



Gender Perspective during TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15 CPX



Appointed last year, JWC's Gender Focal Points had the opportunity to apply their learning during exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15, and they have already left an imprint.

Sarah Denieul and Sonia Bjerke Abdelmaguid explain how.

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Apart from your primary jobs in Exercise and Training Administration and Linguistic Service respectively, you both took part in TRIDENT JUNCTURE (TRJE15) as acting Gender Advisors. Can you explain your role?

— During the execution of TRJE15, we held a gender advisory role in the Situation Centre (SITCEN) within the Exercise Control (EXCON). Prior to learning of our possible involvement in the execution phase, we both had participated in the Main Events List/Main Incidents List (MEL/MIL) workshops. Foreseeing a rapidly approaching involvement for the gender community, we quickly decided upon an initial and two-fold course of action: (1) reinforce our hitherto lean grasp of an exercise cycle and of the Sorotan scenario, whilst (2) deepening our knowledge and exploring the scope of gender perspective within an exercise setting. With no prior involvement in exercises, it was indispensable to interact with representatives from the international organizations and non-governmental organizations (IOs/NGOs) and shadow the Brunssum Gender Advisor (GENAD) who contributed signif-

icantly during both the incident development phase and inject scripting. More specifically, in the execution of TRJE15, our task was to go through stand-alone or integrated gender-related injects to be played and ensure compliance with the Training Audience's Training Objectives. In the absence of a trainer/mentor GENAD within the Training Team in Zaragoza, it became vital to have GENAD representation at least in the SITCEN in Stavanger. Our role, with valuable support from three colleagues from our gender community, was to monitor the injects related directly or indirectly to gender and to act as a reach back element for the White Cell and for the EXCON Response Cells.

Why was it important for the JWC to have a GENAD represented in TRJE15? In your view, is it equally important to incorporate gender into future exercises too?

— For this high-visibility exercise to comply with the NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 and the NATO/EAPC Action Plan, as well as to enable the Training Audience to take full advantage of the complex setting that the Sorotan sce-

nario provided, there was no other way to go; a GENAD had to be represented in EXCON, and ideally both in SITCEN and in the trainer/mentor team. Moreover, 15 years have passed since NATO first recognized UNSCR 1325, and eight years have passed since NATO adopted an Action Plan on implementing these resolutions into all its activities, including exercises and operations. In 2016, NATO's commitment to UNSCR 1325 will undergo scrutiny in the form of an audit. In other words, it was high time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. For TRJE15, we were perfectly aware that nested inside both the Operations Plan (OPLAN) and Exercise Plan (EXPLAN) were specific gender Training Objectives, and that within the Training Audience from the Joint Task Force HQ and the Canadian Multinational Task Force were GENADs who were expecting a scenario with challenging gender content.

How do you ensure that gender is integrated into an operational level exercise?

— If we understand an operational level exercise as an exercise in which the Joint Force





Above (from left): Sonia B. Abdelmaguid at SITCEN during the exercise. JWC's dual-hatted GENAD U.S. Army Major Adrian Sullivan. Sarah Denieul and Sonia B. Abdelmaguid during a JWC Gender Focal Point meeting prior to the exercise. Photos by JWC PAO.

Command's processes rather than results are tested, then integrating gender perspective into an exercise of this scale is not as simple as injecting an individual occurrence of rape within a conflict zone! With thousands of scripted injects, some injects never make it to execution. In order to make sure that a gender story makes the cut, it needs to fit nicely into the overall dilemma, not just as an "add-on". It is also important to clearly define expected and desired outcomes and coordinate across events. In compliance with the NATO Directive 40-1 and the NATO/EAPC Action Plan, it was important to approach the task through the UNSCR 1325 principles of prevention, protection, and participation.

For TRJE15, the Training Audience requested that gender be divided into the eight Gender Lines of Support (GLoS) outlined in the JFCBS EXPLAN: Security Forces Assistance, Security and Protection of Women and Vulnerable Groups, Gender and Rule of Law, Women's Access to Public Services, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Gender in Humanitarian Assistance, Women's Participation in Decision-Making, Political and Peace Processes and Human Trafficking.

We had also observed that when a gender perspective is applied to humanitarian disaster settings, the spotlight is almost exclusively on protection. This does not, however, reflect reality. While one of the main gender focuses in exercise TRJE15 was indeed

on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with women and children being highlighted, applying a gender perspective or lens goes way beyond "just" protecting women and children. The social gender, as opposed to the biological gender, should be analyzed for all areas of operation, regardless of the geographical setting for the scenario, and the stories created should depict not only the vulnerabilities of local populations, but also their strengths.

In any operation you would collect sex-disaggregated data and analyze what identifies men's and women's patterns of mobility, divisions of labour, political standing, access to resources, participation in the conflict and risks of being targeted by violence. These analyses form the creation of challenging and varied gender-related content. The story needs to be monitored as it unfolds, and the right questions need to be asked: How do we convert an inject where there has been a rumour of an abduction case with the perpetrator allegedly being a member of the NATO forces into a story that will really trigger well-oiled processes of monitoring and reporting, coordination with civilian IOs and NGOs, investigation and thorough knowledge of reference documents and policies? Who are most often the victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war? How will the CIMIC unit react when they walk into a local hospital and find only male patients? Will the Commander accept an invitation to a conference hosted by

the largest regional women's organization even though the warfighting situation is tense and priorities might clash? Could a NATO Strategic Communications campaign solve the issue of disgruntled populations, so that hearts and minds remain with the Alliance? How do the typical local gender stereotypes change during the armed conflict and what are the roles and activities assumed by girls in fighting forces (e.g. combat soldiers, looting, suicide bombers, mine sweepers, spies, messengers etc.)? How will the NATO Maritime Component Command report when they find a ship with victims of human trafficking; will they hand over minors to Save the Children and will they have a mixed engagement team in place? What challenges will NATO troops face when training women and men in local armed forces? How will the CIMIC unit report when they find hundreds of commuting children sleeping in the basement of a main hospital? Have NATO troops ensured that men, women and children prisoners of war are kept in separate detention facilities? Will the Commander divert more assets than normal to rescue a female pilot who has crashed in the opposing forces' waters? These are indeed very important questions with gender perspective, but not all of them apply to TRJE15.

What have been some of the highlights during the execution phase?

— One highlight was when Deputy Commander of the Joint Task Force, during one



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Above, left: The 15th Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325—Adopted on 31 October 2000, 1325 is the first United Nations Security Council Resolution to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. Photo by UN/Devra Berkowitz. **Right:** Mother and child in a community clinic in rural Bangladesh. Photo by UN/Mark Garten.

of the daily Situational Awareness Briefings, underlined that the responsibility for integrating gender perspective should be moved away from one individual, the GENAD, and rather be streamlined into all processes. Reading between the lines, gender perspective is a cross-cutting enabler that should become organic to a force rather than remaining the object of a dedicated programme. Another highlight was our conversation with Major General (Ret.) Roger Lane, TRJE15's Senior Advisor, whose ability to contextualize gender issues in conflict zones has been very valuable. A desired and conceivably attained outcome, rather than a highlight, was to see how the stories we had created came to life and appeared throughout the execution, such as the fictitious NAWOL (National Association of Women's Organizations in Lakuta, inspired by similar real life organizations) and the story of the hundreds of night commuters who were discovered by our CIMIC unit in the basement of the city's main hospital. Last but not least, an important desired and achieved outcome would be that a visible presence and contribution within EX-

CON has helped to put gender perspective on the JWC exercise map, so to speak.

Did you face any challenges?

— Our foremost challenge was due to a small hiccup prior to STARTEX, which left us only two days to prepare for execution. Obviously this resulted in the absence of a two-way direction and guidance in relation to our SITCEN role. However, through a last-minute and quasi-heroic effort on the part of one of the Event Managers and the SITCEN Officer of Primary Responsibility (OPR), two unplanned seats were found for us in Stavanger. It is important to understand that this was the first time that a GENAD placard (or two!) had ever graced the monitors of the SITCEN! By regularly searching through the Training Audience's products, closely monitoring human terrain-related injects and an appreciable measure of willingness from colleagues in SITCEN, White Cell and Response Cells, we were gradually able to obtain and give a more comprehensive picture of how our gender-related injects were being addressed by the Training Audience.

What is the way ahead for the gender community at the JWC?

— Until basic gender perspective training becomes mandatory for all NATO personnel, there will be a continuous need to reframe this much misunderstood and misinterpreted capability. Our endeavor will be to streamline gender into all processes, liaise with the wider ACO and ACT gender community and represent JWC at workshops and seminars, where possible. NATO's Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into the NATO Command Structure) is in the process of being updated and JWC will follow the ensuing direction and guidance. The JWC Action Plan on Gender will similarly undergo adjustments and indicators relating to goals will be closely monitored. Finally, we are also working on how to better divide exercise participation while maintaining continuity, because TRJE15 will certainly not be our last challenge! Hopefully, our contribution, while definitely needing refinement and optimization, has helped to legitimize this capability in the JWC exercise arena. †