POLICY BRIEF

A new analytical framework for addressing the intersections of violence against women and girls with post-conflict state-building and peace-building processes

Background

There has been increased recognition by the international community in recent years that addressing women's rights is integral to the ways that post-conflict transition is advanced, and crucial to its overall success.[1] This includes acknowledging and confronting the violence against women and girls (VAWG) that occurs both during the conflict itself and during the transition to peace. Despite the considerable attention given to this issue, both the theory and practice of post-conflict state-building and peace-building (SBPB) processes routinely ignore issues of gender equality and VAWG.[2] This inattention misses a window of opportunity to advance women's rights presented by the cessation of armed conflict and the re-establishment and further development of state structures in the post-conflict period.[3] It is critical that policymakers and other key stakeholders capitalise on this opportunity, as harmful gender roles and inequitable power relations remain resilient after conflict ends.[4]

A strategic review of the literature on VAWG and SBPB reveals that:

- Rates of VAWG, including forms of violence not traditionally considered conflict-related, are high during and after periods of conflict and have lasting effects on the lives of women and girls. However, VAWG is often not sufficiently addressed in state-building and peace-building efforts.

- VAWG and conflict may have many common drivers, including patriarchy and gender discrimination, that impact peace and conflict at all levels.

- Women are frequently excluded from both peace processes and wider political participation in conflict and post-conflict settings. Institutions that work on women's rights (government and civil society) play a significant role in the efforts to eliminate VAWG and in the advancement of more peaceful societies.

- The post-conflict period provides an opportunity to advance policy and legal frameworks addressing VAWG. However, despite progress in policy and legal reform, service delivery to address and reduce violence against women and girls is insufficient in post-conflict contexts, reducing trust in and legitimacy of state structures meant to provide services.

This brief presents an overview of a new analytical framework that explores the intersections of VAWG and SBPB. This framework addresses the critical relationship between SBPB and VAWG: both the way that SBPB strategies may affect VAWG, and the possibility that VAWG may contribute to continued conflict and fragility. These frameworks assist with critical assessment of policy and practice, including considerations such as: In a conflict-affected country, how is VAWG related to efforts to achieve peace and stability? How has VAWG prevention been integrated and addressed within post-conflict state-building policy and programming? What effects do security and justice (and other) reform processes have on VAWG and on the lives of women and girls? These and other questions can be explored by applying the combined analytical framework to further studies and the development of policy and practice.
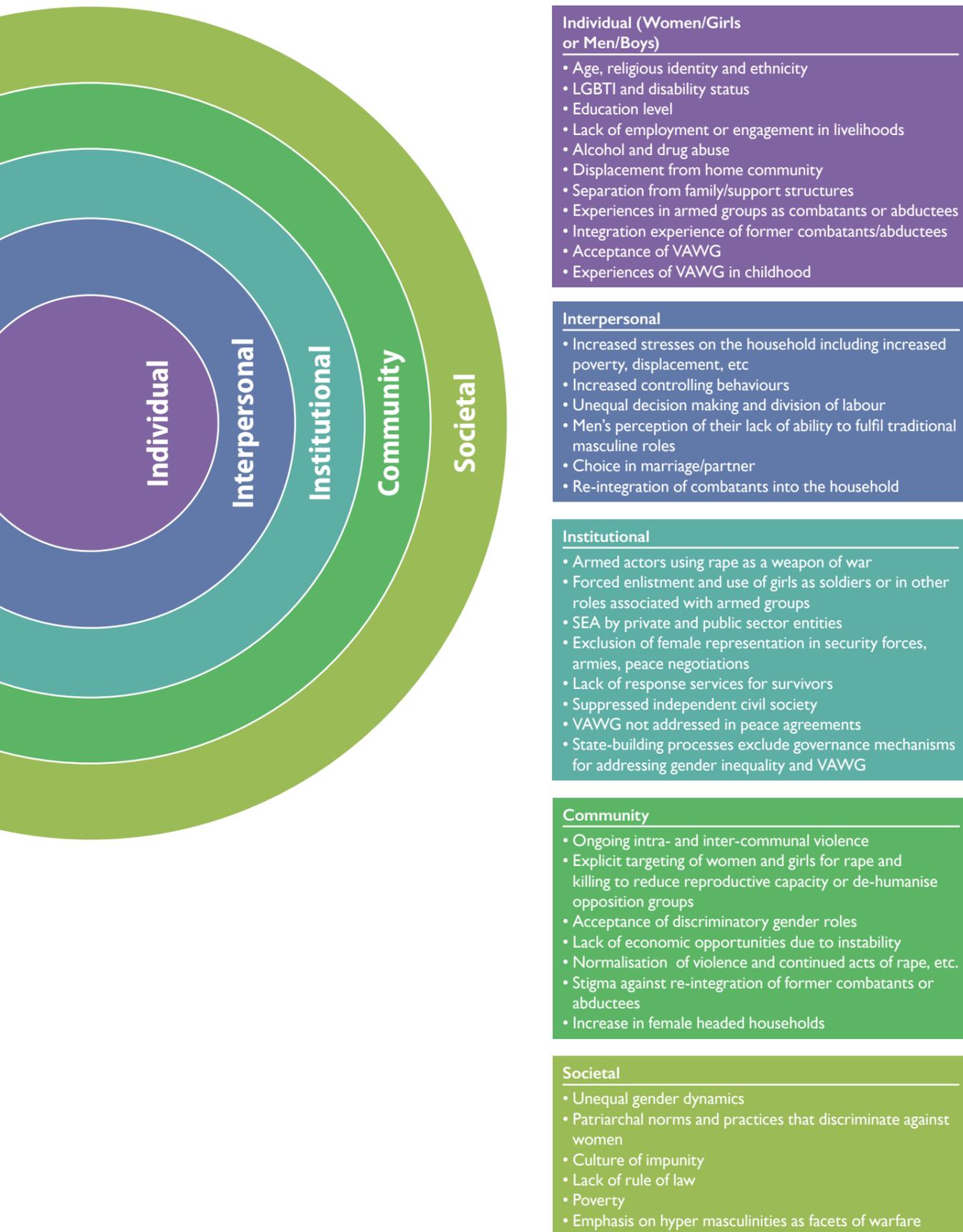
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1   See UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242; Stone, L. 'Annex II: Quantitative Analysis of Women's Participation in Peace Processes' in O'Reilly, M., Ó Súilleabháin, A. and Paffenholz, T. Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015.
2   Castellijo, C. 2012, 'Gender, fragility and the politics of statebuilding,' NOREF; Handrahan, L. (2004) 'Conflict, Gender, Ethnicity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction' Security Dialogue, 35, 4: 429–445; Zuckerman, E & Greenberg, M. 2004, 'The Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: An Analytical Framework for Policymakers' in Gender and Development, 12, 3: 70-82
3   Manchanda, M. 2005, 'Women's Agency in Peace Building: Gender Relations in Post-Conflict Reconstruction' in Economic and Political Weekly, 40, 44/45: 4737-4745; UN Women 2012, 'A Window of Opportunity: Making Transitional Justice Work for Women,' New York: UN Women
4   Domingo, P., Holmes, R., Rocha Menocal, A. et al. 2013, 'Assessment of the evidence of links between gender equality, peacebuilding and statebuilding: Literature Review,' London: Overseas Development Institute

Figure 1: An Ecological model for drivers of conflict and post-conflict VAWG

Individual (Women/Girls or Men/Boys)
- Age, religious identity and ethnicity
- LGBTI and disability status
- Education level
- Lack of employment or engagement in livelihoods
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Displacement from home community
- Separation from family/support structures
- Experiences in armed groups as combatants or abductees
- Integration experience of former combatants/abductees
- Acceptance of VAWG
- Experiences of VAWG in childhood

Interpersonal
- Increased stresses on the household including increased poverty, displacement, etc
- Increased controlling behaviours
- Unequal decision making and division of labour
- Men's perception of their lack of ability to fulfil traditional masculine roles
- Choice in marriage/partner
- Re-integration of combatants into the household

Institutional
- Armed actors using rape as a weapon of war
- Forced enlistment and use of girls as soldiers or in other roles associated with armed groups
- SEA by private and public sector entities
- Exclusion of female representation in security forces, armies, peace negotiations
- Lack of response services for survivors
- Suppressed independent civil society
- VAWG not addressed in peace agreements
- State-building processes exclude governance mechanisms for addressing gender inequality and VAWG

Community
- Ongoing intra- and inter-communal violence
- Explicit targeting of women and girls for rape and killing to reduce reproductive capacity or de-humanise opposition groups
- Acceptance of discriminatory gender roles
- Lack of economic opportunities due to instability
- Normalisation of violence and continued acts of rape, etc.
- Stigma against re-integration of former combatants or abductees
- Increase in female headed households

Societal
- Unequal gender dynamics
- Patriarchal norms and practices that discriminate against women
- Culture of impunity
- Lack of rule of law
- Poverty
- Emphasis on hyper masculinities as facets of warfare

Adapting the ecological model to address conflict/post-conflict VAWG

The risk for a woman or girl of experiencing violence can be understood using a framework known as an "ecological model"[5]. Using this model, an individual's experience of violence, and associated health outcomes, result when a person's individual background and experiences interact with broader personal and social relationships. To promote a gendered approach to SBPB, the ecological framework was adapted to address VAWG in conflict/post-conflict settings **(Figure 1)**. The new framework combines existing knowledge on VAWG and SBPB, outlining potential drivers of VAWG within and outside of armed conflict. This includes enduring drivers of VAWG in both conflict and peacetime, as well as drivers that have been identified as distinctive to and associated with conflict. This adaptation of the model to a conflict/post-conflict context includes a new category of "institutions", bringing into focus the effects of formal state and non-state actors that arise in armed conflicts, and may deliberately or inadvertently influence specific risks of VAWG.

This model demonstrates that many drivers of VAWG in conflict and post-conflict settings are similar to those that drive VAWG outside of and before conflict. In fact, this status-quo inevitably influences women's continuing experiences of that violence and the ways it may endure during conflict. Policymakers need to consider these drivers of VAWG holistically and prioritise programming that addresses the root causes of this violence - systematic inequality, patriarchal social norms, and power imbalances - in order to promote peace within the home as well as the wider community. This new framework addresses critical gaps between the perspectives of scholars, policy makers and practitioners focused on conflict-related VAWG and those focused on state-building and peace-building. This should help both communities to formulate comprehensive policymaking and programming that address the root causes of violence before, during, and after conflict.
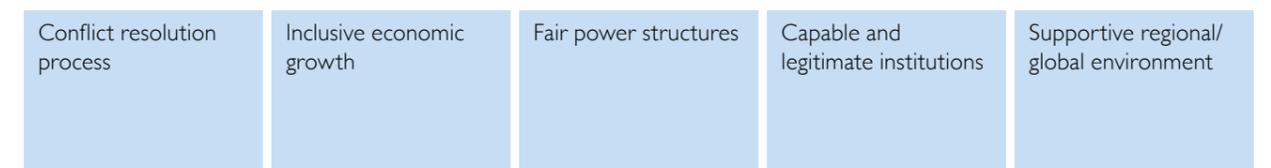
A framework for advancing SBPB

A range of analytical approaches has been developed globally to advance both state-building and peace-building practice in post-conflict settings. The UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) has developed several versions of SBPB frameworks, including the 'Building Stability Framework'. This framework sets out a clear rationale for fair, inclusive, and sustainable SBPB, encompassed in five building blocks **(Figure 2)**.

The 'Building Stability Framework' encourages analysis and response at the following levels: people, state (local and national) and global. It also recognises that change at the levels of people and local governance has been overlooked in earlier global SBPB models. This approach to SBPB provides an opportunity for the meaningful engagement of gender equality and VAWG in the SBPB process.

A combined analytical framework for addressing conflict/post-conflict VAWG in SBPB processes

A combination of the new ecological model and the 'Building Stability Framework' for SBPB offers an opportunity to understand and address the intersections of VAWG and SBPB processes. This combined conceptual framework 1) explores the drivers of VAWG, including those specifically related to conflict and post-conflict dynamics; 2) identifies where and how VAWG might be addressed at key moments in both state-building and peace-building; and 3) analyses these drivers and entry points across the five key building blocks of SBPB presented in the 'Building Stability Framework'. Each building block of SBPB offers several areas for policymakers to address VAWG and gender inequality to achieve positive outcomes. A detailed example of these entry points, strategies, and outcomes across building blocks is presented in **Figure 3**. The list of thematic issues within the framework is not exhaustive, but provides a 'sample' of ways that aspects of SBPB can be analysed and used as entry points for addressing VAWG.[6] This framework should be adapted uniquely for analysis in each post-conflict context.

Figure 2

Conflict resolution process	Inclusive economic growth	Fair power structures	Capable and legitimate institutions	Supportive regional/global environment

5   Heise, L. L. 1998 "Violence against women: An integrated, ecological framework." Violence Against Women. 4, 262-290
6   The full report on the combined analytical framework can be found here: Swaine, A., Spearing, M., Murphy, M., & Contreras, M. 2018. 'Exploring the intersection of violence against women and girls with post-conflict state-building and peace-building processes: A New Analytical Framework'

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In each of these building blocks, there are opportunities identified for policymakers to address VAWG. For example, in Conflict Resolution and Peace Processes, the inclusion of women in peace agreement negotiations is identified as a key strategy for policymakers. South Sudan offers a clear illustration of the differences seen in peace agreements that engage women versus those that do not within the same context (see Box). This is just one example of many strategic opportunities to address VAWG in SBPB processes across the five building blocks.

> ### The 'Women's Bloc' and VAWG in South Sudan
>
> South Sudan had been embroiled off and on in a decades-long conflict for independence from Sudan. In the lead up to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, women were almost completely excluded from the negotiations. This led to a peace agreement that was completely gender-blind and did not acknowledge that VAWG occurred during the conflict and would continue to affect women as the country transitioned to independence. Comparatively, the process to negotiate the 2013 Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan saw much stronger participation of women – who coalesced into a ''Women's Bloc'' that had a representative formally sign the peace agreement on behalf of the bloc. The advocacy of these women ensured that VAWG was included.[7]

Figure 3

SBPB processes	SBPB strategies addressing VAWG and gender inequality	Potential positive outcomes of stability and peace strategies to address VAWG and gender inequality
1. Conflict resolution and peace processes		
Peace process and outcome agreement	• Gendered conflict analysis informs the entire process, leading to the fulfilment of the following requirements: • Gender balanced participation in the peace process. • VAWG is included as a specific issue within the peace process and final peace agreement (e.g. inclusion of a mechanism for transitional justice and/or reparations). • Gender equality and inclusion of women in governance reforms (e.g. adoption of quotas). • Amnesties for VAWG during conflict are prohibited. • Women's rights and VAWG are considered by transitional administrations and decision-making forums (e.g. development of new gender policies, legal frameworks around VAWG). • Conflict analysis and monitoring mechanisms include indicators on VAWG (e.g. tracking reported cases of CRSV, monitoring for escalations in patriarchal practices such as increases in costs of bride price, reduction of girls enrolled in school).	• Gendered dimensions of conflict and peace are understood and addressed in peace process. • Accountability for perpetrators of conflict-related VAWG. • Reduced stigma for conflict-related and ongoing forms of VAWG. • Improved understanding/consideration of women's rights and VAWG in governmental and decision-making bodies. • Gender norms, relations and practices that disadvantage women and girls and increase likelihood of VAWG are identified and addressed. • Behaviour-change communications including strategies to raise awareness of VAWG as an issue help to create peaceful homes and society. • VAWG and attached stigma are recognised as potential triggers of conflict-related tensions.
Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes	• Gender norms, relations and practices that disadvantage women and girls and increase the likelihood of VAWG are identified and addressed (e.g. patriarchal practices and social norms such as forced marriage, wife inheritance, and discrimination in school enrolment). • Specific provisions to respond to women and girls as combatants/ forced recruits/ forced marriages/sexual slavery (e.g. provision of psychosocial support, culturally appropriate livelihoods opportunities for women, healing and reconciliation services with families and communities). • Specific provisions to mitigate against VAWG in home and communities by returning combatants (e.g. tackling drug and alcohol use during conflict period). • Address gender roles in communities upon return of combatants and the displaced, particularly during community reconciliation efforts (e.g. social norm change programming specifically adapted to post-conflict period and the norms engendered by conflict).	• Improved reintegration of women and girls associated with armed groups. • Increased mechanisms and programmes to prevent perpetration of IPV and other forms of violence by returning combatants. • Increased mechanisms and programmes that provide psycho-social support and reintegration for women who suffer negative experiences during conflict.
Transitional justice	• Gender balance is achieved in procedural make-up of judicial or quasi-judicial mechanism, including reparation. • Specific provisions to document and address VAWG and broader experiences of women and girls in the conflict (e.g. explicit inclusion of CRSV in transitional justice efforts, hybrid approaches that utilise formal and/or gender-sensitive informal mechanisms based what women and girls in the context find useful). • Specific provisions to make connections to and address VAWG related to the pre and post-conflict period, including the establishment of justice systems that reduce or remove barriers to accessing justice for survivors of VAWG. • Specific provisions to redress conflict-related VAWG, including reparation, fistula repair, long-term mental health support and programmes to address social stigma, reparation and compensation.	• Reduced perpetrator impunity for VAWG in conflict and post-conflict periods by prosecuting perpetrators through the legal system. • VAWG formally recognised as a crime, helping to debunk myths, stigma and health impacts that can lead to further exclusions and VAWG. • Improved access to services (health, psychosocial, etc.) for survivors. • Women and girls' experiences receive formal acknowledgement and reparation. • Messaging from justice mechanisms that conflict-related VAWG is related to pre and post-conflict and discriminatory norms.

7   The Global Women's Institute, CARE International, International Rescue Committee. 2018, 'Exploring the intersections of violence against women and girls and state-building and peace-building: lessons from Nepal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan,'

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SBPB processes	SBPB strategies addressing VAWG and gender inequality	Potential positive outcomes of stability and peace strategies to address VAWG and gender inequality
2. Inclusive economic growth		
Employment and livelihoods	• Economic interventions that stabilise households (e.g. cash transfers, livelihoods training programs, saving and lending programs, linkages to micro-credit). • Economic interventions tailored to men and women, male and female ex-fighters and abductees (e.g. gender analysis for training opportunities so that members of both sexes have opportunities to find work that fits the cultural norms, encourage women and girls to peruse non-traditional occupations where they are interested). • Reduction of barriers for women to participate in livelihoods programming and incorporation of gender into economic development initiatives (e.g. provision of childcare, flexible hours of trainings, women targeted for leadership training). • Gender analysis used to understand and plan for a reduction in potential tensions between men and women in recalibration of roles post-conflict.	• Increased empowerment and financial independence of women and girls. • Increased number of interventions, including cash transfer programmes that reduce household financial stresses. • Increased economic participation of women who were directly affected by the conflict.
3. Fair power structures and the policy environment		
State-civic relationship	• Open and inclusive approaches are taken to proactively engage women and promote women in leadership positions across government to formulate laws, policies and strategies on VAWG. • Clear consultation strategies with civil society, including women's organisations.	• Improved relationship between governmental institutions and women's rights organisations. • Civil society organisations that support survivors of VAWG are strengthened and funded.
Voices of women and girls	• Specific VAWG forums are held that are tailored to be inclusive to women and girls (e.g. part of efforts to promote social dialogue between government, communities, civil societies, etc.).	• Increased forums and campaigns that address VAWG and incorporate the perspectives of girls and women themselves.
Policies and legal frameworks that specifically address VAWG	• Policies and strategies are adopted specifically to address VAWG (past conflict incidents and current incidents) in all sectors (gender, health, legal, security, etc.), including: standard operating procedures to manage cases of VAWG, use of one-stop centres to break down barriers for service provision, etc. • Legal frameworks revised/adopted on VAWG and gender equality provisions (e.g. adoption of domestic violence laws, codification of marital rape as rape, consistent punitive actions across informal and formal legal structures).	• Improved policies related to VAWG across sectors including national gender policies, protocols to care for and refer VAWG within the health system, policies to promote women and girls in security services, etc. • Existence of national laws with associated criminal sanctions for perpetrators.

SBPB processes	SBPB strategies addressing VAWG and gender inequality	Potential positive outcomes of stability and peace strategies to address VAWG and gender inequality
4. Capable and legitimate institutions		
Health sector	• Reform process includes provisions for gender balance and VAWG expertise in staffing (e.g. accessible female health staff trained in clinical management of rape). • Specific measures in place to deal with health outcomes of conflict-related VAWG (e.g. fistula repair, HIV/AIDs and other STD testing and treatment, provision of mental health and psychosocial support). • Budget for health sector efforts to address VAWG.	• Increased number of health units that have adopted mechanisms to deal with health outcomes of conflict-related VAWG. • Increased proportion of health staff trained to prevent and respond to VAWG. • Existence of specific governmental budget allocated to VAWG within the health sector.
Justice sector (and overall justice chain)	• Reform process includes provisions for gender balance in judiciary. • Resources are attributed to make justice chain responsive to VAWG (past conflict incidents and current incidents), for example provision of gender desks at police units. • Reform of informal justice systems to address patriarchal and victim blaming practices. • Budget for justice sector efforts to address VAWG.	• Increased justice for conflict-related and ongoing VAWG contributes to accountability deficit and peace. • Increased number of women subjected to violence who report to the justice system. • Existence of specific governmental budget allocated to VAWG within the justice sector.
Security sector	• Reform process including provisions for gender balance in recruits. • Academy curriculum includes modules on prevention and response to VAWG. • Availability of expertise and resources to address VAWG (past conflict incidents and current incidents). • Budget for security sector efforts to address VAWG. • VAWG considered as an early warning indicator for recurring political tensions (e.g. monitoring reported cases of violence, rises in inter-communal tensions around bride price, marriage, or targeted abductions/rape).	• Reduced VAWG perpetrated by security forces. • Increased proportion of women enrolled in police and armed forces. • Increased security for women and girls in the community and public spaces. • Increased safety and mobility for women and girls, which increases contribution to the economy and public processes. • Existence of specific governmental budget allocated to VAWG within the security sector.

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SBPB processes	SBPB strategies addressing VAWG and gender inequality	Potential positive outcomes of stability and peace strategies to address VAWG and gender inequality
Education sector	• Overall curriculum is revised in relation to gender stereotypes and inequalities. • Issues of conflict resolution in curriculum include VAWG. • Ensure gender balance among teachers and administrators and take measures to address VAWG in schools (e.g. gender segregated toilets, confidential reporting mechanisms for incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse). • Budget for education sector efforts to address VAWG.	• Existence of educational programmes that include actions to promote gender equality and prevention of VAWG, including modifications to the curriculum. • Schools are seen as safe spaces for girls and VAWG isn't a barrier for attendance. • Increased proportion of women in decision-making positions within the education sector. • Existence of specific governmental budget allocated to VAWG within the education sector.
Specific governmental ministry/department on gender equality/VAWG	• Ministry / department is adequately resourced and politically supported to drive actions to address VAWG (past conflict incidents and current incidents) and address root causes of VAWG, such as gender inequality. • Budget for ministry/governmental efforts to address VAWG.	• Increased ability for the state to build awareness of VAWG issues and offer response services. • Increased national budget to address VAWG. • Improved overall cross-government actions to address VAWG. • Existence of specific VAWG and women, peace and security programmes.

5. Supportive regional/global environment

SBPB processes	SBPB strategies addressing VAWG and gender inequality	Potential positive outcomes of stability and peace strategies to address VAWG and gender inequality
International community supports the process politically and financially	• Regional, global and national frameworks on gender equality and VAWG are used for development of and implemented through SBPB strategies. • Frameworks for multilateral processes, such as OECD and UN Sustaining Peace agenda, consider the gendered nature of conflict and its impacts. • External funding is earmarked to support women's participation in SBPB and address specific issues of concern to women, including VAWG. • External funding and political support are provided to post-conflict states to establish a national women's machinery. • External funding and political support are provided for post-conflict states to fulfil international obligations, including CEDAW reporting obligations, and developing national action plans on VAWG as well as women, peace and security. • Funding baskets are established to address VAWG programming, as well as attention to this issue through transitional justice mechanisms.	• Global standards of women's rights are sustained through SBPB processes, inculcating inclusive and equitable processes which contribute to stability. • Needs of women in SBPB are recognised by the international community and strategies to meet these needs receive funding. • Global normative frameworks are adopted to national context and used as barometer for SBPB processes. • Multi-sectorial response programming is in place and working to prevent and respond to VAWG, contributing to stability within and outside the home.