



Security Council

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Letter dated 10 January 2019 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Peru and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Permanent Missions of Germany, Peru and the United Kingdom have the honour to transmit a concept note (see annex) for an upcoming Arria formula meeting of the Security Council on the theme “What’s next for women and peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa: the potential of national action plans”, to be held on Thursday, 24 January 2019, at 3 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be distributed as a document of the Security Council.

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Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

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Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations

(Signed) **Karen Pierce**
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 10 January 2019 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Peru and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Concept note for the Security Council meeting on the theme “What’s next for women and peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa: the potential of national action plans”, 24 January 2019

1. The Permanent Missions of Germany, Peru and the United Kingdom will co-host an Arria formula meeting of the Security Council on women and peace and security on Thursday, 24 January 2019, at 3 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.
2. The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Retno L. P. Marsudi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Miguel Vargas, and the Minister of State of the United Kingdom, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, are expected to speak at the meeting. Participation by other delegations at the ministerial level is welcome.

Background

3. In a context of increasing attacks on global peace, the Middle East and North Africa region remains particularly volatile. While the rights and opportunities of women and girls in the region have been severely impeded by violence and insecurity, the women and peace and security agenda has been gaining visibility in the last few years. Women’s organizations and activists have defied the risks to organize across the region and demand their inclusion in peace talks, conflict resolution, national dialogues, constitution drafting, transitional justice, post-conflict recovery and stabilization, and initiatives to prevent conflict or violent extremism. As recently as five years ago, no national action plan on women and peace and security existed in the region. Since then, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have adopted national action plans, and Lebanon will likely be the next in the region to follow suit. The League of Arab States has also adopted a regional action plan.
4. Across the region, the development and adoption of national action plans present an opportunity for national stakeholders to advance the women and peace and security agenda and for the international community and civil society to support them. The Security Council has referred to national action plans in several of its resolutions on women and peace and security (e.g. resolutions [1889 \(2009\)](#), [2122 \(2013\)](#) and [2242 \(2015\)](#)), and meets regularly to discuss the situation in the region, including in the Council’s Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, of which Germany and Peru are Co-Chairs and which was co-founded by the United Kingdom. However, it has thus far not provided sufficient attention to national action plan implementation.
5. Two examples of national action plans in the region, in Iraq and Lebanon, respectively, will be highlighted at this Arria formula meeting.
6. Iraq was the first country to adopt a national action plan in the region and is already developing its second national action plan, focused on enhancing gender equality and women’s rights, as well as on peacebuilding and the rehabilitation of survivors of sexual violence post-Da’esh. In addition, several provinces have adopted local action plans. A record number of women ran as candidates in the recent election (37 per cent of all candidates), but challenges remain for women’s participation in the political process. Furthermore, in December 2018 the Government of Iraq launched a

new national strategy to combat violence against women. In another positive development, a Yazidi human rights activist, Nadia Murad, was awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence in conflict.

7. Lebanon is developing its own national action plan on women and peace and security. As in other cases, the inclusion of civil society in the design, development and monitoring of the plan has been essential. A costing exercise was crucial for the development of the draft national action plan. As in Iraq, a record number of women ran as candidates last year in the first parliamentary election in almost 10 years, but this did not translate to increased representation of women in politics (only 6 out of 128 Members of Parliament are women). The implementation of women and peace and security commitments will be crucial for a country that hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world and is affected by prolonged conflict in the region.

Objective

8. National action plans on women and peace and security, in this region and elsewhere, have not yet reached their potential and face shortcomings both in their dissemination and implementation. If implemented effectively by national stakeholders, with support from the international community and civil society, national action plans can become strong vehicles to galvanize support for the implementation of many initiatives on women and peace and security.

9. The purpose of this meeting therefore is to elevate the visibility of national action plans on women and peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa region. Member States are invited to use the Arria formula meeting to discuss the potential of national action plans, recommend ways for the Security Council and the international community to support Governments in the region in implementing the plans, and encourage other countries in the region to adopt such plans in the lead-up to the twentieth anniversary of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) in 2020. Panellists will provide examples from the oldest national action plan in the region (Iraq) and from a plan that will soon be adopted but is still under development (Lebanon). However, participants are encouraged to speak at the meeting about plans across the region, adopted or in development, and their potential to address key women and peace and security issues. In particular, participants are encouraged to answer the following questions:

- What are the specific and immediate needs in terms of advancing the implementation of national action plans on women and peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa region?
- What can the Security Council do to support the adoption and use of these plans in the region, as called for in multiple previous resolutions of the Council?
- How can national action plans become effective tools to address the many challenges regarding women and peace and security in the region, including in contexts affected by active conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies?

Format

10. Speakers from the region, including from civil society, will brief participants on the theme of the Arria formula meeting. The floor will then be opened to Council members, starting with the co-hosts, and other Member States, with priority given to Governments from the region, which may express their interest in participating by writing to katharina.kalaschnikow@diplo.de. The speaking time is set to a maximum of three minutes, and participants are encouraged to be as interactive as possible in their interventions.

11. The meeting is open to all States Members of the United Nations, permanent observers, non-governmental organizations and the press. Interpretation will be available in all official languages of the United Nations. The discussion will be summarized in a brief co-hosts' summary.
