

FMWC Women, Peace and Security Committee IBM Report – Feb. 2021

Respectfully Submitted by Committee Chair: Dr. Nahid Azad

Year 2020 was a landmark year for the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Beijing+25. A year that when discussions of feminist approaches to peace and security were even more relevant than before. However, the COVID 19 pandemic made the existing cracks in our societies and economies more visible. The impact of the pandemic felt most on Indigenous and racialized communities here in Canada and around the world.

The FMWC WPS is a formal member of the Canadian WPS- Network. Currently the network has 32 organizational and 53 individual members. The Canadian WPS Ambassador, Jacqui O'Neill, remains closely linked with ongoing discussions on priorities and strategies to the network. She offers regular virtual updates on the WPS agenda progress report and the government agencies. This includes research on WPS and COVID responding to the next progress report on the implementation of the Canadian National Action Plan (CNAP). The 2019-2020 progress report is delayed due to COVID to March 2021. Examples of the areas of focus are: Gender and disarmament; Forming Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security; making the Network more inclusive and diverse; Supporting antiracism and decolonial approaches; Contributing to the discussions on Canada's feminist foreign policy; Ongoing discussions with Jacqui O'Neill, on priorities, strategies and gains.; and Outreach to Parliamentarians.

On Nov. 24th, FMWC presented WPS Ambassador Jacqueline O'Neill in a virtual webinar to its membership. The webinar, in a Q&A format, was chaired by the FMWC president, Dr. Charissa Patricelli, and Dr. Karen Breeck. The president of the MWIA, Dr. Eleanor Nwadinobi, contributed to the discussion and Q&A session. In support of the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, WPS Committee looks forward to having a future webinar, open to all members, to discuss these important issues with the WPS Ambassador, Jacqui O'Neill. <https://www.ipinst.org/2019/10/focus-on-2020-opportunities-for-the-twentieth-anniversary-of-resolution-1325>

In relation to **Protection of Women's Rights - Sexual and Reproductive**, availability of a **rape kit** for testing is very variable across different regions in Canada. The Ontario Hospital Association as well as the government of Quebec identify that institutions treating people who have been sexually assaulted should have sexual assault evidence kits (SAEKs) available onsite. Two students from the WPS committee have created a list of available resources in our country for the FMWC website. Canadian Rape Kits Resources and Fact Sheet Written for the FMWC newsletter by Celina DeBiasio, Medical Student, University of Ottawa and Brintha Sivajohan, Medical Student, University of Western Ontario.

FMWC Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Committee ABM Report – Oct. 2020

Respectfully Submitted by Committee Chair: Dr. Nahid Azad

Background

The first United National Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) to highlight the importance of women to ensuring world peace and security was UNSCR 1325 adopted in Oct 2000.

Since that time all countries that have signed up in support of these resolutions have been encouraged to develop national action plans on how to move support into action. Canada developed its first five-year Canadian National Action Plan (C-NAP) in 2011. Each action plan is to support four pillars 1) meaningful participation of women at all decision-making levels 2) conflict prevention 3) protection of woman's rights (including sexual and reproductive) and 4) relief and recovery needs.

In response to the C-NAP, civil society coordinated its voice for monitoring and critiquing government through the development of the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-Canada.org) in 2012. WPSN has since established itself as a credible and sought-after voice in Canada on WPS issues and is actively involved in the monitoring of governments actions towards implementation of second CNAP action plan for 2017-2022.

FMWC signed on as a voting institutional member of the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada October 2017. The FMWC developed an internal WPS Committee with the TOR to educate, explore, advocate, and report to the membership both individually and institutionally how women physicians can best be involved in the support of WPS issues. FMWC committee members attend WPS-Network internal and external meetings and before COVID often attended in person Ottawa based political events (most of all which are now open to everyone to attend and participate with via zoom).

Committee Updates

1) WPS Pillar 1 - Meaningful Participation of Women

- a. **WPSN** - The WPSN is presently starting to focus energy on a “midterm” review of the progress made to date on the second CNAP (2017-2022) especially in light of the relatively limited progress made overall on these issues given the concurrent 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. Maybe its time to regroup and pivot the action plan towards a new approach or accountability method? Volunteers welcomed.
- b. **64th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women** in March 2019 in New York City was cancelled due to COVID-19.
- c. **Women Veteran Research and Engagement Network (WREN)**
[Federalretirees.ca/WREN](https://www.federalretirees.ca/WREN). WREN is a network of individuals and groups including WPSN and FMWC that wish to ensure women in uniform

(military/RCMP) completing WPS duties on UN missions also are provided safe, enabled workspaces free of sexual misconduct and with access to sexual and reproductive care and resources. WREN is co-chaired by FMWC member, and veteran, Dr. Karen Breeck

- d. **WPS Ambassador Jacqueline O'Neill.** In support of the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, WPS Committee looks forward to having a future webinar, open to all members, to discuss these important issues with the WPS Ambassador, Jacqueie O'Neill. <https://www.ipinst.org/2019/10/focus-on-2020-opportunities-for-the-twentieth-anniversary-of-resolution-1325>

2) WPS Pillar 2 - Conflict Prevention

- a. **Domestic Violence:** There is an uptick in conflict zones (WPS) but also worldwide thanks to COVID-19 lockdowns and stresses resulting in a call for more support around domestic violence and assault across the board domestic and internationally.
- b. **Supporting the Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns.**
 - i. A letter of support from our committee was sent to Senator McPhedran. <http://www.doctorsforprotectionfromguns.ca/> Bill C-71
 - ii. WPS committee advocacy for gun control and cross posting of gun-violence-and-medicine blog with the WPS-N <https://fmwc.ca/gun-violence-and-medicine/> · WPS committee Blogs: <https://fmwc.ca/advocacy/women-and-peace-advocacy-group/>
 - iii. A letter of support sent to CMA. <http://www.doctorsforprotectionfromguns.ca/> Bill C-71
- c. **Climate change's impact on women and global security advocacy:**
 - i. blog for the FMWC website- supporting Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, health recovery plan particularly about women and children. <https://cape.ca/healthy-recovery/>
 - ii. We need to develop an advocacy plan on gender and Climate change
 - iii. Resources: "How Canada can mobilize against climate emergency" <https://www.sethklein.ca/book> and "Green New Deal by the Council of Canadians" <https://canadians.org/greennewdeal>

3) WPS Pillar 3 - Protection of Women's Rights - Sexual and Reproductive Care

- a. **Action Plan to Improve Domestic Services for Unwanted Pregnancy:**

Based on prior survey by this committee, recognizing serious deficiencies in abortion education in medical curricula, the FMWC WPS will continue to advocate to Medical Educators and medical organizations about the need for much better abortion care education. The committee developed and finalized Fact sheets on abortion (Myths & Stereotypes) for both providers and public, in French and English, and will continue with advocacy to ensure appropriate sex and reproductive health care, including access to medication abortion, including to all deployed military women - Canadian and international on UN missions.

- b. **Rape kit:** availability of a rape kit for testing is very variable across different regions. Two medical students from this committee have offered to create a list of available resources in our country for the FMWC website.
- c. **Access to Sexual and Reproductive Services and Resources:** Action Canada was interested to know how providers of sexual and reproductive health services adapted to get a picture of what services were maintained, adapted, halted, or restricted during the pandemic. Action Canada Access Line is now under pressure. The number of calls to line has more than doubled, going from about 200 a month to close to 500. While abortion was reaffirmed as an essential service at the onset of the national pandemic response, we are now seeing restrictions to those services emerge that are beyond concerning. Access to abortion in those unusual circumstances might lead to better infrastructure for telemedicine which could lead to greater medical abortion access in remote communities. https://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/community_advisor/action-canada-for-sexual-health-and-rights/
- d. **MWIA has adopted 2 Resolutions:** MWIA is in support of establishing WPS committee. MWIA is also endorsing Support for abortion inclusive of medical/medication abortion access. An official letter from MWIA, signed by the MWIA President and Secretary General, was received on Aug.11th. 2020. There was a unanimous decision to endorse the WPS Special Interest Group after reviewing, my submitted draft concept note and annual work plan to advance the mission statement of MWIA.

Issues

- 1) **Review of the WPS Committee chair term:** It is the time for this new committee to reflect on its many advocacy accomplishments achieved over the last two years, any lessons learned, and what should our path be going forward and if the committee TOR and mission do, or don't, need updating. Concurrent to that, the cited two-year term of the chair of the committee is coming to an end. *Dr. Azad wondered if any member was interested in being the next chair or the co-chair?*
- 2) **UN Department of Global Communications:** Dr. Padmini Murthy, Secretary General of MWIA, is a member of a committee of this UN Department. The Australian, American, and Nigerian women's medical associations are members of this department. There is no cost to the application. *Seeking FMWC board approval to apply for membership.*
- 3) **WPS Ambassador Webinar:** Originally this was set up as an Ottawa local event but with COVID the event is now switched to Zoom. Given the possibilities of zoom – how to best approach this opportunity this fall? Should the event be targeted only for FMWC members i.e. a perk of membership? Or target FMWC and invite the US AMA members i.e. embrace MWIA links? Or encourage all women physicians to attend i.e. CWIM i.e. a membership drive focus? *Seeking guidance on who to target as the audience for this event.*