

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER 2015

SUBMISSION BY THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM (AUSTRALIA)

Summary

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) began in April 1915 when women from both sides of the conflict met in The Hague to try and bring about an end to the war. This makes us the oldest women's peace organisation in the world, with our 100th Anniversary coinciding exactly with the ANZAC Gallipoli campaign.

This submission points to the contribution that gender equality makes to the prevention and recurrence of armed conflict and to a just and peaceful society. It addresses two of the six key questions in the Issues Paper:

- Are Defence's policy settings current and accurate?
- How can we enhance international engagement on defence and security issues?

Gender inclusion is becoming recognised as a central component of peace operations. In 2012 the Australian Government produced a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2012-2018 (NAP). The NAP provides the strategy for the implementation of UN Security Council [Resolution 1325](#) (2000) and the six subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security making up the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

The NAP brings together actors across the Australian Government (Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Civil Military Centre and the Australian Federal Police) and civil society to ensure that both domestically and when we act overseas, Australia listens to and includes the voices of women in peace and security initiatives. In the range of initiatives that have been undertaken in the two years of the NAP, the Department of Defence has made significant contributions to its implementation. By choosing to demonstrate its full commitment to the goals, strategies and actions of the NAP in the 2015 Defence White Paper, the Department of Defence will be able to clearly and succinctly explain the priority and commitment given to gender equality, conflict prevention and long-term sustainable peace.

The submission makes the following recommendations:

- (1) Recommendation on conflict prevention and peacebuilding: We recommend that much greater efforts and resources be put into conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs in order to reduce the need for military intervention.**
- (2) Recommendation on training and use of peace negotiators: We recommend that more resources be directed towards the training and use of peace negotiators and peace negotiations.**
- (3) Recommendation on participation of women: We recommend that the implementation of Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security be fully resourced and that the implementation be done in full cooperation with diplomatic, aid, development and international policing efforts in order to provide a comprehensive approach to peace processes.**

Introduction

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) began in April 1915 when more than 1,000 women from both sides of conflict met in The Hague to try and bring about an end to the war. This makes WILPF the oldest women's peace organisation in the world and our 100th Anniversary coincides exactly with the ANZAC Gallipoli campaign. WILPF works towards ending and preventing war, to ensure that women are represented at all levels in peace-building processes, to defend women's human rights and to promote social, economic and political justice.

Gender inclusion is becoming recognised as a central component of peace operations. In 2012 the Australian Government produced a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2012-2018 (NAP). The NAP provides the strategy for the implementation of UN Security Council [Resolution 1325](#) (2000) and the six subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security: [Resolution 1820](#) (2008), [Resolution 1888](#) (2009), [Resolution 1889](#) (2009), [Resolution 1960](#) (2010) and [Resolution 2106](#) (2013) and [Resolution 2122](#) (2013). Together these make up the international Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.

The NAP brings together actors across the Australian Government (Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Civil Military Centre and the Australian Federal Police) and civil society to ensure that both domestically and when we act overseas, Australia listens to and includes the voices of women in peace and security initiatives. The Department of Defence is a major contributor to the success of the NAP. In the range of initiatives that have been undertaken in the two years of the NAP, the Department of Defence has made significant contributions to its implementation. WILPF believes that the Department of Defence has an opportunity to make real changes nationally and abroad by adopting the strategies and actions of the NAP. By choosing to demonstrate its commitment to the goals, strategies and actions of the NAP in the 2015 Defence White Paper, the Australian Defence Force will be able to clearly and succinctly explain the priority and commitment given to gender equality and long-term sustainable peace.

Are Defence's policy settings current and accurate?

For existing, intractable conflicts, such as the Middle East, the solutions are more political than military. These modern conflicts are conflicts of ideas. They require understanding of the 'enemy' and new, thoughtful, strategies devised and that see military force as an extreme last, not early, intervention.

The dynamics of conflicts are varied and complicated. There is no one answer to preventing violent conflict occurring or resolving it once it has started. It is essential that conflict assessments be carried out, including assessments of the gender dimensions of the conflicts, to determine and understand the factors involved. As part of this process, impact assessments need be carried out thoroughly to analyse and assess the effects of interventions, including the impact on women. These actions would then contribute to the development of effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies and inform peacebuilding efforts.

With this in mind, we would like to see greater emphasis put on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The overall aim of peacebuilding is to transform conflicts constructively and to achieve a sustainable peace without the need, or at least minimal need, of military intervention.

It is essential that peace negotiations be conducted by fully trained experts, with equal representation by both women and men at all levels of the negotiations, and in environments where all participants feel safe from physical danger and coercion.

- 1. Recommendation on conflict prevention and peacebuilding: We recommend that much greater efforts and resources be put into conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs in order to reduce the need for military intervention.**
- 2. Recommendation on training and use of peace negotiators: We recommend that more resources be directed towards the training and use of peace negotiators and peace negotiations.**

How can we enhance international engagement on defence and security issues?

Participation of women: UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security, adopted in 2000, and the later UNSCR 2122 adopted in 2013, focus on the impact of armed conflict on women but, more importantly, on the participation of women in peace processes. For comprehensive peace agreements to be reached which address the needs of all members of a society, the voices of all must be heard, not only those of the combatants – especially the extremists or hard-liners. Unless everyone's needs are met, a sustainable peace will never be reached and the likelihood of the recurrence of violent conflict will remain. All peace negotiations, peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction programs must be inclusive of women.

We acknowledge that the Department of Defence has taken the implementation of Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security seriously and has developed an Implementation Plan for it. However, we would like to see the NAP implemented in full cooperation and coordination with the other relevant Departments, i.e. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Civil Military Centre and the Australian Federal Police. This would ensure a comprehensive and coherent approach to any peace processes happening on the ground and to training and educational programs within Australia, with the ultimate goal of producing comprehensive resolutions to conflict and post-conflict reconstruction programs that lead to long-term sustainable peace.

- 3. Recommendation on participation of women: We recommend that the implementation of Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security be fully resourced and that the implementation be done in full cooperation with diplomatic, aid, development and international policing efforts in order to provide a comprehensive approach to peace processes.**