

# A Canadian Red Cross paper submitted as part of the 2016 Public Consultations for the Defense Policy Review



## Key points

1. Gender analysis and accountability is essential
2. Action on SGBV & specific Canadian Government commitments with the Red Cross
3. Training and IHL
4. Update the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

## Gender Analysis and Accountability

- An explicit gender analysis, preferably using **GBA +** (as the CAF already is using) is essential, as part of the overall contextual analysis for complex environments. *[The **GBA +** analysis examines the dynamics between all genders including men, women, boys and girls and those who identify outside of these categories, within a particular context, specifically focusing on power, privilege and access, and is an essential step to ensure that humanitarian assistance is accessible to those most in need and to those most vulnerable.]*
- **GBA+** must be used with a commitment to be held accountable for its implementation as well as the funding to move from analysis to action.

## Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- The CAF should (in both its training and operations) acknowledge and be prepared to respond to sexual violence related to conflict as well as sexual and gender-based violence during times of disaster. *[this should not be conflated with doing a gender analysis (GBA +) as described above. Responding to SGBV does not replace the gender analysis that is needed at the forefront. A gender analysis is much broader and helps direct the response and type of activities needed beyond responding to SGBV to ensure that all of the humanitarian needs of the population are met]*
- The CRC is already working with the CAF on a number of initiatives which will improve training and response to SGBV in conflicts and disasters. Key elements of prevention are raising awareness; increasing understanding; and highlighting possible roles and responsibilities during any government intervention, whether that be armed or otherwise, in both conflict and disasters responses.
- At the International Red Cross Conference in December 2015 the Canadian Government agreed to Resolution 3 on Sexual and Gender Based Violence which highlights, among other responsibilities, the roles and responsibilities of militaries:
  - To prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by their own troops
  - To immediately cease all acts of sexual violence
  - To adopt and enforce a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual violence
  - To ensure that there are appropriate internal systems for monitoring, and responding to sexual violence that are sensitive to the needs of victims/survivors

- To ensure that there is specific training for personnel who may need to respond to instances of sexual violence in armed conflict.
- At the same conference, the Canadian government and the CRC signed a joint pledge which commits the Canadian Government and the CRC for 2015-2019 to:
  - Work within respective mandates and priorities to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and other crisis situations;
  - Work to disseminate IHL including existing provisions that prohibit sexual violence as widely as possible in military instruction;
  - Continue to ensure that knowledge and understanding of existing prohibitions of sexual violence are fully integrated into the planning of operations of armed forces including relevant aspects of doctrine, training and exercises; and
  - Work to share these experiences and good practices where appropriate with other militaries and the International Conference

## **Training and IHL**

- IHL reminds all States that they are obliged to use appropriate means to investigate and prosecute those who are alleged to have committed sexual-based crimes.
- Training on IHL is one way of attempting to prevent SGBV in conflict as IHL (and international criminal law) already includes specific prohibitions on the use of sexual violence both against civilians and those engaged in the fighting.
- The CRC recommends that the CAF increase their own training on SGBV and protection of the medical mission; and that when working with other armed forces around the world, the CAF should include this messaging in that training.

## **Action Plan of Women, Peace and Security**

- The CRC urges the Ministry of Defence and the CAF to continue to implement where relevant the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which would be coherent with a feminist foreign policy. In this regard, it is essential that the government of Canada update and implement an ambitious Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, with a focus on results and accountability.