced that the C-NAP “encourages women and girls’ participation, promotes their rights and advances their equal access to humanitarian and development assistance” (PeaceWomen, 2011). Despite this, the Women, Peace, and Security Network of Canada, a volunteer-based network that monitors the Government of Canada’s commitments to UNSCR 1325, criticized the first C-NAP for portraying women and girls as victims. While Indicator 8 of C-NAP states that Canada will “promote evidence-based research and analysis, and engage in policy dialogue with development on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, including discussions with Canadian, international and local civil society organizations” (Government of Canada, 2010), the plan was criticized for not explicitly outlining structures and mechanisms for consultations with civil society organizations.

In 2017, Canada launched its [second NAP](#) for the period of 2017-2022. The second NAP includes Canada’s 2017 Feminist International Assistance Policy, the Chief of the Defence Staff’s direction on UNSCR 1325, and the government’s commitments to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The lead partners are Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The supporting partners are Public Safety Canada,

Status of Women Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Department of Justice. The report acknowledges the feedback and consultations done with Canadian civil society organizations for this iteration. The plan reaffirms Canada's commitments to increasing the well-being, empowerment, and participation of women and girls in conflict-affected areas while also outlining how men and boys can be partners in transformative change.

The C-NAP outlines five high-level objectives:

- Increase the meaningful participation of women, women's organizations and networks in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict state-building
- Prevent, respond to, and end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and other international personnel, including humanitarian and development staff, perpetrated in conflict
- Promote and protect women's and girls' human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings
- Meet the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings, including the upholding of their sexual rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services
- Strengthen the capacity of peace operations to advance the WPS agenda, including by deploying more women and fully embedding the WPS agenda into CAF operations and police deployments (Government of Canada 2017)

CANADA'S FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) was launched in June 2017. It "set an ambitious agenda to make gender equality and feminism the centre of Canada's development assistance programming going forward" (Morton et al. 2020). The policy recognizes the need to integrate gender equality across its vision for international assistance. It consists of seven action areas, which include: gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, human dignity, growth that works for everyone, environment and climate action, inclusive governance, and peace and security. The

policy states that to ensure “peacekeepers and other military personnel are best able to execute their duties, Canada will also develop and facilitate training and pre-deployment courses on gender equality and context-specific gender norms” (Government of Canada, 2017). Further, the Feminist International Assistance Policy commits to “strengthening accountability mechanisms, backed up by greater support for local women’s organizations and movements” (2017).

The Feminist International Assistance Policy acknowledges Canadian women’s participation in almost all aspects of domestic and international missions by the CAF. The policy states that Canadian “military members also receive continuing education and training to raise awareness of the differential impact of conflict, natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies of women, men, girls, and boys” (Government of Canada, 2017). However, it also recognizes that more work needs to be undertaken by the CAF to ensure that it reflects and respects the needs of the women and girls it employs and serves.

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF DIRECTIVE ON UNSCR 1325

On January 26th, 2016, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) issued a [directive on integrating UNSCR 1325](#) and related resolutions into the CAF’s planning and operations. The directive references NATO’s Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 that required incorporating gender perspectives into NATO Forces and NATO-led missions. NATO’s directive called for creating gender advisor positions to serve as specialists in integrating gender perspectives into mission and operational planning. Gender advisors receive specialized training in gender mainstreaming and serve as advisors to the commanders on gender-related issues.

The CDS calls for integrating Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into all of CAF’s planning and execution of operations. GBA+ is an analytical tool used to assess potential impacts policies, programs, and initiatives may have upon a diverse group of people through the lens of intersectionality. The CDS outlines that the CAF will fully integrate the requirements of the C-NAP and GBA+ into CAF planning and operations by August 31st, 2017, and across the wider CAF institution by March 31st, 2019. The directive states that gender advisor positions will be established, and GBA+ will be incorporated into CAF

training. Training for gender advisors is available from NATO, the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, and Status of Women Canada.

THE ROLE OF GENDER ADVISORS

Proposed by NATO in 2007 by the Committee on Women in NATO Forces (CWINF), gender advisors provide strategic advice to senior officers for each NATO mission. CWINF states that “a qualified gender advisor, optimally well versed in NATO Operational Planning Process is crucial to integrating the gender mainstreaming into NATO operations” (2007). NATO reports that more than “96 percent of NATO member nations include gender in pre-deployment training and exercises, 77 percent include gender in operational planning, and 80 percent provide education and training programmes related to gender” (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018). The first NATO gender advisors, deployed by Sweden in 2008 and Norway in 2009, had internal duties to advise commanders, support analysis and planning, and had external duties to cultivate contacts with local Afghan women (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018). NATO’s Resolution 1889, passed in 2007, “addresses women’s exclusion from peacebuilding and the lack of attention to women’s needs in post-conflict recovery” (Coomaraswamy et al., 2015). Within 1889, there are calls for the Secretary-General to “include gender advisors and women’s protection advisors in peacekeeping missions” (Coomaraswamy et al., 2015). Gender advisors are positioned to act as consultants and mediators between the mandates of militarized institutions and civil society organizations.

CANADA’S DEFENCE POLICY- STRONG, SECURE, ENGAGED

In 2017, the Department of Defence launched a new defence policy titled [*Strong, Secure, Engaged*](#). The policy document announced a new focus on recruitment, training, and retention, prioritizing diversity and inclusion in the CAF. As part of this strategy, a diversity champion will be appointed to integrate GBA+ across all defence activities. The policy mandates mandatory GBA+ training and directs the CAF to increase women’s representation in the military by one percent annually over the next ten years to 25 percent representation by 2026. The policy states that gender advisor positions will be established to advise on gender in operational planning and doctrine and to model the value of diversity, inclusion and gender equality when working internationally.

The above discussion will be illustrated through the lens of Operation IMPACT in Iraq in the following section.

2003-2014 CONFLICT IN IRAQ

In March 2003, Iraq was invaded by U.S. and coalition forces based on the perception that the country possessed weapons of mass destruction and had ties to the terrorist organization, Al Qaeda. The Government of Canada announced that it would not participate in the invasion, as its intelligence did not support the assessment that weapons of mass destruction were present in the country. The invasion resulted in a U.S. occupation of Iraq that attempted to restore law and order following insurgency attacks and mass violence. The war lasted until 2011, when the U.S. and coalition partners formally withdrew troops from Iraq. Daesh, an offshoot of Al-Qaeda, reemerged following the withdrawal and slowly gained traction in Iraq and Syria over the next few years. In 2014, Daesh captured Fallujah, Mosul and Tikrit, Iraq. In June 2014, Daesh leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi announced the formation of a caliphate that spanned from Aleppo, Syria, to Diyala, Iraq (Wilson Centre, 2019).

OPERATION IMPACT

Operation IMPACT is the Government of Canada's whole-of-government approach to Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Operation IMPACT began as the CAF's support and contribution to the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh, formed in September 2014. The Global Coalition includes 79 members and regional partners, many of which are Canada's allies. A maximum number of 850 CAF members are approved to serve on Operation IMPACT at any given time.

Within Operation IMPACT, 17 CAF members are currently deployed to support NATO Mission Iraq (NMI), led by the Danish Armed Forces. NMI is a non-combative mission that advises the Iraqi Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces on building peace and security through security sector reforms (SSR). The objective of SSR is "to achieve efficient and effective defence institutions that serve the defence interests of citizens, society, and the state while representing human rights and operating within the rule of law under effective democratic control" (Government of Canada, 2020). SSR includes integrating the WPS agenda to promote women, men, girls, and boys in reforms.

TIMELINE

- **Jan 2014**, Daesh captures Fallujah, Iraq
- **Jun 2014**, Daesh captures Mosul, Iraq
- **Aug 2014**, the CAF delivers 1,600,000 pounds of military supplies to Iraq
- **Sep 2014**, Global Coalition formed to defeat Daesh
- **Nov 2014**, the CAF conducts first combat airstrikes against Daesh
- **Mar 2015**, the CAF mission extended additional 12 months and into Syria
- **Mar 2016**, the CAF ceased airstrike operations against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.
- **Nov 2017**, the CAF began delivering explosive threat training to Iraqi security forces.
- **Jul 2018**, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that Canada will command a new NATO training and capacity building mission in Iraq from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019.
- **Mar 2019**, Government of Canada announced renewal of Operation IMPACT until March 2021
- **Jun 2019**, Government of Canada announced extension of Canada's command of NATO Mission Iraq until November 2020
- **Jan 4, 2020**, NMI and Operation IMPACT temporarily suspended due to death of General Qassem Soleimani and increased tensions
- **Jan 16, 2020**, NMI and Operation IMPACT resumed some operations
- **Nov 2020**, the CAF transferred command of NMI to Danish Armed Forces

IRAQI WOMEN

The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the rise of Daesh resulted in Iraqi women suffering from immense violence and widespread destruction, which only compounded the violence and inequalities they faced for years previous. “Exclusion and violence are common experiences for many Iraqi women. The Iran-Iraq war, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Gulf War in 1991 and international sanctions throughout the 1990s had a devastating impact on society generally and women specifically” (Parry and Aymerich, 2018). A 2017 UN Women’s report stated that “as a result of the ongoing cycles of conflict in Iraq, women and girls have 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” (Swaine, 2017). Post-2003, Iraq has made limited progress in gender equality. “Women seeking employment outside the home have experienced threats and as a result reduced potential for income and employment opportunities; while violence against women, such as domestic violence has impacted their security” (Swaine, 2017). Further, a 2009 study reported that 55 percent of Iraqi women respondents had experiences of violence in public spaces, domestic violence, and sexual abuse (Swaine, 2017).

In post-conflict Iraq, women struggle to be involved in peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives. There is a limited representation of women in decision-making bodies, as societal and institutional factors curtail their involvement. “Women’s human rights activists who have established advocacy and support services in response have experienced violence, kidnapping, assassination, threats, and intimidation” (Swaine, 2017). Hanadi Attieh, a member of the Iraqi Prime Minister’s Office, stated that “the institutionalized resistance of women’s voices [is at] the highest levels of power” (Al-Kadi and Vale, 2020). Further, she asserts that “the ascension of women in the public sphere has been admonished and dejected. Prior to the May 2018 elections, hoax, sexual films were published in order to discredit female candidates by Salafi-Jihadist groups” (Al-Kadi and Vale 2020).

IRAQ’S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

In 2014, Iraq became the first country in the Middle East and North African region to develop a [National Action Plan](#) (NAP) on UNSCR 1325. The NAP consists of six pillars:

Participation; Protection and Prevention; Promotion; Social and Economic Empowerment; Legislation and Law Enforcement; Resource Mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation. "Iraq's National Action Plan acknowledges that despite the instrumental contribution made by Iraqi women during periods of conflict, they have not achieved equal representation or participation in decision-making bodies" (Parry and Aymerich, 2018). The NAP provided a four-year map for Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government that encompassed "national-level political reform, electoral reform, legal reform and improved networks of communication between women's rights organizations and government institutions" (Parry and Aymerich, 2018). While Jordan and Palestine have established subsequent NAPS, the "Iraq plan is the only plan that elaborates reference to different identities of women with the narrative that frames the NAP-WPS document," such as raped and assaulted women, and vulnerable groups such as the poor, unemployed, widows, and internally displaced" (Swaine, 2017).

This section aimed to provide readers with the background knowledge necessary to understand the role of the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq and the policies that govern their actions in relation to the WPS agenda. The following section will outline the policy problem this report attempts to address and identify the three research questions that guided the literature review and interviews conducted with subject-matter experts.

POLICY PROBLEMS

The initial problem presented by the Dallaire Centre of Excellence (COE) to understand the differing perspectives of stakeholders. The Dallaire Centre recognizes that when working in international contexts, the Canadian Armed Forces need to understand how key stakeholders, specifically civil society organizations, interpret the principles of UNSCR 1325.

While the CAF's mandates are based on the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda upon the C-NAP and the CDS Directive, military doctrine such as the 2017 Defence Policy, contributes to significant differences in the ways in which the terms and underlying conceptualization of the agenda are treated. COE and the research team agreed to focus the research on the perspectives of international and Iraqi CSOs. Additionally, areas of possible gaps and disconnect are to be identified, as well as how to integrate the perspectives of CSOs to provide a way forward for the CAF in terms of strengthening its WPS commitments and relationships with stakeholders.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of human security in achieving the objectives of the 2017-2022 Canadian National Action Plan by the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq, and what barriers, if any, exist in the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda?
2. Why are the relationships between the CAF and women's CSOs resulting in a disconnect of goals for engendering Iraq's peace and stabilization?
3. How can barriers to engagement be eliminated? And how can relationships be better facilitated between Canadian gender advisors and Iraqi CSOs?

LITERATURE REVIEW

While UNSCR 1325 was unanimously adopted by the Security Council in 2000, scholars indicate that there is still progress to be made. This section will explore scholarly discourse ranging from anti-militarist critiques of the WPS agenda to the construction and implementation of NAPs situated within local contexts. Scholars such as Bastick (2009), Cook (2016), and Wright (2019) have critiqued how states have securitized UNSCR 1325 and question the role of militaries in implementing the objectives of the resolution. The concept of human security will be explored through the work of Barnes (2010), Bastick and Duncanson (2018), Hampson (2008), Oliveira et al. (2020), and Small (2013), with a specific focus on Canada's evolving adoption and re-adoption of the theory to help address research question #1: *What is the role of human security in achieving the objectives of the 2017-2022 Canadian National Action Plan by the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq, and what barriers, if any, exist in the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda?* The four pillars of UNSCR 1325 will be reviewed using the work of Coomaraswamy et al. (2015), Kirby and Shepherd (2016), and Oliveira et al. (2020) in conjunction with the Government of Canada policies on WPS to address research question #2: *Why are the relationships between the CAF and women's CSOs resulting in a disconnect of goals for engendering Iraq's peace and stabilization?* Finally, the barriers to participation will be examined through the work of Barnes (2010), Coomaraswamy (2015), and Paffenholz (2015) to address research question #3: *How can barriers to engagement be eliminated? And how can relationships be better facilitated between Canadian gender advisors and Iraqi CSOs?*

THE MILITARIZATION OF UNSCR 1325

Adoptions of the WPS agenda have been criticized for undermining its original feminist intents and goals. Sam Cook affirms, "concern has been expressed that the concept of gender has been entirely depoliticized and the holistic approach of the UNSCR 1325 reduced such that women continue to be portrayed primarily as victims" (2016). The portrayal of women and girls as victims was also a criticism of the first C-NAP. Hannah Wright writes that opponents of the WPS agenda critique it as a liberal vision of WPS enshrined in the UNSCRs that focuses on adding women to the military rather than transforming how nations understand and pursue international security from a gendered

lens (2019). She continues by stating that “feminists have argued that patriarchal gender norms, combined with other global structures such as capitalism, racism, and coloniality, play a role in causing, or at least normalizing and legitimizing, militarism and war” (Wright, 2019). This normalization and legitimization of militarism and war risks removing the WPS agenda from its feminist and anti-militarist roots.

Similarly, Oliveira et al. explore de-militarizing the agenda by drawing on Basu (2018) to state that protection is impossible in militarized security systems (2020). They continue by stating that “efforts to promote women and gender equality in peace support operations or state militaries may securitize the agenda” (Oliveira et al., 2020). Efforts such as increasing the number of women in the military are thus criticized as largely symbolic. Bastick and Duncanson argue that “even when described as ‘pacifying’ or ‘liberating’ missions, military interventions remain violent, for some feminists, often wars of extraction involving the logic of all war: opposition differentiation and the othering of peoples” (2018). Critics argue that some or all of the WPS agenda original goals have been co-opted by militaries which are inherently patriarchal and oppressive institutions.

Further, Bastick and Duncanson argue that “many feminist scholars view militaries as fundamentally inimical to feminism, institutions of destructive power and inherent misogyny” (2018). They further this argument by asserting that some feminists view militarized institutions as “hegemonic forms of masculinity privileging practices of violence and misogyny, [that are] combined with myths of heroic protection of vulnerable civilians” (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018). Coomaraswamy et al. state that “reliance on the use of force as the sole means of conflict resolution may, itself, actually create and perpetuate a cycle of violence” (2015). According to this perspective, women can never be fully equal in such an institution. “The challenges of routine workplace discrimination, the greater efforts women personnel must make to gain unit acceptance and the ways in which they are constructed as disruptive all undermine the argument that military participation represents increasing female equality” (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018). These arguments present the adoption of UNSCR 1325 by military institutions as antithetical to the original goals and intentions of the resolution.

Despite these arguments against female integration into the military, some feminists theorists argue that “if male soldiers see women in positions of agency and strength, it makes it more difficult for them to objectify and sexualize women” (Bastick and Duncanson 2018). Further, “women can change the military, making it more democratic, less hierarchical, more compassionate and more suited to the modern world; accordingly, women’s military participation provides opportunities for disruption, subversion and even transformation of the military” (Bastick and Duncanson 2018). Even if women do not change the patriarchal reality of the military, Wright argues that the institution provides women with international engagement opportunities. She states that although the UNSCR’s “focus on women may not do the work that feminist anti-militarists would like, they allow women in conflict situations to claim entitlements to services, protections, and representation, where otherwise need may go unmet” (Wright, 2019). Wright asserts that while there is every reason to be wary of militarized institutions co-opting the concepts of the agenda in ways that do not support feminist anti-militarized goals, “there is much to be gained from designing security policies based on a contextual understanding of masculinities and femininities, and their intersections with other structures of oppression” (Wright, 2019). Even though the original feminist goals of UNSCR 1325 have evolved, proponents agree that the involvement of military institutions can still serve and contribute to other societal goals.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

UNSCR 1325 is the result of decades of activism by women and civil society organizations worldwide. CSOs’ significance in adopting UNSCR 1325 is widely recognized and celebrated. Chaney defines civil society as “associational activities involving the family, non-governmental organizations, pressure groups, charities, community groups, social movements and campaigning organizations” (2016). He goes on to state that the Beijing Declaration is “explicit in its requirement that state signatories secure the participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, particularly women’s groups and networks and other non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations” (Chaney, 2016). CSOs provide spaces for women and girls to collaborate politically and economically to promote gender equality domestically and internationally. However, Oliveira et al. write, “there is a risk that Western countries hold a conception of empowerment that does not align with the realities of women on

the ground, furthering a top-down approach in the implementation of an agenda that many times fails to account for the most marginalized sectors of society” (2020). It is essential that when Western actors work with CSOs that they do not impose viewpoints that local women do not share. CSOs must be given the opportunity to lead these partnerships and set any agendas. Chaney states that civil society “is a social arena that is of pivotal significance to understanding contemporary gender relations because of its potential to challenge the largely male-dominated character of state institutions, and act as a source of pluralism and solidarity around norms of equality and rights, promote civility and be a locus for rights and recognition” (2016). Chaney furthers this argument by stating that civil society seeks to “advocate, politicize and provide services for women through representation and gendered claims-making while remaining cognizant of a history of marginalization and oppression” (2016).

Foreign actors need to carry the responsibility of helping further the mandates of local initiatives. “Local initiatives for building peace and promoting gender equality have usually been in place for a long time, often prior to the conflict itself. These initiatives are generally thought to fall within the ‘informal’ sphere and do not necessarily overlap or merge with the more formal initiatives once the peace mission arrives” (Barnes, 2010). Due to them falling outside the informal sphere, foreign actors fail to recognize their importance and the lived experiences of those involved. Local initiatives contain invaluable contexts and knowledge that are at risk of being overshadowed and overlooked by foreign peacekeepers and peacekeeping initiatives.

LOCALIZATION

Since the Security Council called on member states to implement WPS NAPs in 2004, there has been increased importance placed on the need to situate UNSCR 1325 within localized contexts. The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders defines the localization as a “people-based, bottom-up strategy based on the premise that local ownership and participation lead to more effective policy-making and implementation” (2018). The localization must be situated within intersectionality to ensure that women and girls’ experiences are not viewed as homogenous or universal. Localization relies on intersectionality to bring forth marginalized voices. Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran state that in Iraq, the term “local refers to women who have, or are assumed to have, first-hand experience of conflict, violence, or displacement” (2020). They warn that the local should

not be conceptualized within a hierarchy of national or global spaces but to think of these spaces as interconnected (Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran, 2020). Shweta Singh states that the agenda's actual translation relies upon transnational actors and local facilitators (2017). Further, "UNSCR 1325 recognizes women as both agents and victims," Singh argues that in post-war contexts, women "are *in between* victims and agents" (2017).

While there are significant bodies of research on the securitization of UNSCR 1325, the importance of civil society actors and the integration of local perspectives within NAPs, there exists a gap in the literature that examines these three within the participation pillar of UNSCR 1325. While there is plentiful research that focuses on the protection of women and girls, there is a lack of data on how militaries can increase local women's participation in peacebuilding processes. Addressing this gap can help answer what the role of human security is in achieving the C-NAP, and examining the presence of barriers that exist in the full participation of women in peacebuilding initiatives. The following section examines this question by drawing on human security to identify CSOs as critical stakeholders.

HUMAN SECURITY

This section answers research question #1: What is the role of human security in achieving the objectives of the 2017-2022 Canadian National Action Plan by the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq, and what barriers, if any, exist in the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda?

State-centric approaches to security "organize economies around producing weapons rather than civilian goods and absorb vast amounts of funding that could otherwise be spent on human security" (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018). However, in recent years, there has been an increased movement to adopt holistic security ideas that place the individual at the centre of security concerns. This has become known as human security (Barnes, 2010). The human security view is based on humanitarianism. It seeks to "deepen and strengthen international law, particularly regarding genocides and war crimes, and to abolish weapons that are especially harmful to civilians and non-combatants" (Hampson, 2008).

At the heart of this humanitarian approach is the idea that military interventions should improve the living conditions of those impacted or displaced by conflicts from their homes. Human security then seeks to broaden the concept of security to include economic and social forms of harm to individuals' overall livelihood and well-being. The inclusion of women into the military and their perspectives on peace and security are central to human safety. Nested within the human-centric approach to security is the idea that CSOs and NGOs are the most capable stakeholder in bringing about inclusive and enduring peace and security. The research shows a consistent pattern in support of this view. "Canada's presence on the UN Security Council during the time of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 was particularly critical, as its focus on human security issues was able to influence the discussions in the Council" (Barnes, 2010).

However, in practice, human security is also problematic in two key respects, and security continues to be a gendered concept. First, while focusing attention on the individual, it can also risk masking gender-differentiations in what it means to be secure. Second, it is not clear that the UN-directed understanding of any kind of security, including human security, that is incorporated into UN policies and programs, matches local perceptions of security" (Barnes, 2010). "The objective of human security is supposedly universal, but in reality, it is a highly subjective concept that varies greatly depending on the context and the individuals in context" (Barnes, 2010)

Human security became a defining doctrine of Lloyd Axworthy's time as Foreign Minister from 1996-2000 (Small, 2016). In 1996 Axworthy stated that "changing times have set for us a new broad agenda, which includes focusing on the security needs of individuals, in other words, on sustainable human security" (UN General Assembly, 1996). The 2000 report released by Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security*, defined human security as "freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety or lives" (Smith and Ajadi, 2020). It identified five priority areas: protection of civilians; peace support operations; conflict prevention; governance and accountability; and public safety (Smith and Ajadi, 2020). While it continued to grow and evolve under subsequent Liberal ministers, in 2006, the term was shelved by the Conservative government while "funding [was] slashed and Canada dropped out of sight internationally as a promoter of the concept" (Small, 2016). However, the term has returned under the current liberal government with the introduction of Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy Initiative.

FOUR PILLARS INTRODUCTION

The WPS agenda is thought of in four pillars: prevention; participation; protection; and relief and recovery. These pillars are equal in importance and are interlinked together to uphold UNSCR 1325. This section introduces these four pillars and provides references to them that exist within the second C-NAP. An examination of work by scholars such as Coomaraswamy et al. (2015) and Kirby and Shepherd (2016) provide statistical data to support each pillar's importance. The participation pillar is identified as having uneven operationalization and implementation compared to the other three pillars, and several barriers are identified to have caused this disruption.



Prevention Pillar

The prevention pillar is centred around preventing violence against women. It aims to prosecute "those responsible for violations of international law; strengthening women's rights under national law; and supporting local women's peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes" (United States Institute of Peace, 2021). In a like manner, the DND/CAF made an explicit commitment to protect and promote women's and girls' rights, achieve gender equality, and empower women and girls in conflict and post-conflict areas. More specifically, the CAF seek to protect women and girls in humanitarian settings by "upholding their sexual rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services" (Government of Canada, 2017). The UNSCR 1325 takes prosecutorial conception

and confrontational framing. It aims to prosecute those responsible for inflicting harm against women and girls. By contrast, the CAF adopt a rights-based approach towards preventing sexual violence against women and girls in fragile and conflict areas.

Protection Pillar

The protection pillar extends beyond conflict areas; it includes protecting women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in "emergency and humanitarian situations, such as in refugee camps" (United States Institute of Peace, 2021). While some of the women in Iraq may not necessarily be living in internally displaced camps, they undoubtedly face a humanitarian crisis resulting from violence and disease. DND/CAF appear to prefer the strengthening of the protection pillar through multilateral engagement. "DND/CAF's leadership ... advocates for the advancement of the WPS agenda when we engage bilaterally or in multi-national fora, including NATO and the UN" (Government of Canada, 2019). Thus, DND/CAF may need to consider an alternative strategy to better address humanitarian conditions under the protection pillar.

Participation Pillar

In 2014, 88 percent of all peace processes that included UN involvement had regular consultations with women's organizations (Coomaraswamy et al., 2015). However, Coomaraswamy et al. note that these consultations and meetings "are sometimes symbolic affairs-lacking thorough preparation, representativeness, and follow-up" (2015). Kirby and Shepherd write that "women's participation in peace agreements is higher than before the WPS agenda was inaugurated, and yet remains disappointing given initial ambitions" (2016). Coomaraswamy et al. cite the Graduate Institute in Geneva's 2011-2015 research study that found "in cases of women's participation and strong influence, an agreement was almost always reached (2015). Furthermore, the strong influence of women in negotiation processes also positively correlated with a greater likelihood of agreements being implemented" (Coomaraswamy et al., 2015). The study also found that "peace agreements are 64 percent less likely to fail when civil society representatives participate" (Coomaraswamy et al., 2015). Gender advisors acting as consultants between civil society organizations and militaries is an increasing trend in peacekeeping.

Women's full participation and inclusion are essential to every aspect of achieving and sustaining peace and stability within a community. The UNSCR 1325 "urges all actors to increase the participation of women and additionally incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts" (United States Institute of Peace, 2021). Involving women in peace negotiations contributes to a broader range of alternative solutions and promotes inclusivity and diversity of thoughts and opinions. "This enhances the ability of peacemakers to address a broader range of stakeholders and their concerns, which has proven to lead to more sustainable peace" (Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2021). However, Carvajal and Alvarez-Vanegas argue that UNSCR 1325 places a singular focus on women's formal participation and largely ignores informal processes in which women participate in peacebuilding (2019). While UNSCR 1325 provides guidance on how women should be included in peacebuilding initiatives, it does not adequately emphasize the need for informal participation methods to increase the inclusion of local and marginalized women and girls.

Per Canada's defence policy, [*Strong, Secure, Engaged*](#), women's participation is vital to achieving and sustaining peace, and has a tangible impact on the operational effectiveness of Canada's forces (Government of Canada, 2017). Women's participation is believed to increase and diversify the skillset, capacities, and competence among all personnel categories and improve peace and security tasks. Furthermore, "it enhances situational awareness and early-warning by facilitating outreach to women in communities and improves a military force's accessibility, credibility and effectiveness in working among local populations" (Government of Canada, 2017). In contrast, the participation of women as it is conceived in UNSCR 1325, prioritizes the positioning of women to participate in "mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations; and as Special Representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General" (United States Institute of Peace, 2021). The UNSCR's understanding of women's participation envisions women in critical institutions as having a pragmatic and transformative potential on peace and security. An "outcome approach drives this strategic positioning of women" (United States Institute of Peace, 2021). According to the UN, as cited in Oliveira et al., "Women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, it is argued, improves outcomes before, during and after conflict by contributing to the outcome of peace talks and the implementation and durability of peace agreements" (Oliveira et al., 2020).

Relief and Recovery Pillar

The relief and recovery pillar of the UNSCR 1325 calls for the increase of relief and recovery measures to respond to international crises through a gender-sensitive lens, including by respecting the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps and considering the needs of women and girls in the design of refugee camps and settlements (United States Institute of Peace, 2021). The pillar ensures that the specific relief needs of women and girls are addressed and met, particularly for vulnerable groups such as displaced women and girls, as well as survivors of sexual and gender based violence. Measures that promote economic, political and social empowerment build collective capacity for women and girls to participate in political processes such as peace accords and constitution writing. The relief and recovery pillar particularly highlights the interconnectedness of all pillars, as it relies upon the integration of prevention, participation, and protection to achieve progress.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

This section answers research question #3: How can barriers to engagement be eliminated? And how can relationships be better facilitated between Canadian gender advisors and Iraqi CSOs?

While UNSCR 1325 calls for women and civil society organizations' participation in peace processes under pillar two, this is difficult to achieve due to societal and institutional barriers. O'Reilly states that while NAPs and subsequent security council resolutions have focused on the protection pillar, participation and prevention have received less attention and focus (2019). Coomaraswamy et al. outline that "the logistical barriers to participation that women face cannot be ignored. For example, they may need to organize childcare, they may lack funds to travel, or they may require security to attend meetings" (2015). They argue that women's organizations are often politically marginalized, and additional measures must be enacted in order to elevate their visibility and abilities. Further, foreign actors risk perpetrating domestic misogyny through exaggerated respect for social norms, resulting in the exclusion of women's groups. Coomaraswamy et al. argue that these "social norms are not extended when it comes to the participation of other groups deemed crucial to successful political dialogue" (2015). Coomaraswamy et al. draw on the example of Syria to demonstrate how despite

negotiating cessations of hostilities and humanitarian access by the local women, Syrian women remain largely marginalized from formal peace processes and discussions (2015). Any initiatives to include civil society organizations' perspectives and integration must identify barriers to participation and implement necessary support structures to overcome such barriers.

In recent years there has been an increase in successful examples of support structures implemented to overcome barriers. Coomaraswamy et al. draw on the 2001-2005 Somali peace negotiations to demonstrate beneficial support structures implemented by foreign actors to engage women's groups successfully. They state that among these structures, some of the key successes were a "resource centre, fully equipped with computers, photocopiers, printers, and internet access" that provided women with the resources they needed for active participation (2015). Further, gender mediators in Kenya have helped meet women's organizations' needs by arranging meetings and acting as mediators as the groups formulated a joint memorandum of action (Coomaraswamy et al., 2015). Paffenholz similarly states that when foreign actors implement support structures such as workshops and training sessions, women's overall preparedness has been proven to increase and has contributed to civil society organizations pushing for more gender-specific goals (2015). Despite these examples of successful integration of civil society organizations in peace processes, there is room for increased actions. Barnes states that "while some positive changes have been made in terms of making token references to gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping mission mandates and setting up gender offices on the ground, much remains to be done" (2010).

The need to place Iraqi women in decision-making positions is evident. Women cannot affect the desired change in peace and security as their systematic exclusion persists. The literature review section demonstrates that increasing Iraqi women's participation and responding to their humanitarian needs will strengthen the relationship between the CAF and local CSOs. The participation pillar of the WPS in Iraq urgently needs to be addressed. Women's participation can transform how the CAF approach prevention, protection, and relief and recovery elements of peace and security.

FINDINGS

The findings section will provide interpretations and analysis of the three research questions. Various shortcomings in the CAF's working relationships with local CSOs are identified in this section.

Research Question 1: What is the role of human security in achieving the objectives of the 2017-2022 Canadian National Action Plan by the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq, and what barriers, if any, exist in the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda?

Human security and the human-centred approach to realize enduring peace and security were frequently mentioned by interview participants in direct relation to the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, consisting of prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. Most of the academic and civilian participants associated the role of the CAF with human security; discussions on the protection of women and girls closely intertwined with the protection of human lives and promotion of human well-being. A consensus was found across interviews that the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 are instrumental in advancing Canada's commitment to the WPS agenda, which aligns with the Canadian government's goal of becoming a "global leader in gender equality" (Oliveria et al., 2020).

One of the dominant themes of the human-centred approach to security is that CSOs are the most capable stakeholders in implementing inclusive and enduring peace and security. This understanding is in alignment with and is reinforced by a civilian Canadian government participant with direct experience with C-NAP, who stated that "CSOs are one of the most important, if not *the* most important, stakeholders to shape peace and security in a way that is inclusive and enduring." Under this framework, deployed military forces are expected to act as the enabling agency on the ground to set the conditions for achieving enduring peace and security.

The CAF's current operation mechanisms fail to give local CSOs the ability to define the working relationships between them. As a result, there are often misalignments in mandates between the CAF and local CSOs. A Canadian CSO participant provided an example in which military members developed negative sentiments when they were

required to accompany local CSOs on tasks that could be considered dangerous. “There was some degree of frustration about going on really dangerous operations because they find the values of the tasks to be questionable.” The Canadian CSO participant further suggested that “Iraqi CSOs ask people to pay attention to women’s roles in peace processes and other issues such as displacement, refugees and domestic violence. There are huge cultural, normative, and societal barriers that prevent women’s participation in different regions. Maybe they are beyond the CAF’s scope, but they can still be leveraging what capital they have to be able to support women’s role in peace processes.” Due to the CAF’s lack of localized outreach efforts, the working relationships between the CAF and local CSOs have been ineffective in increasing the meaningful participation of women and girls in Iraq.

There are differing perceptions towards military forces and government institutions among local Iraqis. One of the local CSOs interviewed suggested that local Iraqi women often view the Iraqi military as an agency of the government that adds obstacles to women’s meaningful participation. A long-time Iraqi women’s rights activist stated that

“Even at the organizational and labour union levels, there is more representation for men than women. There are few opportunities for women. It seems as if society does not trust women. Women are not put in leadership positions. Even in basic functions such as school principals, there are hardly any women. There are no women in executive positions in organizations and institutions of the state. It is always men who take leadership positions, including the state’s institutions, such as the parliament.”

The Iraqi military and government institutions often discriminate against women and exclude women from operational and decision-making processes. A participant from an international peacebuilding CSO stated that there is a deficit of trust between local CSOs and the Iraqi military due to histories of abuse, lack of accountability and gender discriminations.

While there is also a particular bias against foreign military forces, local Iraqis tend to favour the CAF and Canadian institutions. The Iraqi women’s rights activist explained that Canada’s absence from the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq might explain the positive sentiments towards Canadian institutions. Some local Iraqi women also share the view

that the increasing number of female CAF members in Iraq will support skill transfer and experience sharing, further strengthening Iraqi women's formal and informal participation in peace and security activities. The Iraqi activist also expressed their wish that Canada's presence and engagements in Iraq could nudge the Iraqi government towards stronger gender inclusivity and gender mainstreaming. However, due to the CAF's direct engagement with the Iraqi military and government, there is a risk for a negative perception against military forces, in general, to be extended onto the CAF in the future.

Research Question 2: Why are the relationships between the CAFs and women's CSOs resulting in a disconnect of goals for engendering Iraq's peace and stabilization?

CSO Perspectives

When interviewing CSOs, the theme of localization was present across interviews. A CSO that regularly engages with local Iraqi women stated that "localization not only leads to more inclusive implementation, but it can also feed back into more inclusive NAPs in the future." The localization of NAPs allows for marginalized women and girls' perspectives in peacebuilding processes. When NAPs promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, human security becomes a focus of the plan. The CSO further stated that groups of women and girls, including widows, child brides, refugees, those who are internally displaced, and live in rural areas, are all affected differently by conflict. The forefront of intersecting identities is supported by Shepherd (2007) and Singh (2017), who emphasize that gender is not homogenous and that a focus on the lived experiences of women and girls need to be included in these conversations. In Iraq, gender is intersected with religion, ethnicity, class, age, occupation, sexual identity, marital status, and political beliefs. Therefore, Iraqi women's experiences are all different given the varying societal, cultural, economic, and spatial spaces they occupy. Further, Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran point to the creation of local action plans for some Iraqi governorates by CSOs as a good place for the concerns of local women and girls to be heard and addressed in a more specific way (2020). A CSO who works on localization supported this technique, as it promotes collaboration with local officials, such as mayors, in peacebuilding processes as a way to integrate intersectional identities.

While collaborating with local officials on increasing women's participation during peacebuilding is an ideal practice, a CSO interviewee indicated that this process could

be extremely difficult due to Iraq having one of the lowest levels of women's political and economic participation. They stated that women and other marginalized groups are excluded "from local government participation due to cultural stigmas, widespread insecurity, or just something as accessing transportation to be able to participate in a town hall meeting or to meet with local officials." To address the barriers that women can face in meaningful participation, the Canadian International Research Development Centre has identified that opportunities for "women-only meetings, compensating women for attendance, and establishing gender quorums in local service committees, user groups, planning processes, and similar institutions," can improve the participation of women in decision-making processes (2008). This is supported by several CSOs interviewed, who similarly identified that additional measures such as women-only meetings or compensation for participants' time and contributions can increase Iraqi women's participation. Other measures, such as establishing a bus that connected a rural area to the town, were identified by an interview participant as positively affecting local women's turnout to peacebuilding events in Georgia (2008). CSOs with on-the-ground knowledge and established relationships with local women are best positioned to identify potential barriers to political processes with local officials.

Multiple CSOs and a human rights journalist interviewed all expressed concern over Iraqi women and girls' urgent humanitarian needs. A specific emphasis on sexual and gender-based violence is a common trend amongst the data as interviewees highlighted that neither the Iraq government nor foreign actors adequately addressed it. Aljazeera reports that since the onset of COVID-19, domestic violence has increased by about 20 percent across the country (2021). One CSO stated that increased access to resources and support services must become available for sexual and gender-based violence survivors. The availability and access to psychological and mental health support were underlined as necessary in aiding Iraqi women's ability to participate in peacebuilding meaningfully. Further, holding perpetrators of gender and sexual violence responsible was also identified as a critical component of post-conflict reconstruction.

Even when women can participate in peacebuilding processes, their expertise and lived experiences are often minimized. A CSO participant that has worked extensively in Iraq stated that "women peacebuilders and activists are routinely chronically undervalued as experts. They are experts, and they know their stuff. But they are not seen as such. They are seen as victims. They are very rarely appreciated for their expertise." Shepherd's

scholarly work supports this statement and further argues that even at the international level, UNSCR 1325 portrays women and girls either as victims or agents, but not both (2007). These findings indicate that it is essential for the Canadian Armed Forces to value Iraqi women's lived experiences and call upon them as experts in the field.

For foreign actors, navigating the local context is fraught with practical and logistical constraints. Identifying local, marginalized women is difficult due to limited relationships with diverse Iraqi civilians. Women who live in rural areas or internally displaced persons camps can be inaccessible due to increased travel and security risks outside of central cities. Local CSOs and Iraqi activists have reported being subject to the government's threats, intensifying widespread distrust and fear of openly collaborating with foreign actors. Further, CSO interviewees identified constraints such as access to funding, internet access, computer availability, and lack of transportation options as common inhibitors to local women's participation.

CAF Perspectives

Although heavy consultation processes are incorporated during both the creation and implementation processes of C-NAP, there is an apparent disconnect and insufficient direct communication and engagement between the CAF and local CSOs. According to a Canadian CSO participant, "there was very heavy consultation with civil society in the lead up to the drafting of the action plan. Our primary civil society partners are Canada-based, with the main one being the Women, Peace, and Security Network of Canada, who have connections with CSOs overseas." Despite having access to a wide range and network of individual activists and international CSOs, the regular and extensive communication with CSOs during the consultation process is mainly conducted through those who operate domestically.

One of C-NAP's high-level objectives includes "increasing the meaningful participation of women, women's organizations and networks in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict state-building" (Government of Canada, 2017). Although the CAF's planning and execution processes incorporate local CSOs, there are contrasting views on where the burden of outreaching responsibilities lies. A CAF participant of senior ranking indicated that the "military is deployed to Iraq to support and help, but it is difficult for us to understand the needs and the environment of the

local community. CSOs do understand what is required for CAF to help, but a lot of them do not want to get involved with the military; but if there is no communication between CSOs and the military, then the military can not understand their needs and problems.” The lack of formal communication channels affects the CAF’s efforts in encouraging meaningful participation of local CSOs in peace and security activities.

The existence of technical barriers further limits the CAF and local CSOs’ meaningful communication and engagement. Both the CAF and CSO participants indicated that there are difficulties in arranging in-person meetings between the parties on non-military grounds due to security concerns. Civilian access to military bases is often highly restricted, whereas the CAF personnel also have limited liberties in conducting off-base activities. Furthermore, off-base meetings between local CSOs and the CAF are often accompanied by heavy security protections and conducted under strict schedules, thus interfering with these meetings’ quality and effectiveness. Furthermore, the CAF and local CSOs often do not share the same language. The language barrier can inhibit fruitful dialogue and future communications. On rare occasions, local CSOs and the CAF can arrange in-person meetings on the premises of a third-party embassy or other diplomatic establishments.

Research Question 3: How can barriers to engagement be eliminated? And how can relationships be better facilitated between Canadian gender advisors and Iraqi CSOs?

Gender advisor positions within the CAF’s organizational structure ensure the effective implementation of WPS objectives and the adoption of gender perspectives in all planning and execution processes. Gender advisors and other gender advisory positions were identified by the CAF and CSO participants as the primary source of support in the CAF’s implementation of WPS objectives in Iraq. Most gender advisor candidates come from military backgrounds and often lack previous working or studying experience in gender-related fields. Previous gender advisors have been tackling the responsibilities of incorporating a gender perspective into operational effectiveness and community outreach in tandem. However, due to the negative perceptions of the CAF’s direct engagement with the Iraqi military, gender advisors’ community engagement efforts have been significantly undermined. With experience training gender advisors, one interviewee stated that the CAF should have both a civilian gender advisor and a military gender advisor working in tandem on all operations. They identified the

opportunity to have civilian practical experience and knowledge on gender theories alongside military practical experiences and expertise on military theories to create inclusive understandings of contextual difficulties on the ground.

CAF, CSO and academic participants expressed that there is limited availability of gender and cultural training courses for CAF's deployed personnel and gender advisors. Participants explained that most training courses on gender and culture are primarily available through NATO's online training platform or foreign military forces. While all CAF members are required to complete training on the WPS agenda and GBA+ framework, the training available is available in an online module that lacks the opportunity for interactions and discourse between members while learning the subject. The training program on gender is limited to the institutional application and basic understanding of the WPS agenda. The two-week special training program for gender advisor candidates that focuses on gender mainstreaming in operational processes is only offered via the Nordic Centre for Gender and Military Operations in Sweden. A CAF participant with previous gender advising experience informed the research team that "one of the feedback we have gained from academics and CSOs is that they wish Canada had its version of the Nordic Centre." At the present stage, overseas travelling is often required for CAF members to complete gender-based training courses. Canada is only offered limited seats to these training programs each year, which further restricts the number of Canadian personnel who can receive such training.

The lack of gender-based training courses interferes with the CAFs' efforts in advising the Iraqi military forces. A former RCMP gender advisor shared their experience in sourcing gender-training course materials from Australia. Since the CAF do not offer domestic gender training courses for foreign military officials, the gender advisor arranged an opportunity for two Iraqi women to participate in Australia's gender advisory training program via Global Affairs Canada. The two Iraqi women's financial costs were waived through the gender advisor's personal connection with an Australian gender advisor. Upon returning, the course materials were translated into Arabic by the two participants and were offered to Iraqi military personnel of all rankings. Although the initiative was not part of the CAF's mission mandates at the time, the gender advisor's efforts directly increased the meaningful participation of women within the Iraqi military and government.

Both the CAF and CSO participants indicated that there were limited opportunities for the two groups to convene. Across the gender advisors interviewed, interactions with local CSOs were reported to occur 1-3 times during their assignment duration. Assignments are between 6 months to a year long. Neither gender advisors from the CAF nor NATO identified quotidian interaction with local women and girls as part of their duties. An international CSO identified a practice by the Chad National Army that consists of officers inviting local women activists onto their headquarters several times a year to hear and engage directly with this population as a positive solution to overcoming some participation barriers. Similarly, scholar Landgren highlights the annual *Open Days on Women, Peace, and Security* held by the heads of UN peace operations since 2010 (Landgren, 2019) as another example of increased participation measures. These annual Days allow for senior mission leadership to participate in “structured, regular engagement with local communities, including women, youth, religious and other leaders who can provide feedback to the mission on its work” (Landgren, 2019). Further, the use of oral histories that have been compiled by and with local populations has proven to be another effective measure to increase participation (Landgren, 2019). According to data published by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, in 2014, approximately 26.4 percent of Iraqi women were illiterate, while in rural areas, 50 percent of women aged 15 to 24 years old were also illiterate (UNESCO, 2014). Therefore, the use of oral histories can provide opportunities to women who may be left out of participating in peacebuilding processes due to a lack of reading and writing skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings gathered during interviews with subject-matter experts and an in-depth literature review, the report recommends the following:

Recommendation 1: Create communication strategies and informational and transitional channels between local CSOs and the CAF to support the consistent involvement of local CSOs in the planning and execution of CAF operations

To effectively and consistently engage with local CSOs, the CAF's gender advisors are recommended to develop localized long-term communication and engagement strategies every five years in alignment with the publication of future C-NAPs. The established strategies should incorporate job transition mechanisms to ensure the smooth transition of progress and information to withstand the frequent and perpetual rotations of gender-advisory positions.

The CAF are recommended to address the existing barriers by increasing communication channels with CSOs. The CAF should address technical barriers by ensuring participants and CSOs have internet capabilities and regular access to computers. CSOs should identify logistical barriers such as transportation, and the CAF should provide mediation as necessary. Communication channels, including recurring meetings, information and feedback sharing mechanisms, are recommended to be established. Security barriers should be addressed to balance the need to protect military personnel and civilian participants from potential government backlash and the need to have neutral spaces to conduct meetings between the two parties.

The CAF are recommended to replicate their own version of the UN Open Days on Women, Peace, and Security several times a year to create further opportunities for Iraqi women to engage with Canadian personnel. When security concerns prevent the CAF and CSOs from meeting in person, the CAF should dedicate efforts to supporting the collection of oral histories by and with the local population as a measure to increase local women's participation.

Recommendation 2: Establish pre-deployment background learning requirements, at-deployment outreach commitments and reporting mechanisms for gender advisors

Gender advisors, as part of the job transition mechanisms, are recommended to conduct pre-deployment research to identify and fully understand the existing barriers to local CSOs' full participation during peace and security activities. The pre-deployment research should incorporate a thorough review of the emerging and existing local CSOs, their mandates and contextual experiences on the ground.

While deployed, gender advisors are recommended to establish outlined commitments to meet with CSO representatives every month. Gender advisors are also recommended to create bi-annual reports on consultation and outreach findings and detailed action plans on how the CAF and the gender advisor may help eradicate existing barriers in local CSOs' full participation in peace and security activities. Furthermore, gender advisors are recommended to draft and release documentation and findings reports when the CAF participate in the institution's own version of the UN Open Days on Women, Peace, and Security; similar reports are also recommended to be created to document the CAF's participation in oral histories collection activities.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality and increase the availability of gender-based and cultural training courses

Beyond the existing scope of basic WPS agenda and GBA+ framework training, the CAF is recommended to incorporate stronger gender-sensitivity training and cultural training materials as part of its mandatory pre-deployment training courses. Gender sensitivity and cultural training are also recommended to be delivered in conjunction with other operational training courses to ensure the knowledge provided is both institutionalized and operationalized.

Recommendation 4: Discard the double-hatted structure of gender advising, and establish co-leadership positions consisting of civilian and military gender advisors to work in tandem on missions.

While having a military background is beneficial for the gender advising position within the CAF, it is recommended that the CAF also consider candidates from non-military backgrounds to diversify and strengthen the impacts of the roles and responsibilities of gender advisors. Candidates with transferable experience in engaging with CSOs must be prioritized for the civilian stream of gender advisors. By establishing the co-leadership positions, the civilian gender advisor may improve the capabilities and effectiveness of the CAF's community engagement and outreach commitments. The two gender advisors are expected to work in tandem to enhance the prevalence of gender perspective in the CAF's planning and execution of peace and security activities.

Recommendation 5: Establish a Canadian Centre for Gender Advising Training

The CAF is recommended to develop and offer its version of the Nordic Centre's gender training program to reduce reliance on foreign military forces' resources and reduce access barriers. Canada's gender advisor training courses are expected to include contextualized gender perspectives and intersectionality within the Canadian domestic realm. All the CAF members may use the knowledge to set the conditions for enduring peace and security in future operations.

CONCLUSION

Interviewees acknowledged the CAFs' conscious efforts to adopt the aspirational objectives of UNSCR 1325 by using the four pillars as guiding principles in operation planning and execution processes. In achieving a more inclusive implementation of the WPS agenda, the primacy of the human-centric approach to security was frequently mentioned by interviewees. It is a shared consensus among interviewees that the CAF's current implementation of the WPS agenda has shortcomings in supporting local women's participation due to a lack of localized approaches. This is supported by a common theme that emerged across interviews, indicating limited engagement opportunities and a lack of communication channels between the CAF and local CSOs. Societal, cultural and logistical barriers were identified to have been most substantially undermining local women's participation in peacebuilding operations. Furthermore, in strengthening the CAFs' capabilities and effectiveness in engaging with local CSOs, interviewees indicated the presence of shortcomings within the CAF's current gender advising structure. Interviewees also frequently emphasized the need to enhance the accessibility and availability of CAF's domestic gender-based training programs.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research is recommended to be conducted to encourage the Iraqi military and government to become more receptive towards increasing the meaningful participation and inclusion of women and other marginalized groups in peace and security planning.

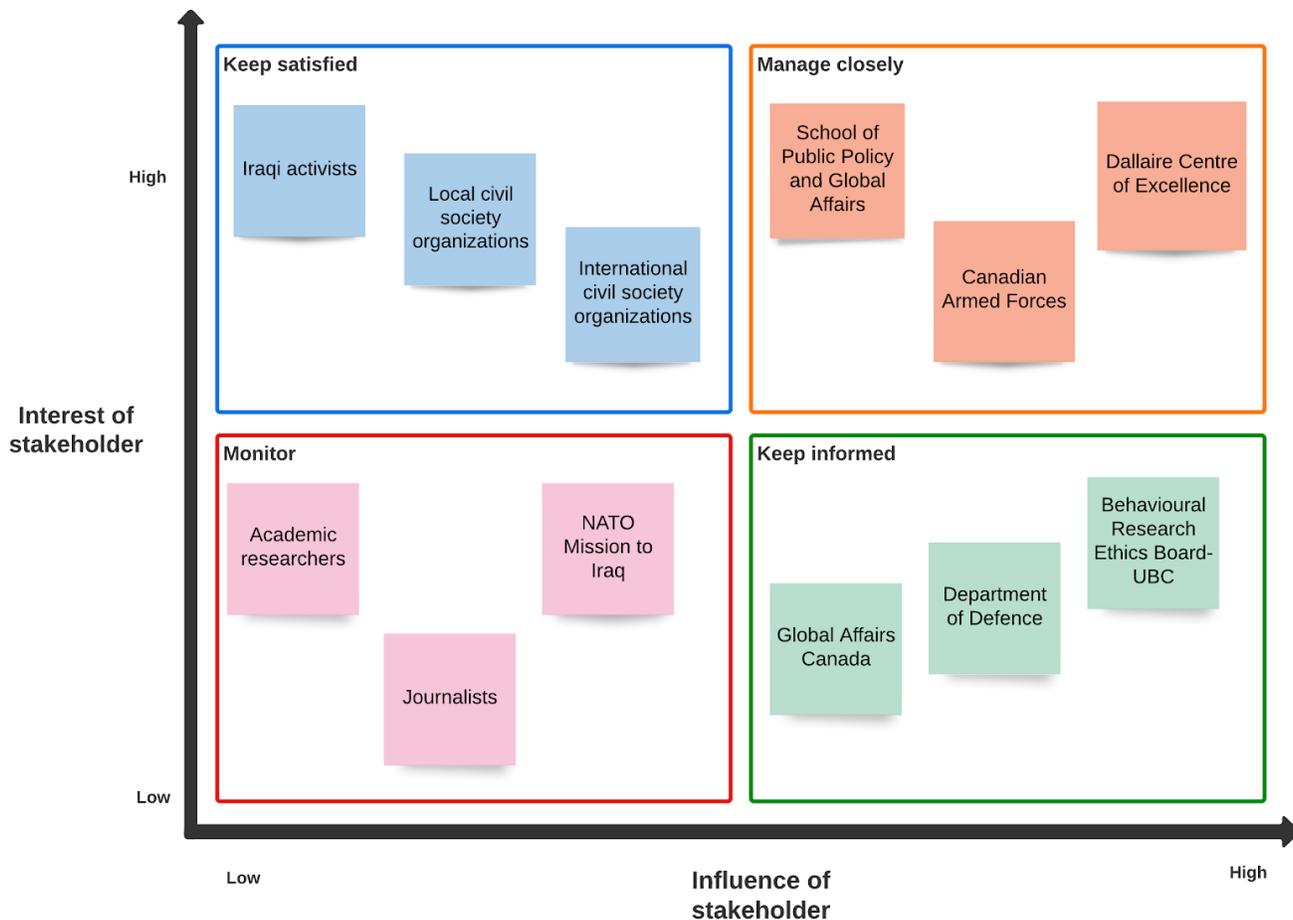
Since Operation IMPACT is winding down and the CAF is slowly reducing the number of deployed personnel, there is a need for transitional strategies that place women's participation front and centre. Future research is required to examine the possibilities of making such transitional strategies a success.

Many perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence have not been brought to justice in Iraq. Future research needs to be conducted to identify the needs of survivors of sexual and gender based violence, and analyze avenues for the pursuit of transitional justice. If the CAF is to have a successful transition out of the country, it must determine how it can build women's capacity to drive the justice process, alleviate grievances, and rebuild trust.

METHODOLOGY

The research team used a two-part mixed-methods approach to collect primary and secondary qualitative data from various sources.

PHASE I consisted of a case study on Operation IMPACT, a preliminary literature review, and key stakeholders' mapping. The team identified the Dallaire Centre of Excellence, the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, and the Canadian Armed Forces as primary stakeholders in the project. Iraqi activists, local CSOs, and international CSOs were identified as having high interest but low influence in the outcome of the report. Global Affairs Canada, Department of Defence, and the Behavioural Research Ethics Board of UBC were identified as having low interest but high influence. Academic researchers, journalists, and NATO Mission Iraq were identified as having lower interest and lower influence in the outcome of the report. The research team first conducted a literature review to examine C-NAP and WPS objectives within the CAF and identified Operation IMPACT as an illustrative case study to lead the empirical inquiries. A brief comparative analysis was conducted between the C-NAP and the Iraqi NAP to reflect on the various interpretations and priorities of women's CSOs in Iraq, which helped identify the research questions. The case study on Operation IMPACT investigated Canada's ability to implement WPS through the C-NAP in a real-life context and served as an in-depth investigation that explored identified research questions. The preliminary literature review included the 2017-2022 C-NAP, annual progress reports by C-NAP leaders including the Department of Defence, 2014-2018 Iraq NAP, WPS-Network Canada consultation reports, NATO operation planning guides and strategic directives, women's CSO reports, as well as a range of academic and non-academic articles published by the Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian and non-Canadian scholars and authors. The literature review drew on GBA+ informed by the WPS perspective as an interpretive framework. Key information and findings from literature reviews were reorganized using qualitative coding software. Relevant actors and stakeholders were identified and analyzed to compare and contrast mandates, objectives, and timelines pertaining to security sector reform and stabilization in Iraq.



PHASE II consisted of subject-matter expert interviews with domestic and international stakeholders on the challenges of implementing the WPS agenda within Iraq. Identified relevant actors and stakeholders were categorized into five broad categories: academic scholars or WPS professionals, Canadian military personnel, civilian Canadian government officials, Iraqi women’s CSOs and international women’s or WPS CSOs. A total of 15 interviews were conducted, including four academic scholars, two Canadian military personnel, two civilian Canadian government officials, three local Iraqi CSO representatives, and three international CSO representatives. Scheduled 45-minute interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom. All interviewees received and signed written consent forms before the interviews, whereby they agreed to participate in the research study. The research team reiterated the research goals and ensured participants’ willingness to participate in the interview before the interviews’ commencing. Each interview was documented through written notes and audio/visual recordings based on the interviewee’s consent. Arabic translation was provided by team member Muhi Bakini

when requested by an interviewee. The interpretation and analysis of data collected consisted of three stages. First, the audio recordings of the interviews were distributed among team members for transcription. Group members studied the transcriptions individually and input data points into qualitative coding software for coding. Secondly, team members collectively decided on common themes and patterns from the interviews by sharing and discussing individual findings. Thirdly, findings and recommendations were developed collectively using the reorganized and structured data.

LIMITATIONS

There are certain limitations of the research and data analysis presented in this report, which readers should consider.

COVID-19

Although fieldwork would have unlikely to occur in Iraq, the Covid-19 pandemic removed all possibilities of travelling or conducting in-person activities. Therefore, all research activities, team collaborations, client consultations and interviews were conducted virtually. While Zoom and other digital platforms provided necessary means for virtual connections, time zone differences and other technical barriers may have hindered communication quality.

MILITARY CONFIDENTIALITY

Due to the military industry's nature, the research team had limited access to classified documents, such as meeting records, ledgers, and information about operation details on the ground pertaining to Operation IMPACT. The team also indicates that there may be a lack of transparency due to the culture of the military institutions. However, the qualitative data gathered from CAF interviewees have been cross-referenced to eliminate biased factors or information.

SAMPLING METHODS

Due to the constraints of working with vulnerable populations, interview candidates did not include local Iraqi communities. The research team gained access to interviewees primarily through the Dallaire Centre of Excellence, faculty leads at the University of British Columbia and team members' connections. The research team acknowledges the oversampling of female interviewees during the primary research process. Among all participants, only two male interviewees were included. The majority of the interviewees have experience working for CSOs, whereas only two CAF members and one RCMP member were included in the primary research process. As a result, there is the potential for sampling bias within the qualitative data collected and analyzed.

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CLIENT PROFILE

The Dallaire Centre of Excellence (COE) for Peace and Security was established within the Canadian Defence Academy (CDA) on June 25th, 2019. It is expected to achieve initial operating capability in 2020 and full operational capability in 2021, with 13 civilian and 4 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members organized in three functional areas and located in Ottawa, Kingston, and Toronto. COE's core mandate is to develop concepts, support relevant research, sponsor doctrinal changes, and capture lessons learned and best practices in supporting CAF training and education.

Notably, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers is COE's initial area of focus. The intersection of United States Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) intersects with Vancouver Principle #11: To recognize the essential contribution of women to operational peacekeeping effectiveness and the distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Research staff are currently developing a more comprehensive understanding of the WPS agenda and the linkages to other topics, including children and armed conflict, sexual exploitation and abuse, conflict-related sexual violence, the protection of civilians, and human security.

STUDENT PROFILE

Claudia Kobetitch has a BA in Political Science and English Literature from UBC and is currently completing her second year of the MPPGA program. Claudia has worked in policy analysis for Canadian and US government agencies. She has been a research assistant with the First Nations House of Learning at UBC for the past year. In 2019, she was selected as a member of the MPPGA Case Study Team, where she competed at the National Public Policy Case Study Competition in Quebec City. Claudia is the mentor to the first year MPPGA statistics course, where she holds weekly office hours to assist students in their studies. Visit her LinkedIn profile [here](#).

Travis Liu graduated from the Smith School of Business at Queen's University in 2018. Despite being a full-time Commerce student, Travis dedicated a significant portion of his time studying and researching the fields of global affairs and international relations. Travis spent his third-year exchange opportunity at Queen's University's Bader International Study Centre in the U.K. Throughout his undergrad, Travis spent one year working for a Fortune 500 consulting firm, Accenture Strategy, on various marketing and operation consulting projects. Visit his LinkedIn profile [here](#).

Muhaladin Bakini completed a BA in Political Science and TESL from the University of Fraser Valley in 2018 while also working as Life Insurance Agent for the World Financial Group. After graduating, Muhaladin joined the Universal Learning Institute in Coquitlam, British Columbia as an ESL Instructor. Before coming to Canada in 2012, he had lived and worked in both Egypt and Israel for eight years. There, Muhaladin worked as a volunteer translator at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Australian Embassy, and he speaks Nubian, Arabic, Hebrew, and English. Currently, Muhaladin is specializing in energy and resources governance policies and their combined impacts on human security. Visit his LinkedIn profile [here](#).

GLOSSARY

Civil Society Organizations: Refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations, labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations (World Bank, n.d.a)

Gender Equality: Refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men and gender-diverse people. Equality refers to the state of being equal, while equity refers to the state of being just, impartial or fair (Government of Canada, 2017)

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+): Gender-based Analysis Plus is an analytical tool that assesses how diverse groups of women, men, and non-binary people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives. It acknowledges that factors including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability needs to be included in assessments (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2017).

Gender Mainstreaming: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997)

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV): Gender-based violence(GBV) is violence perpetrated against someone based on their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender. Specifically, GBV includes any act of violence or abuse that can result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering. Sexual violence is the prevalent type of GBV. Sexual violence in conflict includes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, or abortion (Government of Canada, 2017).