Chairs: Michael Mills & Jenna Kapp

Zambia: More Women Needed in Polls
The ruling political part in Zambia, the Patriotic Front, has emphasized the need for women to participate more in politics. Edgar Lungu, the President and leader of the Patriotic Front, has stated that their party will allow 40 percent of the seats in parliament to be held by women in the upcoming tripartite elections. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, which Zambia has ratified, would have its objectives of development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes, and projects, advanced through this move. Increasing the participation of women within the government has been shown by studies to increase attention to women’s issues. Hopefully with this move, other nations will follow in allowing women to fully participate within their governments.

Afghanistan: Include Women in New Peace Talks
In January of 2016, a meeting was set to take place between Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and China to discuss the revival of peace within Afghanistan. Human Rights Watch had advocated for the inclusion of women within the peace process. Afghan women’s rights activists have long feared that not including women in the talks between the Taliban and the government would result in the Afghani government trading away women’s rights in order to please the Taliban. Before the meeting the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, had promised to include women in the peace talks but those words appeared to be empty promises. Afghan women’s rights activists have cited Security Council Resolution 1325, which stressed the importance of including women within the peace process during the resolution of conflicts. The Afghani government has pledged to implement this resolution by the year 2022 but we will see if they uphold this promise.

Growth of IS See’s Female Terrorist Numbers Rise in Indonesia
Women’s roles in terrorist organizations have been steadily increasing in Indonesia. Many of these organizations see several advantages with using women for attacks as opposed to men. Women are especially being used as suicide bombers as they are not as likely to be seen as suspects or commit such acts of violence. It is also easier for women to conceal bombs underneath their clothing. If there are not female personnel available at a checkpoint to examine whether weapons are being concealed on a female person, then it will be easy for the bombers to attack. There is no doubt that the role of women as terrorist combatants is evolving in Indonesia.

A female suicide bomber used three children as a decoy to blow herself up in new low for Islamic State.
In Sirte, Libya there were several reported instances in which women were used as suicide bombers as fighting intensifies between the Libyan forces and IS terrorists. The Libya Herald reported that in one case a woman used three malnourished children to get closer to Libyan forces. Once the children were separated from the rest of the group she detonated explosives, wounding dozens. One source reported that there were two women involved, and that 4 soldiers were also killed.