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The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine

by Irene Fellin



*This publication
is supported by:*

The NATO Science for Peace
and Security Programme

ABSTRACT

Fifteen years after the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is far from ideal. The ongoing security crisis in Ukraine is a good example of how contemporary conflicts can heavily affect women and girls, without fully involving them in the management and resolution of the crisis. In order to support the analysis of the current gender policies in Ukraine and to promote a better inclusion of women in the peace-building process, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and the Democracy Development Centre (DDC) collaborated in the organisation of a workshop focusing on "The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine" held in Kyiv on 21-22 September 2015. The initiative was funded by NATO's Science for Peace and Security Programme in the broader framework of implementation of NATO's Policy on WPS. This report provides a summary of the event and highlights the key points that emerged from the debate including the recommendations given by the experts.

Ukraine | Armed forces | Women | UN Security Council | NATO

keywords

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Introduction

The Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and the Democracy Development Centre (DDC) collaborated on the organisation of a workshop focusing on "The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine" held in Kyiv on 21-22 September 2015. The initiative was funded by NATO's Science for Peace and Security Programme in the broader framework of implementation of NATO's Policy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). IAI has been conducting research on the current Ukrainian security situation, but this workshop constitutes part of the first research project to focus specifically on the gender dimension of the crisis and with the ultimate objective of providing guidance and support in the final drafting of the Ukrainian 1325 National Action Plan (NAP).

Fifteen years after the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325,¹ implementation of the WPS agenda is far from ideal. The ongoing security crisis in Ukraine is a good example of how contemporary conflicts can heavily affect women and girls, without fully involving them in the management and resolution of the crisis.

The IAI-DDC project was intended to support the analysis of the current gender policies in Ukraine in order to promote a better inclusion of women in the peace-building process. The meeting gathered together international experts, representatives from the Ukrainian Government, members of the Armed Forces and the police as well as civil society, and created a platform for fruitful dialogue and the elaboration of policy recommendations.

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 31 October 2000, [http://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000)).

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· Report of the NATO advanced research workshop "The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine. Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Related Resolutions", Kyiv, 21-22 September 2015. The workshop has been organised by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and the the Democracy Development Centre (DDC) and supported by the NATO's Science for Peace and Security Programme.

The workshop was divided into four working sessions and a final roundtable. After the opening remarks, welcoming addresses and keynote speeches, the first session was dedicated to the analysis of the different impact that the Ukrainian conflict has on men and on women. During the second session international experiences in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions (hereafter UNSCR 1325) were presented; the third



Workshop participants

session closed the first day of work by focusing on the specific gaps and challenges that the Ukrainian 1325 NAP should address in its development. The second day was opened by a session dedicated to one of the main aspects of UNSCR 1325, the participation of women in the decision-making process and in the security and defence sector, followed by a roundtable where experts discussed together and provided recommendations for effective implementation of a 1325 NAP.

This report provides a summary of the event and highlights the key points that emerged from the debate, including the recommendations put forward by the experts.

Opening remarks and presentation of the advanced research workshop, welcoming addresses and keynote speeches

The opening remarks were given by Liliia Honiukova, Board member of DDC and Nicoletta Pirozzi, Senior Fellow in the European Affairs area at IAI, the two co-directors of the project, followed by Michael Gaul, Senior Advisor for Projects & Strategy at the Emerging Security Challenges Division at NATO.

Liliia Honiukova opened the working day by thanking IAI and NATO for the collaboration and the financial support that made the event possible. She underlined that the workshop was the result of many months of joint efforts and mutual collaboration that led to the realisation of a long overdue and necessary event. The greatest effort for DDC was to bring to the table all stakeholders dealing with defence and security matters and not only the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy, the designated agency for the coordination of all gender-related issues. This workshop was conceived to provide all institutions involved with the opportunity to broaden the perspective of the WPS agenda and especially to hear the voices of several service women who also joined the event.

After the greetings addressed to all participants and special thanks to DDC for its invaluable collaboration in supporting the organisation of the workshop, as

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From left to right: Liliia Honiukova, Nicoletta Pirozzi, Gianni Bonvicini

well as to NATO for providing the necessary funds, **Nicoletta Pirozzi** briefly presented the idea behind the workshop and introduced the conference programme. She recalled IAI's expertise on the political and security situation in Ukraine and the current crisis, and the importance that the Institute gives to the WPS agenda in promoting the inclusion of a gender perspective in its research activities. In this framework, the Institute decided to initiate a research project focusing specifically on the

gender dimension of the crisis. Taking into account the regional context and the country's specificities, the workshop was meant to provide a forum to share international experiences and good practices from other countries. The objective of the workshop was to see how UNSCR 1325 can be applied to the Ukrainian crisis and how the implementation of the principles contained in the resolutions can help the Ukrainian authorities to find a way out of the conflict.

Michael Gaul explained that the NATO's Science for Peace and Security Programme is a policy tool aimed at enhancing cooperation and dialogue with all NATO partners based on scientific research, innovation and knowledge exchange. Through funding and expert advice, the Alliance supports security-relevant activities jointly developed by a NATO ally and a partner country with the engagement of civil networks. UNSCR 1325 has been included among the research topics of the programme since 2014, in line with the increased awareness of the Alliance on the need for a comprehensive approach and a full implementation of the WPS agenda to guarantee a sustainable peace. Civil society has been heavily involved in the evaluation and development of many allied and partner NAPs, and continues to show its commitment and leadership in the WPS domain. He thanked the project co-directors and the respective organisations for setting up the event as well as for their professionalism and enthusiasm in addressing such an issue at a moment when not all the stakeholders in the Ukrainian crisis considered gender issues to be a priority.

The welcoming addresses, chaired by Gianni Bonvicini, Executive Vice President of IAI, were delivered by Iryna Lutsenko, a member of People's Movement of Ukraine and Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Serhiy Ustymenko, First Deputy Minister on issues of European integration at the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. Before giving the floor to Ms. Lutsenko, **Gianni Bonvicini** thanked the representatives of the Ukrainian institutions who attended the event. He said that everyone is aware of the huge economic problems and security challenges that Ukraine is facing, and it is understandable how difficult it might be in these circumstances to move towards the implementation of a 1325 NAP and women's full participation in the promotion of peace and security.

Notwithstanding the present time of crisis, UNSCR 1325 should be considered as an element of civilisation, social improvement and policy normalisation for all countries, including Ukraine.

In her address, **Iryna Lutsenko** shared the experience of some female members of Parliament (MPs), who worked personally on the frontline providing assistance to soldiers and volunteers, and supplying hospitals

with medical equipment. They mobilised the community to raise funds in support of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who are mostly women and children, by building playgrounds and cultural centres. As she recalled, at present women represent only 12 percent of Parliament and nonetheless they were able to do so much for improving the life conditions of both military and civilian populations. However, women's political participation remains a challenge and she noted that in light of the coming local election, "soft pressure" was required for approval of a 30 percent quota for seats to be occupied by women in local councils.

She also offered a picture of the current situation concerning the forthcoming legislation on violence against women and ratification of the Istanbul Convention (the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011). Since the eruption of the crisis, episodes of domestic violence have heavily increased due to post-traumatic stress disorders and the lack of psychological and economical support for veterans, who are often disabled and jobless. If a society wants to achieve gender equality, this process has to start in the households where gender roles and stereotypes are initially shaped, she stated. Since the experience has demonstrated that raising awareness among men and women is not enough to tackle this phenomenon, the Ministry of Social Policy is preparing, with the support of the Swedish Embassy, a reform package to be submitted shortly to the Parliament for approval. Concluding her speech, she called on foreign countries and international organisations to share successful practices and provide expertise concerning rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for veterans and their families.

Serhiy Ustymenko took the floor for welcoming remarks followed by a keynote speech. After the institutional greetings and thanks, the Deputy Minister underlined the importance of this topic that pertains to the entire population. He welcomed the report made by Ms. Lutsenko and thanked her for the fruitful collaboration between the Ministry of Social Policy and female MPs, whose support in addressing the social problems is invaluable. He also praised grassroots civil initiatives – often led by women – that have focused on restoring normal life for the population in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk through for instance the organisation of art exhibitions and debates. He noted that the participation of women in politics



From left to right: Svanhvit Adalsteinsdottir, Michael Gaul, Liliia Honiukova



Serhiy Ustymenko

and in the peace-making process at the local level is slowly increasing, and stressed the importance of their contribution in the implementation of the 1325 NAP – especially in the regional agencies.

He added that the Ministry is making a great effort to include the gender perspective in all issues that are on the agenda. The aim is to have this as one of the top five priorities of Ukrainian society in these hard times. He stated that the organisation

of the workshop was timely to bring an impetus to the work already done in the preparation of the 1325 NAP. Mr. Ustymenko reiterated the important step that the country is making with the approval of the law on violence against women and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, especially now that a growing wave of violence is reported in the occupied territories, affecting especially women who often become victims of human trafficking. The conflict with Russia has increased the number of IDPs, which has now reached 1.5 million. Society has to become more aware of the need to tackle these phenomena and to be able to implement the directives included in the 1325 NAP. Power decentralisation and gender budgeting are among the key aspects presented in the document. Only by guaranteeing these two elements will local organisations and agencies be able to implement the NAP at the regional level. He highlighted how the Ukrainian 1325 Plan is called "Equality, Peace and Security Plan" instead of "Women, Peace and Security," with the ultimate objective of achieving a gender-equal society. The Plan will last until 2020.

Taking into account the recent OSCE study on National Action Plans on the implementation of UNSCR 1325,² the Ukrainian NAP includes the development of several project activities: from professional training of personnel on UNSCR 1325, to training of specialists dealing with victims of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence; from scientific research studies to evaluation of needs and collection of sex-disaggregated data. He concluded by recalling that the Action Plan was in its final stage and the Ministry's ambition was to have it approved within a few weeks, therefore the recommendations and outcomes of the workshop would have been taken into account in the final version of the document.

Svanhvit Adalsteinsdottir, Advisor to the NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security, delivered the second keynote speech and addressed the Ukrainian authorities, underlining how gender perspective is a tool to their advantage. It should not be an afterthought; on the contrary, it

² Published on 24 October 2014 and available in the OSCE website: <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/125727>.

should be a fundamental process of their security and defence planning, calling for specific and concrete actions. A comprehensive reform of the defence and security sectors is vital for Ukraine's democratic development and its ability to defend itself, she stressed. As part of this process, she praised President Petro Poroshenko's decision to appoint Iryna Herashchenko as his commissioner for the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk regions in charge of supporting de-escalation of tension, achieving public concord, guaranteeing the safety of citizens and preventing attacks on the health and lives of civilians.



Svanhvit Adalsteinsdottir

She recalled that the workshop was happening on the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and that the 1325 agenda is about prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery, as well as mainstreaming gender perspective in operation. Including more women in crisis management and the peace-building process is vital, but the primary responsibility of the entire society remains to prevent conflicts from happening. This is the role of NATO as well, but unfortunately when crises occur and war is unavoidable, it is fundamental that the planning and execution process of a military mission includes a gender perspective in order to achieve more effective and intelligent work. This is why the Alliance has for several years had a Policy and an Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. It has since deemed it necessary to establish the position of a Special Representative for WPS for ensuring the implementation of the principles embedded in the resolutions within the Alliance and in its external activities, with partners and with civil society especially. Mainstreaming gender requires organisational change.

The role of institutional leadership is key for progressing in this domain. As Jens Stoltenberg, NATO's Secretary-General, said, "We can only achieve lasting peace and security when women and men contribute equally." History has demonstrated that crises can shift gender roles: they create opportunities and make transformations. During the two World Wars women left the household and took up men's jobs. They challenged their traditional role and when the war ended, the cultural revolution had already started and women realised that they had a new role to play within society. Sometimes revolutions are necessary to make a change, and crisis should be always considered as an opportunity for taking stock of the situation of women and girls – as now, in developing a sustainable and comprehensive 1325 NAP, she said, thus concluding the first part of the event.

Session I. Different impact of the armed conflict in Ukraine on men and women: applying the gender perspective



Eugenia Benigni and Laurie Mulvey

The session was moderated by **Laurie Mulvey**, Executive Director of the World in Conversation Center for Public Diplomacy at Pennsylvania State University, who first explained that the objective of this session was to provide background information on the security situation in Ukraine with a gender lens. Service women and men, together with some experts, had been invited to share findings and accounts of the impact of the conflict on women and girls in

Ukraine and to introduce existing institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection.

The service women who fought on the frontline shared their experiences both as professional soldiers and as volunteers. The situation of women in the Ukrainian Armed Forces is not linear, since many positions within the Army remain both officially and unofficially closed to women. The only male military panellist referred to about 300 professional positions that are exclusively reserved for male soldiers, i.e., driver, shooting instructor and head of guard unit, whereas positions like sanitary instructor, horn blower, and culinary or veterinary instructor are open to women. He explained how hard it is for women to gain access to a military career and not only because of administrative restrictions, but especially because of the deep-rooted patriarchal culture embedded in Ukrainian society. In addition to the fact that jobs in the security sector are traditionally viewed as men's jobs, the selection seems to be based more on contacts than on merit (this happens for male candidates as well). Theoretically, women should be in the position to apply for officers' positions after higher education, but practically they are often not "welcomed" when they show their interest, with a few remarkable exceptions. His reference to an existing sexist and corrupt culture was later shared by his female colleagues, who directly experienced gender-based discrimination during their career and while serving on the frontline.

All service women explained that following the eruption of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine more women wanted to serve in the military than before, both as professionals and as volunteers, and this has led to the exposing of existing discriminatory regulations in the Armed Forces. Around 40 women had taken up male-only positions in the East and were involved in combat and other support functions; however, all of them were officially registered as administrative officers or cooks, as one of the speakers reported. The lack of official registration leads not only to missing official recognition for the service done for the country, it also denies

access to rights and economical benefits. Women serving on voluntary bases suffer from a different range of problems, from lack of salary (a monthly compensation of 50 dollars is provided) to lack of equipment. They reported that uniforms and other accessories are provided thanks to the voluntary contribution of the civilian population.



First session panelists

One speaker shared her experience of being the only woman serving in her unit in the East and reported how important her presence was for connecting with the female portion of the local population. Women approach the Army more easily when they find another woman to talk to, and are more inclined to share their concerns and negative experiences – like sexual assault attempts and rapes perpetrated by soldiers, or episodes of domestic violence often due to alcohol abuse.

The Ministry itself recognised the positive role that women play on the frontline, but mostly for their social and caregiver role. Most women hold positions in the medical field or work for the “moral affairs” or “social work” department. It seems that the overall number of women employed within the Armed Forces is 2,000, with colonel being the highest rank (46 women). In addition to these women, the Ministry of Defence reports employing a fairly high percentage of female civilian staff (around 40 percent), but the exact level remains unclear because sex-disaggregated data about soldiers deployed on the frontline is considered confidential information. The availability of gender-disaggregated data about women employed in the Army and in the security agencies remains a big problem and limits the assessment of the real situation women face. One of the speakers reported that her association of volunteers, the Centre for Support of Aerial Reconnaissance, is now carrying out research gathering data and information about roles and responsibilities of women working in the defence sector, but has found some opposition from the Ministries in information sharing. The report, which will describe women’s participation in combat, their life and working conditions, acknowledging the lack of adequate infrastructures for women and of specialist medical services or female equipment, should be made available shortly and will represent an invaluable instrument for implementation of the 1325 NAP.

Eugenia Benigni, an independent gender expert, concluded the first session by sharing some reflections matured while working in Ukraine and other countries of the region. In her speech, she focused on some good practices of women’s engagement in grassroots dialogue initiatives that represent a great potential for peace and reconciliation in Ukraine. She reported that on her arrival in Kyiv in 2014, she was deeply impressed by the activism and the role played by Ukrainian women at all levels of society. Women were present at the Maidan demonstrations and they were always on the frontline both in leading and supporting roles. When



Lyudmyla Kalinina

the numbers of IDPs increased, women played a leading role in setting up volunteer groups and new non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to welcome and respond to the needs of people coming from Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, as well as to locate and identify people who had disappeared, and to document torture, abductions, violence and other human rights violations. As the previous speakers said, women volunteers play a key role in supporting troops, by collecting

and sewing uniforms and providing funds and other items needed by soldiers and combatants – including other women – on both sides of the conflict. She highlighted how unfortunately women's role in the peace-building process at both grassroots and decision-making levels still constitutes an enormous untapped potential for sustainable peace and reconciliation among divided communities in many regions of Ukraine and the country as a whole. Experience shows that bottom-up efforts are crucial for the peaceful future of a conflicted country, at both local and national levels. However, these efforts need and deserve long-term, tailored and flexible support from the national and international community to become sustainable as real engines for long-lasting peace.

Session II. Implementing UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on women, peace and security: international experiences

Karen McMinn, gender consultant on WPS from Northern Ireland, moderated the second session dedicated to international and regional experiences. According to the moderator, the moment is perfect for developing a NAP in Ukraine, since the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 is drawing great attention to the WPS agenda.

Sabine Freizer from the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office of UN Women gave an opening speech and introduced briefly the regional and global agenda. She started by referring to the 1325 Global Study commissioned by the UN Secretary-General and launched on 14 October 2015 in New York.³ The study includes a long list of recommendations, some of them very relevant for Ukraine and for the preparation of a 1325 NAP. A new resolution is also in preparation, strongly supported by the United Kingdom and Spain. Ms. Freizer recalled how women in

³ UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace. A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, 12 October 2015, <http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>.

Ukraine, like in every other conflict in the world, are victims of terrible crimes, such as conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. At the same time, they are also courageous, resilient, resourceful leaders and peace builders, whose efforts are too often resisted, ignored or marginalised by more powerful actors. The goal for UN Women is to ensure that the WPS agenda is not only a thematic area that is given periodic visibility and attention, but that it is really moving forward, as one of the core principles of the UN's work on peace and security.



Jesus Gil Ruiz and Sabine Freizer

The 1325 Global Study provides further empirical evidence for what has been established in recent years: women's participation and inclusion makes humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthens the peacekeepers' protection efforts, contributes to the successful conclusion of peace talks and sustainable peace, and accelerates economic recovery. A chapter is devoted to 1325 NAPs: as of March 2015, 53 countries have adopted a NAP (only 24 of them in Europe) and the multiplication of NAPs is often welcomed as an illustration of Member States' growing commitment to implement UNSCR 1325. However it must be borne in mind that a NAP represents a process and a facilitator of action, not an end in itself. Lessons from around the world show that there are key aspects for a NAP to be successful: first of all it needs to be backed by strong governmental leadership and commitment. In addition to that, the choice of the government institution that will conduct the coordination of the NAP is crucial, since too often, especially in developing countries, NAP implementation is under the responsibility of ministries that face financial, human and technical resource constraints preventing full NAP implementation.

Another fundamental aspect observed in the study is that a NAP has to be based on an inclusive design, implementation and monitoring process where civil society organisations, academic institutions, as well as local communities can make substantial contributions. As already mentioned, a successful NAP should include realistic and detailed costing, and allocated budgets for its implementation, and there should be sufficient flexibility to adapt to emerging situations; monitoring and evaluation plans should be prepared from the starting process. Before concluding, she underlined that women in Ukraine are already doing amazing things to advance peace and security. More institutional, legal and funding-related decisions are now required to support them, and the international community – including the UN – has to learn from its inability to more effectively support the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The 15th anniversary gives us all the opportunity to clearly voice what works and what does not and to forge ahead.



Shota Shermadini

The opening speech was followed by the presentation of some case studies. **Jesus Gil Ruiz**, former Chief of the NATO International Military Staff Office of the Gender Advisor, explained how the Ukrainian Armed Forces can benefit from the experience of NATO. The first way is through the Committee for Gender Perspective, whose role is to advise NATO's leadership and member nations on gender-related issues in order to enhance organisational effectiveness. The Committee

organises a yearly conference with delegates from allied and partner countries on a topic that is of particular interest (i.e., "How NATO can prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence" and "Recruitment and retention of women in the armed forces") and develops recommendations. He invited Ukraine to appoint a delegate for the forthcoming conference on "Strengthening military leadership and accountability to implement gender perspectives." The Committee for Gender Perspective is also in charge of collecting information on the national Armed Forces. According to the annual report submitted by Ukraine, there are restrictions against women working in submarines, in demining operations and as divers; the country does not have any strategy or training related to the prevention of sexual harassment. Investigators do exist, but apparently no case has been reported during the last years. Additionally, the Ukrainian Armed Forces do not have any trained gender advisor. Based on NATO's experience, allied and partner countries are invited to professionally train gender advisors before deployment. Gender advisors work in close collaboration with the Commander and play a key role in implementing the WPS agenda at both policy and operational levels.

Shota Shermadini, Senior Specialist in the Human Relations Department of the Georgian Ministry of Defence and member of the Gender Monitoring Team, presented the case of Georgia, widely recognised as a successful example of NAP. The Georgian NAP is part of a broader national effort to mainstream gender principles and policies within society, and was developed following the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality in 2010 and the establishment of the Council for Gender Equality. Women in Georgia represent 45 percent of personnel in the Ministry of Defence, 7 percent in the Georgian Armed Forces and 2 percent in international military missions. Mr. Shermadini recalled that Georgia has a recent experience of conflict. As such, the Georgian NAP has a focus on conflict-affected areas, IDPs and occupied territories within the country. It also addresses the mainstreaming of the WPS agenda in its international peacekeeping and diplomatic activities. Many women's organisations have recently emerged, particularly focusing on the needs and empowerment of internally displaced women. Working at the grassroots level and in cooperation with international donors and UN agencies, in Georgia as in Ukraine and many other countries, women's organisations have been instrumental

in the development of the NAP and its subsequent implementation.

Anne Sofie Stude, Ambassador for UNSCR 1325 in Finland, stated that her country has been one of the early champions of gender equality and the empowerment of women and that the society has benefitted immensely from increasing equality between women and men; however many challenges remain, as the comparatively high level of violence against women within the country demonstrates. She stated that there are high expectations that the High-level Review of 1325 will come up with new ambitious, concrete and time-bound commitments, including the need to address new and very actual themes such as violent extremism, where women can be everything from perpetrators and participants, to point-of-target and preventer. She noted that in the past two decades only 2.4 percent of chief mediators have been women and there is an urgent need to get more women as mediation experts and peace negotiators. Finland has accordingly been making great efforts to increase this number. She highlighted that in recent years conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence has received international attention, and how vital it is to keep up the momentum to eradicate this phenomenon. In tackling this issue, Finland emphasises the comprehensive approach, taking into account women's participation and empowerment. At the same time, taking a true "gender perspective" requires critical examination of roles and experiences of men and boys as well. Steps should be taken to promote notions of masculinity that favour nonviolence and gender equality, as this will improve lives of both women and men.



Anne Sofie Stude and Karen McMinn

Cristina Figueroa Domecq and **Jesus Palomo**, from the Rey Juan Carlos University in Spain, presented "UNSCR 1325 Reload: An Analysis of Annual National Reports to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives from 1999-2013: Policies, Recruitment, Retention & Operations,"⁴ a project developed with Australia and supported as well by the NATO's Science for Peace and Security Programme. The researchers explained that the main objective was to map the current situation of women within the armed forces of NATO allies, using data provided in the annual national reports submitted to the NATO International Military Staff Office of the Gender Advisor. In so doing, the project also mapped the current level of implementation of UNSCR 1325, through monitoring and evaluating the evolution of the status of women from 1999 to 2013. One of the ultimate goals of the project was to provide recommendations and best practices to improve the status of women in the Army.

⁴ See the report presented in June 2015 and available at <http://www.unscr1325reload.org>.



Cristina Figueroa Domecq

According to the findings, in 2013 women represented 10.6 percent of NATO armed forces, compared to 7.14 percent in 1999. All allies accept women into their armed forces, however seven of them still limit their full access to all positions (mostly combat roles and submarines). Another substantial aspect concerns sexual assault, which remains a significant challenge for the armed forces all over the world. Strong prevention mechanisms would certainly act as a catalyst

for increasing women's participation in the military. Based on the findings, the researchers developed some key recommendations: military leaders are invited to commit to increasing the representation of women in their forces. They are also required to develop strategies that will enhance women's opportunities to enter leadership positions. Another focus should be on developing and implementing targeted strategies designed to retain members and prevent their unnecessary separation from the Army, particularly women who may feel compelled to leave because of caring responsibilities. The speakers added that another important recommendation concerns gender-based harassment and violence, which ruins lives, divides teams and damages operational effectiveness. Therefore military leaders should implement strong, evidence-based measures preventing violence and harassment against women in the military. And finally, military leaders should ensure that accurate and current data showing trends in relation to women's representation and their experience in the military are gathered, because a transparent and accountable military is also strong and confident. The research shows that progress is being made, but at a slow pace. Therefore there is a real risk of losing many of the opportunities that would come with increased female participation.

Session III. Implementing UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions in Ukraine: challenges and gaps of the developing National Action Plan

The third session was dedicated to the testimonies of Ukrainian women and men working in the security and defence sectors. Recognising that UNSCR 1325 calls for improving strategies aimed at the prevention of violence against women and girls in armed conflict, as well as greater participation of women in conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building efforts, this session gave the opportunity to look in greater detail at what measures have been put in place or should be developed in Ukraine in order to address the different pillars of UNSCR 1325. Their voices and personal experiences, working both at policy level and on

the frontline, highlighted the main existing challenges and gaps that still need to be addressed. The majority of the statements confirmed what other speakers had already shared, even though according to Lt. **Natalia Semeniuk**, Deputy Chief of Informational and Analytical Section of the Civil-Military Cooperation Directorate of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the situation in the country is less negative than previously described. She did not deny the

difficulties that women have to face in gaining access to a military career, but she underlined that they have much greater employment opportunities than previously, even if the lack of official data does not facilitate a real assessment of the situation. Nonetheless, recent studies indicate that 30 percent of peacekeepers deployed by Ukraine are women. Based on her experience, the main obstacle is represented by the patriarchal culture embedded in the Ukrainian society, where it is considered that women's role is to give birth, not to take lives. Therefore, in order to change the *status quo*, public opinion and management leadership need to be challenged.



Vita Atamanchuk

Women in Ukraine have historically been active in providing support on the frontline when this was required. However, Ukrainian feminism was different than in western countries, said **Vita Atamanchuk**, Deputy Head of Kyrovograd State Oblast Administration. Ukrainian women did not fight in order to challenge their status against that of males, but for the sake of protection of their homeland. She acknowledged that Ukraine underestimated the security challenges coming from the neighbouring countries during the independence years and was not ready for the Russian aggression, whose consequences are now strongly impacting on the whole society, especially with the high number of IDPs and the problem of veterans' reintegration. Considering that local administrations are unable to cope with these problems, she called on the government to develop a package of social security benefits at the central level, for guaranteeing the right and due support to military personnel and their families.

Vitaliy Holota, the Head of the Department of Military Social Work at the Department of Moral Affairs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, agreed with the assumption that one of the biggest obstacles for women in accessing a military career is stereotypes. On the other hand, even if recent internal research indicates that women would be ready to leave their children and serve in combat, experience demonstrates that they are often more inclined to apply for psychologist and desk officer positions. These choices will later limit their possibility to apply for combat roles, where specific competences and training are required. Concerning the lack of official data and information sharing, during a lively debate with other participants, he reiterated the confidentiality of certain information and invited the interested people to address their request to the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and to the Parliament.



Olga Kopaniova

Maria Honyukova and **Olga Kopaniova**, serving in the 46th "Donbas-Ukraine" detached special-purpose battalion, confirmed what was previously said, reiterating that the lack of formal military education and specialised training represent a huge obstacle for women who want to serve and apply for specific assignment in the combat zone. Kopaniova added that given her 14 years of experience as a shooter and in demining operations, she was granted the opportunity to become

deputy head of the battalion, but all the time she had to prove and confirm her professional competences, which were constantly put under discussion because of her sex.

Yulia Strybkova, coordinator of the women's programme at the Artan Training Centre in Kyiv, stressed the importance of specialised training and shared the experience of her centre in providing training to women living and serving on the frontline. This training is of little use when it comes to career advancement and does not give any formal advantage, however it does provide practical skills for women in combat zones.

Tetyana Dzhafarova, from the volunteer association "People's Rear", put a focus on the vital work done by volunteers, whether soldiers or civilians. Their fundamental support is sometimes taken for granted, she said, and the consequences that their unpaid job will have on their lives are not duly considered by the social system. They are also victims of the conflict and deserve the same assistance, when it comes to the social reintegration process and psychological rehabilitation, highlighting that the country lacks psychologist experts on conflict.

Kateryna Levchenko, President of the international women's rights centre "La Strada," concluded the session by stressing once more the importance of gender training as one of the core activities of the 1325 NAP, adding to this the need for training in law enforcement as well. The responsibility for developing and later implementing the 1325 NAP remains with the government, nonetheless only an inclusive approach that involves NGOs at local level will guarantee an effective implementation of the WPS agenda.

Session IV. Women as agents of change: enhancing female participation in the decision-making process and in security agencies in Ukraine

Irene Fellin, research consultant for gender issues at IAI, moderated the fourth session dedicated to female leadership and women's participation in politics and security at all levels. Together with protection and prevention, participation is one of the three fundamental pillars of UNSCR 1325. The initial trend of the WPS agenda of putting protection of women at its centre has shifted in recent years towards participation, as highlighted and recommended by the



Angelic Young and Irene Fellin

UN Global Study as well. Research confirms that women's participation has a direct and positive impact on negotiations, and on the sustainability of peace processes. It is only through the participation of women in politics, in crisis management and in peace-building efforts that women and girls will be granted protection.

Angelic Young, Senior Coordinator of NAPs at the Institute for Inclusive Security in Washington, underlined the undeniable link existing between human security and conflict. Security is not just a lack of physical violence; humans will never be fully secure if their needs – whether health, economic, social or others – are not met. Far too often, as fear of insecurity mounts, governments respond with increasingly restrictive state-centred security policies, but as the nature of conflict evolves, so does its impact. Fifteen years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, while many are familiar with the objectives outlined in the resolution, many others misunderstand its overall aim, which is not to provide security for women, but to engage women in providing security for all people.

A critical element of a successful, high-impact NAP plan is a series of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) outcomes. Inclusive security's research and experience working with government and civil society practitioners suggests a framework of three overarching objectives. The first is to attain meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes. The second is to affirm women's contribution to peace and security. The third and last objective concerns the achievement of women's human security. This objective focuses on removing barriers to equality and ensuring that women are able to exercise their rights, but within the greater context of human security: security for the people, not the State. Integrating gender perspectives requires identifying and addressing gendered issues that may obstruct or improve women's ability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the security sector. Successfully advancing women's inclusion requires a commitment to recognising and overcoming



From left to right: Angelic Young, Irene Fellin and Heather Huhtanen

barriers, even where those barriers are not immediately apparent, she concluded.

Heather Huhtanen, gender and security Programme Manager for Eastern Europe from the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), focused her speech on the importance of gender equality as a fundamental principle for building a secure society. Research has shown a connection between the level of democratisation and gender

equality. Indeed, gender equality is connected to all major development indicators, from employment to education. It is also directly linked to health improvement, economic growth and stability. A gender-equal society is a healthier, more educated and more vibrant society, she explained. When it comes to security institutions and justice, gender equality enables countries to fully access the human resource potential within the society: women represent half of the population and excluding them from security issues will drastically reduce a country's potential.

Colonel **Yuliia Laputina**, Deputy Head of the Cyber Defence Department of the Ukrainian Security Service, is an officer with twenty years of experience and brought a different perspective. She said that in doing her job she never considered the gender perspective, approaching it in a gender-neutral way, which she considered to be the right professional approach. No obstacle was put in the way of her training possibilities or career opportunities. The security sector is improving, she said, and women are nowadays admitted to the Academy. She praised young girls and women for their willingness to support the country. According to her it is not a question of gender, but of patriotism. Her concluding proposal was to support the establishment of civilian and military connections for fostering dialogue in building peace.

Ulana Suprun, Director of Humanitarian Initiatives of the Ukrainian World Congress, presented "Patriot Defence," a project launched in May 2014 in response to the specific need to professionally train Ukrainian fighters according to NATO standards and provide them with a first individual aid kit. As of September 2014, 20,304 kits had been distributed, and 23,371 soldiers and 2,384 cadets had been trained. The organisation's achievement is based on the tremendous contribution of the individual volunteers and organisations, where women and young girls as well play a key role.

Marusia Zvirobiy, chief of the "Marusia Training Range," highlighted once more the importance of training and the lack of institutionalisation in this domain. She shared her experience on leading training courses for soldiers and civilians on the frontline on a voluntary basis. There is a lack of information about the gravity of

the current conflict and the impact that this is having on women and children, who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence and kidnapping. She went on to stress that the main problem is the information warfare that Russia is conducting, using it as a rough method of controlling masses and public opinion. Unfortunately, the gravity and the seriousness of this attitude is far from being duly considered by the relevant authorities.



Ulana Suprun

Roundtable: discussion among experts, lessons learned and recommendations for an effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions in Ukraine

In the roundtable moderated by **Nona Mikhelidze**, Senior Fellow at IAI, experts developed a set of recommendations, based on the two-day discussion, for a better implementation of the WPS agenda and the final drafting of the Ukrainian “Equality, Peace and Security” NAP, including activities to be developed with the support of the international community. Recommendations included:

- *Learning from previous experiences.* All experts underlined that it is a great opportunity for Ukraine to be in the process of finalising the NAP coinciding with the release of the UN 1325 Global Study. The country has the opportunity to learn good and bad practices from previous experiences and listen to the recommendations. Therefore, all experts agreed on the importance of slowing down the process in order not to miss this unique opportunity.
- *Political will and high-level endorsement.* Political will is crucial for a sustainable implementation of the NAP. Experience shows that a high-level commitment (preferably at the Presidential or Prime Minister level) is required in order to move forward. It is essential that the goal is perceived as something constructive: aiming at better results for everyone, including security policy. Therefore many countries opt for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as coordinator agency for the development of the NAP and its implementation activity.
- *Inclusion.* The process of developing a NAP is as important as – if not more important than – the document itself. In developing the NAP, all stakeholders should be included. From the beginning to the end of the process, they should sit around the same table, build trust between them and look together for good practices. Governments should collaborate closely with civil society to take stock of existing objectives, activities and strategies with an eye toward improving coherence,



Tamar Tavartkiladze and Nona Mikhelidze

avoiding duplication and addressing gaps that inhibit inclusion.

- *Key role of civil society.* A particular focus was put on the role that women's civil society has to play both in the development of the NAP and in its implementation. Supporting and strengthening grassroots networks of women and youth from both sides of the conflict, confidence-building measures and other bottom-up approaches are key to fostering dialogue and peace building.

Experience shows that investing in women, who have a profound knowledge of their communities' needs, is a very effective way to build more resilient and peaceful societies.

- *Effective implementation.* A clear division of roles and responsibilities is required for ensuring an effective implementation. Concrete goals and budget allocation could work as an incentive for holding the individual implementing agencies more responsible.

- *Implementing locally, inspiring globally.* Developing a localisation programme in the implementation of the WPS agenda will ensure a decentralised and localised approach with the engagement of key local actors such as governors, mayors, community-based women's organisations, police and military officers, and religious, indigenous and traditional leaders. The aim is to shift from awareness-raising to concrete actions that can support the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the local level of governance.

- *Data collection.* Every research study and assessment has to start from data and figures. There is an urgent need to track accurate data on women's representation and experiences working in the security and defence sector, including those working on a voluntary basis, as well as within the civilian population, especially IDPs affected by the military conflict.

- *Increasing opportunities for women to gain access to the armed forces.* Targeted recruitment campaigns should be carried out in order to remove barriers and exclusion of women from certain categories of military personnel; improve and diversify employment pathways; conduct surveys and studies on recruitment and retention of women in the armed forces; make changes in family policy; carry out reforms addressing sexual harassment and abuse within the armed forces; and ensure changes to facilities, uniforms and equipment to meet women's needs. The composition of the armed forces should reflect the composition of the society.

- *Protecting IDPs.* The government should consult with affected communities and let them take part in any decision-making process while creating IDP camps and guaranteeing transparency by giving communities feedback on their own choices. The development of specific programmes for female IDPs focusing on employment reintegration would be strongly recommended.



Nona Mikhelidze and Mavic Cabrera Balleza

- *Reintegration and rehabilitation.*

Developing reintegration programmes for veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder in order to avoid increased alcohol abuse and domestic violence against women and children should be part of the NAP.

- *Fighting against gender stereotypes.* Prioritising actions that can deliver transformative change for women and girls should be a critical criterion for the NAP development. Developing programmes for the empowerment of girls at the local level that will enable them to realise their talents and potential, and transform gender stereotypes within their families and communities, with the engagement of young men and boys, is key for achieving a gender-equal society. Gender equality is fundamental for building a peaceful society.

- *Monitoring and evaluation.* In order to strengthen the NAP, qualitative indicators should be added to the quantitative ones. Training needs should not be evaluated based on their frequency, but on the extent to which they impacted on participants' awareness and actions.

Conclusions

Liliia Honiukova shared with the audience the draft of a Resolution that the DDC addressed to the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and the President. The aim of the document is to inform the authorities about the outcomes of the event and to reiterate the importance of addressing the WPS agenda as a matter of security. Authorities are called on for full and effective implementation of the 1325 NAP and for regular reporting activity to DDC. Before concluding, she invited all participants to sign the document.

Gianni Bonvicini closed the gathering praising the intense work done and the very successful discussions. The workshop gave the opportunity to learn from the personal experiences of soldiers, volunteers and policy makers who are in different manners already implementing the WPS agenda in the country. Ukrainian women are strong and determined and they are doing a great job at both military and

The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine



Roundtable participants

civilian levels. However, it is now evident that there is a need to move ahead and act at the policy level, he said. As the experts underlined, there is now an opportunity for the Ukrainian Government to improve and strengthen the "Equality, Peace and Security" NAP taking into due consideration the recommendations of this workshop and the UN Global Study. The workshop highlighted as well that there are areas where more research, data collection and analysis are required.

As a follow-up to this event, the creation of a mixed group of Ukrainian and international experts could be envisaged, for conducting new research on this topic, assessing needs and developing training curricula. Such crises as the one Ukraine is facing might turn into an opportunity for women to become agents of change and peace builders. It is a matter of democracy and civilisation that concerns the entire society.

Updated 18 February 2016

Workshop Programme

Kyiv, 21-22 September 2015

Opening Session

Opening Remarks

Liliia Honiukova, Board Member, Democracy Development Centre (DDC)

Nicoletta Pirozzi, Senior Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

Michael Gaul, Senior Advisor, Emerging Security Challenges Division, NATO, Brussels

Welcoming Addresses

Gianni Bonvicini, Executive Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

Maria Berlinska, Leader of volunteer organisation "Centre for Support of Aerial Reconnaissance"

Iryna Lutsenko, People's Deputy of Ukraine

Svitlana Zalishchuk, People's Deputy of Ukraine

Hryhorii Nemyria, People's Deputy of Ukraine

Petro Mekhed, Vice Minister of Defence of Ukraine, chief of staff

Serhiy Ustymenko, First Deputy Minister on issues of European integration, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine

Keynote Speeches

Svanhvit Adalsteinsdottir, Advisor to the NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security, Brussels

Serhiy Ustymenko, First Deputy Minister on issues of European integration, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine

First Session

Different Impact of the Armed Conflict in Ukraine on Men and Women: Applying the Gender Perspective

Chair

Laurie Mulvey, Executive Director, World in Conversation Center for Public Diplomacy, Pennsylvania State University, University Park

The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine

Opening address	Petro Mekhed , Vice Minister of Defence of Ukraine, chief of staff
Speakers	Maria Berlinska , Leader of volunteer organisation "Centre for Support of Aerial Reconnaissance" Volodymyr Kukhar , Senior Lieutenant, Deputy Squadron Commander Lyudmyla Kalinina , 46th "Donbas-Ukraine" Detached Special-Purpose Battalion Oksana Yakubova , Deputy Commander, 1st motorised battalion, Luhansk Oblast Anna Kovalenko , Centurion, 39th Maidan Self-Defence Unit Eugenia Benigni , former Gender Advisor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Second Session

Implementing UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. International Experiences

Chair	Karen McMinn , Gender Consultant on Women, Peace and Security issues, Northern Ireland
Opening address	Sabine Freizer , Governance, Peace and Security Advisor, UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Istanbul
Speakers	Jesus Gil Ruiz , former Chief of the NATO International Military Staff Office of the Gender Advisor, Brussels Shota Shermadini , Senior Specialist in Human Relations Department and Member of the Gender Monitoring Team, Ministry of Defence of Georgia, Tbilisi Anne Sofie Stude , National focal point and Ambassador for UNSCR 1325 in Finland Cristina Figueroa Domecq and Jesus Palomo , Directors of the "UNSCR 1325 Reload" Project, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid

Third Session

Implementing UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in Ukraine: Challenges and Gaps of the Developing National Action Plan

Chair	Natalia Semeniuk , Lieutenant Colonel, Deputy Chief of Informational and Analytical Section, Civil-Military Cooperation Directorate of the Ukrainian Armed Forces
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The Role of Women and Gender Policies in Addressing the Military Conflict in Ukraine

Opening address	Vita Atamanchuk , Deputy Head of Kyrovograd State Oblast Administration
Speakers	Kateryna Levchenko , President, international women`s rights centre "La Strada Ukraine" Vitaliy Holota , Head of the Department of Military Social Work, Department of Moral Affairs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Maria Honyukova , 46th "Donbas-Ukraine" Detached Special-Purpose Battalion Olga Kopaniova , 46th "Donbas-Ukraine" Detached Special-Purpose Battalion Yulia Strybkova , Coordinator of the Women's Programme, Artan Training Centre Tetyana Dzhafarova , volunteer association "People's Rear" Mykola Tykhonov , Officer, "Karpatska Sich" Squadron, 93rd Separate Mechanised Brigade Igor Mykytyn , Director of the regional centre for providing free secondary legal aid in Lviv Oblast

Closing Remarks

22 September

Fourth Session (roundtable format)

Women as Agents of Change: Enhancing Female Participation into Decision Making Process and in Security Agencies in Ukraine

Chair	Irene Fellin , Gender Expert, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome
Speakers	Angelica Young , Senior Coordinator of NAPs, Institute for Inclusive Security, Washington Heather Huhtanen , Programme Manager, Gender and Security in Eastern Europe, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva Marusia Zvirobiiy , Chief, "Marusia's Training Range" Victoria Dvoretzka , Acting Deputy Squadron Commander, Aidar Battalion Oleksandr Potiomkin , Head of the Group on Moral Affairs, Chief Administration, Military Police of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Yuliia Laputina , Colonel, Deputy Head, Cyber Defence Department, Ukrainian Security Service

Ulana Suprun, Director of Humanitarian Initiatives, Ukrainian World Congress, and "Patriot Defence" founder

Roundtable

Experts Discussion and Recommendations for an Effective Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in Ukraine

Chair **Nona Mikhelidze**, Senior Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

Speakers **Tamar Tavartkiladze**, Gender Advisor of OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
Mavic Cabrera Balleza, International Coordinator, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, New York
Yvette Langenhuizen, Policy Officer (1325 NAP Advisor), J9/ Civil-Military Cooperation Branche, Dutch Ministry of Defence
Lidiya Kozub, Democracy Development Centre (DDC)

Wrap-Up

Closing Remarks and Recommendations to the Relevant Actors to Enhance the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in Ukraine

Representatives of the Ukraine's governmental bodies
Gianni Bonvicini, Executive Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome
Vitaliy Holota, Head of the Department of Military Social Work, Department of Moral Affairs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces
Liliia Honiukova, Board Member, Democracy Development Centre (DDC)

Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Founded by Altiero Spinelli in 1965, does research in the fields of foreign policy, political economy and international security. A non-profit organisation, the IAI aims to further and disseminate knowledge through research studies, conferences and publications. To that end, it cooperates with other research institutes, universities and foundations in Italy and abroad and is a member of various international networks. More specifically, the main research sectors are: European institutions and policies; Italian foreign policy; trends in the global economy and internationalisation processes in Italy; the Mediterranean and the Middle East; defence economy and policy; and transatlantic relations. The IAI publishes an English-language quarterly (*The International Spectator*), an online webzine (*AffariInternazionali*), two series of research papers (*Quaderni IAI* and *IAI Research Papers*) and other papers' series related to IAI research projects.

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- 15 | 17 Pier Domenico Tortola and Lorenzo Vai, *What Government for the European Union? Five Themes for Reflection and Action*
- 15 | 16 Silvia Colombo, *La crisi libica e il ruolo dell'Europa*
- 15 | 15 Serena Giusti, *La Politica europea di vicinato e la crisi in Ucraina*
- 15 | 14 Fabrizio Saccomanni, *The Report of the Five Presidents: A Missed Opportunity*
- 15 | 13 Luca Barana, *Promoting Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Building a Private-Public Partnership*
- 15 | 12 Umberto Marengo, *Il Piano Juncker per gli investimenti: potenzialità e problemi dell'implementazione*
- 15 | 11 Ramzi Ben Amara, *Changing Migration Patterns in the Mediterranean Region*
- 15 | 10 Andrea Dessì, *A Multilateral Approach to Ungoverned Spaces: Libya and Beyond*