AT THE CENTRE OF CONFLICT, CENTRAL TO PEACE

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

15 Years of Implementing UNSCR 1325
Progress, Barriers, and the Future

"Women are essential contributors to the transition from the cult of war to the culture of peace."

- Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, High-Level Advisory Group of the Global Study on 1325

UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

NATIONAL COMMITTEE AUSTRALIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACMC	Australian Civil-Military Centre
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFP	Australian Federal Police
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
IPI	International Peace Institute
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OfW	Australian Office for Women
PM&C	Australian Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

FOREWORD

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 set the foundation for progress in the last 15 years on women, peace and security. Since its adoption in 2000, governments and non-governmental organisations have mobilised to advance the women, peace and security agenda. Notable progress includes the formal commitment of nations to develop policies that address the differential impact of conflict on women and girls compared with men and boys, the adoption of (at the time of writing) 52 National Action Plans to implement the agenda set down by UNSCR 1325, and the UN Security Council's adoption of seven subsequent Resolutions on women, peace and security. In the first 15 years, perhaps the biggest achievement has been putting women, peace and security on the agenda. This is critically important – but it is only the first step.

Formal commitment and political awareness of the women, peace and security agenda is vital to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. However, the next step for progress is full implementation, practical change, and the monitoring and evaluation of this change. In the first 15 years, we have seen initiatives from all over the world in the women, peace and security arena. There has been an increase in the inclusion of gender specific language in peace agreements, demonstrating awareness of the vulnerabilities of women in conflict. There has been increased development of programs to increase women's participation, as leaders in military and law enforcement and as peacebuilders in treaty negotiations. And there is an increased awareness of the merit and effectiveness of adjusting justice and law enforcement systems to detect sexual violence in its early stages to protect women and girls during conflict.

If UNSCR 1325 was not in place, perhaps these initiatives and programs would not exist. This progress should be commended. But there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality in the women, peace and security context. In the first 15 years, we have opened up positions for women to lead and to participate where they did not exist before. However, many leadership and decision-making positions are still not being occupied by women. The next step is to encourage women to take up these positions.

The Australian National Committee for UN Women is committed to advancing and supporting the women, peace and security agenda. On the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, this Report provides a foundation to understand women, peace and security; analyses international and Australian initiatives for implementing the agenda; and considers the future of UNSCR 1325. This anniversary shows us what can be achieved in 15 years, but it also demonstrates what still needs to be achieved. The change envisaged by UNSCR 1325 and by all gender equality advocates is possible, but it needs ongoing support across the spectrum of government, non governmental and civil society stakeholders.

Julie McKay
Executive Director
Australian National Committee for UN Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its adoption by the UN Security Council in 2000, UNSCR 1325 has laid a foundation for a discussion of women, peace and security and the development of policies to advance women's empowerment and gender equality in post-conflict situations. This report examines the background underlying UNSCR 1325, reflects on the progress made in women, peace and security since 2000, and considers which areas require further attention and improvement.

UNSCR 1325 represents a commitment by the UN Security Council to address the differential impact of conflict on women and girls. More broadly, the women, peace and security agenda relates to the identification of gendered inequalities in conflict and post-conflict settings, and the development of policies and initiatives to redress them. UNSCR 1325 is commonly split into four pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. Sustainable and effective solutions to women, peace and security issues require a policy approach that addresses all four of these pillars.

Since its adoption, UNSCR 1325 has led to progress in certain areas. In the first 15 years, the most notable change has been an increase in the percentage of peace agreements that incorporate language on gender equality and women, peace and security. There have been slight increases in the number of women participating in the formal negotiation of peace agreements – an area traditionally and overwhelmingly dominated by men – while the number of women mobilising progress at the grassroots level remains high. Statistics continue to showcase the higher impact of conflict on women and girls, and how that impact extends beyond experiencing violence and instability to lower levels of education, health and access to basic needs.

However, a key issue with measuring the effectiveness of implementation is a lack of gender disaggregated data looking firstly at the scope and extent of gender inequalities in conflict, and secondly at the effectiveness of policies created to address them.

Having considered the goals of UNSCR 1325 against the progress since its adoption indicates that there is still a great deal of work to be done. A lack of political will and the need to comprehensively rethink traditional, male dominated power structures stand in the way of UNSCR 1325's full implementation. Women need access to leadership and decision-making roles to ensure their voices are integral to women, peace and security policy making. Increasing women's participation in military and law enforcement and continuing to encourage the use of pre-deployment gender perspective training is necessary to ensure that police, soldiers and peacekeepers have a sound understanding of how conflict affects women. Women, peace and security initiatives must be properly supported by funding from Member States, and accountability for implementation must be maintained by encouraging the collection of gender disaggregated data.

Thus far, UNSCR 1325 has yielded more action and progress at the policy level than on the ground. The creation of women, peace and security policies is a vital step toward achieving progress. The next step should focus on achieving practical change by supporting the implementation of these policies. Spaces for women in peace and security have been opened up, but women often do not occupy these spaces. In the next 15 years, governments and NGOs should continue to support the inclusion of women, peace and security issues in policy, while expanding the focus to ensure existing policies are supporting women's empowerment and gender equality in conflict and post-conflict settings.

UNDERSTANDING UNSCR 1325 AND WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

> 66 *Simply put, UNSCR 1325 is a political tool. It is a language – an agenda – that reframes issues that women's human rights defenders have long been advocating for. From protection against gender-based violence to women's right to participate in government and other decision-making bodies, the issues that emerge in UNSCR 1325 are not new. What is new, however, is the security language that policymakers and advocates are now using to address these long-standing challenges related to gender inequality."*

Natalie Florea Hudson, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Dayton[1]

2015 marks the 15 year anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. UNSCR 1325 was the first UN Security Council Resolution to recognise the differential impact of conflict on women and girls. A global review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was conducted and released in October to coincide with the anniversary. The 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 provides an opportunity to reflect on how it has affected the policies and practices of Member States, NGOs, and civil society organisations. Such reflection should celebrate achievements while also identifying areas that require further work. It should account for the changing landscape of conflict, and how future women, peace and security policies should adapt to these changes. This Report aims to examine progress that the women, peace and security agenda has achieved globally and in Australia, before considering areas that require further progress.

WHAT IS 'WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY'?

Women, peace and security is about achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict and post-conflict settings. Conflict and post-conflict settings include countries experiencing armed conflict, instability caused by natural disasters, women in domestic and international military and law enforcement, and women participating in the negotiation of peace agreements. Women, peace and security focuses on the differential impact of conflict upon women and girls and strives to identify and address the issues that lead to this impact. The agenda facilitates initiatives to provide protection and assistance to women who are affected by conflict and implores policy and decision-makers to use the unique experiences of women to contribute to developing peacebuilding solutions after conflict. In short, the women, peace and security agenda recognises, and seeks to increase awareness of, the gendered nature of conflict and calls for action to correct the imbalance by championing and using the power of women.

> 66 *Women's experiences of war are different than those of men. UNSCR 1325 recognised that women are a powerful, yet untapped, force for peace. Our challenge is to act on this understanding… Empowering women and girls for peace and development is the smartest and most overdue investment the international community can make in securing a just and peaceful future for all."*

— Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General[2]

THE NEED FOR UNSCR 1325

> *[UNSCR] recognised that women suffer differently from conflict, and that they need specific policies and programs. But on the other hand, it acknowledged that women were part of the solution."*

– Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile and Former Executive Director of UN Women.

UNSCR 1325 recognises that the impact of armed conflict is greater on women than it is on men. It acknowledges that armed groups specifically target women, that women are more likely to be refugees or to be internally displaced, and that women have a higher chance of experiencing conflict-related sexual violence.[4] These direct effects of conflict lead to broader disruptions:

"During and after conflict, more women die during childbirth, and more girls are forcibly married. Fewer women work and participate in the economy and [fewer] girls go to school. Of primary school age children that are out of school, half live in conflict areas. Only 35 per cent of girls are enrolled in secondary education in these settings… this puts us all in danger." [5]
– Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka, Executive Director of UN Women

Conflict and instability have a detrimental impact on the education, livelihoods, health, and wellbeing of women and girls. Conflict affects access to basic needs, such as food, water, healthcare, education, and shelter.[6] Women are those most likely to experience violence during conflict, but they are also the primary caregivers in conflict and post-conflict settings. Sexual violence against women and girls gives rise to additional needs, particularly sexual and reproductive healthcare, counselling, and legal support. These unique needs must be addressed by peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives.

> *Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognising the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation…*

- UNSCR 1325[3]

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY OUTSIDE UNSCR 1325

Importantly, UNSCR 1325 is interrelated with other UN instruments. UNSCRs 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2422 were all passed after UNSCR 1325, and also relate to women, peace and security.[7] The subsequent resolutions add supporting mechanisms and recognise specific, critical issues that need to be addressed. For example, UNSCR 1960 and UNSCR 2122 focus on conflict related sexual violence and the need to address impunity for conflict-related sexual violence.[8] The most recent Resolution, UNSCR 2242, focuses on the impact of violent extremism and terrorism on women, and urges Member States to incorporate the UNSCR 1325 agenda in counter-terrorism policy.[9] Other UN instruments related to women, peace and security are the Beijing Platform for Action (which yielded the Millennium Development Goals),[10] the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),[11] and the Sustainable Development Goals ('Global Goals').[12]

The Beijing Platform for Action sets out the Millennium Development Goals for women, championing women's empowerment and gender equality across all areas. The MDGs include Strategic Objectives and Actions regarding eliminating violence against women, addressing the needs of women in armed conflict, and empowering women to hold positions of power and decision-making.[13] CEDAW lays the framework for an anti-discrimination approach towards achieving gender equality. It emphasises the need for Member States to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men, and to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination. CEDAW's breadth can be contrasted with the UNSCR 1325's narrower application to conflict and post-conflict situations.[14] The Global Goals were adopted in September 2015 and two of the 17 goals hold relevance for the advancement of the women, peace and security agenda. Goal 5 is to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', and Goal 16 is to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'.[15]

THE PILLARS OF UNSCR 1325

The four pillars of the women, peace and security agenda are Participation, Prevention, Protection, and Relief & Recovery. The pillars correspond to the driving forces behind why the Security Council believes UNSCR 1325 was and is necessary.

It is important to recognise the relationship between the four pillars, and how they support one another. Optimal implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda relies upon a holistic approach. The participation of women in policymaking and in the armed forces increases the chances that relief, recovery, prevention and protection initiatives are appropriately tailored and carried out to meet the needs of women in conflict environments, creating more sustainable and effective solutions.

Photo credit: UN Photo / Tobin Jones
A woman undergoes Somali Police Force Training.

> 66 *[Resolution 1325] calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. Statistics show that it is more dangerous to be a civilian woman than a soldier in conflict zones. Sexual assault against women, for instance, is a much used tool of war."*

- Elizabeth Broderick, Former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner [16]

PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

The protection and prevention pillars respond to the immediate differential impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It focuses on human rights violations, including conflict-related sexualised violence. The sexual exploitation of women and girls by all actors, including State, non-State, and UN Peacekeeping forces, must be addressed. Armed conflict and instability create dangerous environments for women. The organised mass-kidnapping and subsequent trafficking of Yazidi women into sexual slavery in Iraq by ISIS and the sexual trafficking of Nepalese women following the April 2015 earthquake stand as examples of how women and girls become targeted and exploited during times of unrest. [17] The 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 reflected on the devastating impact conflict has on women and girls:

Year after year, we hear too many horrific stories of women political leaders, media personnel, women's human rights defenders and members of civil society and grassroots organizations being assaulted, threatened and killed. Intimate partner violence and early, forced and child marriage have become more widespread during and after war.[18]

Prevention focuses on developing strategies to prevent human rights violations, conflict-related sexual violence, and the targeting and exploitation of women and girls. Policies introduced under the 'prevention' umbrella include the provision of gender-perspective training to military and peacekeeping forces. This increases awareness of the differential impact of conflict on women and girls, and also assists personnel in identifying women who may be experiencing sexual violence or exploitation. Increasing awareness and education is particularly crucial in dealing with sexual violence. An 'overwhelming majority' of women do not report violence because there are no accessible services or avenues to report safely.[19] Providing training to law enforcement officers encourages the creation of a safe environment for women to report incidents of violence, which is crucial to preventing recurrence.

CASE STUDY:

SENEGAL:
Women's Election Situation Room

Following support and sponsorship from UN Women in West Africa, the Women's Election Situation Room was created. The initiative championed women's rights to campaign and vote safely during the 2012 Presidential Elections. In addition to lobbying for women's safety, the Situation Room also created an early warning system for outbreaks of election-related violence. Senegal demonstrates how the prevention and participation pillars of UNSCR 1325 can be combined to protect women while also empowering them. The early warning system demonstrates the perhaps untapped advantages of working closely with local community networks.[20]

66 *[The UN Security Council] calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict.*

- UNSCR 1325

INCREASING PARTICIPATION

"Women make up 50 per cent of the population. How can you possibly attempt to create and maintain international peace and security when you are excluding 50 per cent of the population?"

- Sarah Taylor, Executive Coordinator, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

Without women's meaningful participation, the experiences of women in conflict will not be properly identified, measured or incorporated into government policies or aid initiatives. Member States must encourage and enable women to occupy leadership and decision-making positions in government, military, and law enforcement. Further, government should include and consult widely with women and women's advocacy groups during peacebuilding and policy negotiations.

The capability of women to make extraordinary contributions, even in unstable conflict settings, is clearly demonstrated. Women make up large numbers of participants in social movements at the grassroots level, and in doing so have been agents of social change. Large

*Photo Credit: UN Photo / Sojoud Elgarrai
Women participate in an Open Day Workshop on women, peace and security and UNSCR 1325 in Malha, North Darfur.*

numbers of women demonstrated against Muammar Gaddafi in Benghazi, Libya in February 2011, contributing to the beginning of a revolution. However, the danger of being a woman in conflict increases the vulnerability of those that do mobilise to create change. As the Libyan conflict escalated, women became targets of violence in the conflict, particularly prominent women who had played a strong role in the demonstrations.[21]

As such, meaningful participation is not just about giving women opportunities to participate. It also requires Member States to provide a safe space for participation, and measures to ensure that women's contributions in these spaces are properly valued and not dismissed. In a recent study on women's participation in peacebuilding, the International Policy Institute examined treaty negotiations in the Philippines. They found that where women were given central roles in the negotiation process – either as representatives of a party to the treaty, or as mediators – the end result was more sustainable and effective. However, the study also found that the mere physical inclusion of women as observers who were unable to contribute to the actual negotiations resulted in less sustainable treaties; unrest and conflict broke out not long after negotiations had concluded.[22] This study emphasises the benefits of enabling women's full participation, as well as the disadvantages of their exclusion.

Meaningful participation would enhance the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Since its adoption, written references to women, peace and security in peace treaties and government policy have increased.[24] When the references first began to emerge, they were criticised for being overly broad or tokenistic. However, in recent years, references to women, peace and security have become more specific; the use of gender advisors in peace negotiations has also begun to increase, and the number of women participating in peace negotiations has slowly crept upwards -- though, as observed by the Global Study, 'at far too slow a rate.'[25]

CASE STUDY:

RWANDA
Increasing women's participation in the police force

UN Women supported the Rwanda National Police (RNP) in establishing 'Gender Desks', a hotline for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. To boost the effectiveness of the hotline, UN Women and the RNP recruited additional female police officers. The introduction of the hotline saw a marked increase in the percentage of violent incidents that were reported. This example demonstrates how increasing women's participation in peacekeeping and law enforcement improved the utility of the police force for women, and the effectiveness of law enforcement in relation to sexual violence.[26]

Photo Credit: The Guardian
Teresita Quintos-Deles, the presidential adviser on the Mindanao Peace Processes in the Philippines. Quintos-Deles was the first woman appointed to the role in 2003-2005, and was reappointed in 2010. Her contribution in leading civil society and mass action campaigns relating to the peace processes is frequently credited as a model example of the power of women's participation in the peacebuilding process.[23]

66 *Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution...*

- UNSCR 1325

RELIEF AND RECOVERY

The relief and recovery pillar is about fully incorporating women, peace and security issues into post-conflict agendas, to ensure that advancing the rights of women and girls goes beyond protection. The goal of incorporating women, peace and security into relief and recovery is to ensure post-conflict policies appropriately account for women's interests and rights into the future. It also has an education and awareness aspect, encouraging the incorporation of gender perspective training for military and law enforcement personnel.

A large part of relief and recovery relies on the collection, analysis and use of information as feedback, so that policies can be targeted and fully implemented. This information can be gained through consultation and engagement with NGOs and civil society organisations. These organisations often have access to on the ground knowledge about what particular women in a particular area need, depending on what the conflict is and how it has affected them. Dialogue between civil society and government is crucial to the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

The collection of statistical data is also central to understanding the way that conflict is affecting women in particular areas, and in measuring the effectiveness of post-conflict initiatives. The data gathered must be gender disaggregated so as to separate the experiences of men and women. Gathering this kind of information can be difficult, but is vital. Without it, it is difficult to fully grasp the extent of the impact of conflict on women, thus making the development of policies that appropriately address women in conflict problematic. UNSCR 1325 urges Member States to increase an analysis of gender disaggregated data, and additionally requested the Secretary General to conduct a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls.[27]

66 *[The UN Security Council] expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component… [The UN Security Council] expresses its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender equality considerations and the rights of women, including through consultations with local and international women's groups.*

- UNSCR 1325

CASE STUDY:

LIBERIA
Peace Huts:

Working together with the local community, UN Women established Peace Huts which provided survivors of violence with legal services and support. The initiative also refers reported cases of violence to the police. The success of the Peace Huts has been recognised by the local police, who have reported a drop in the number of violence related issues due to an increase in early intervention. The Peace Huts stand as a model example of how creativity, innovation and working with the community can optimise the prevention of violence and the provision of support and services to survivors of violence. [28]

PROGRESS

TIMELINE[29]

2000
UNSCR 1325 is passed, marking the first formal recognition by the UNSCR of the need to address women, peace and security issues. It recognises the need for the representation and participation of women in peace and security governance, and the protection of women's rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations. It lays the foundation for the women, peace and security agenda.

2001
Friends of 1325 is established. This initiative is led by Canada, and comprises 28 UN Member States dedicated to implementing UNSCR 1325.

2005
10 year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. From the Conference emerged a Platform for Action in championing women's equality and empowerment. The strategic areas for action outlined in the Platform include violence against women, women and armed conflict, and women in power and decision-making.

2008
UNSCR 1820 is passed, condemning sexual violence during conflict and recognising it as a weapon of war. It relates specifically to sexual violence in conflict, and implements a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse – including violations committed by UN Peacekeeping Forces, in an effort to target issues surrounding impunity.

2009
UNSCR 1888 is passed, appointing experts and representatives for women, peace and security issues in UN policy and on the ground. Appointment of experts at the policy level, and on the ground. The office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict is created, UN Action is created, and the appointment of Women's Protection Advisors on to field missions is implemented.

UNSCR 1889 is passed, emphasising the need to increase participation and encouraging the use of National Action Plans to track implementation of women, peace and security issues. UNSCR 1889 reinforces the importance of women's participation in peace processes and encourages Member States to elevate the status of women in specific areas of peace building.

2010
UN Women is created by merging four different UN agencies, including UNIFEM. UN Women is technically known as the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

UNSCR 1960 is passed, calling for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict. It is a follow-up resolution to 1820 and 1888, calling for monitoring and data collection on conflict-related sexual violence and the use of gender advisors on military field missions. UNSCR 1960 also provides measures intended to end impunity for perpetrators.

2011
Australia appoints a Global Ambassador for Women and Girls to advocate for the rights of women and girls, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. This includes looking at the needs of women and girls in conflict zones, and increasing the political participation of women and girls.

2012

Australia adopts its six-year National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) on International Women's Day, 2012.

UN SWAP is adopted. UN SWAP stands for the UN System-Wide Action Plan on gender equality and women's empowerment. Ensuring that gender equality and women, peace and security issues are seen as cross-cutting on the international agenda remains a priority today.

2013

UNSCR 2106 is passed, challenging impunity and lacking accountability for conflict related sexual violence.

UNSCR 2122 is passed, recognising key actors in the women, peace and security process. UN Women is identified as the key UN body for information and advice on women, peace and security issues. The inclusion of civil society organisations during consultation and policy development processes is underscored, and a 2015 High-Level Review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is requested.

2015

International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict created. The UN General Assembly approves by consensus a new resolution to recognise 19 June as International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Afghanistan becomes the 50th country to implement a National Action Plan in July 2015. Japan and New Zealand follow soon after, bringing the number of NAPs in place to 52 at the time of writing.

Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) adopted in September. Goal 5, 'Gender Equality' is to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. Goal 16, 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions' is to 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.'

Internationally, a review and Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is conducted by UN Women. The result, a report titled 'Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Securing the Peace' is released in October 2015.

In October 2015, UNSCR 2242 is passed. UNSCR 2242 emphasises the continuing need to encourage women's meaningful participation, and the impact of violent extremism and terrorism on women and girls and the need for states to incorporate the women, peace and security agenda when countering violent extremism. UNSCR 2242 reemphasises the need to address impunity for acts of conflict related sexual violence committed by UN Peacekeeping forces.
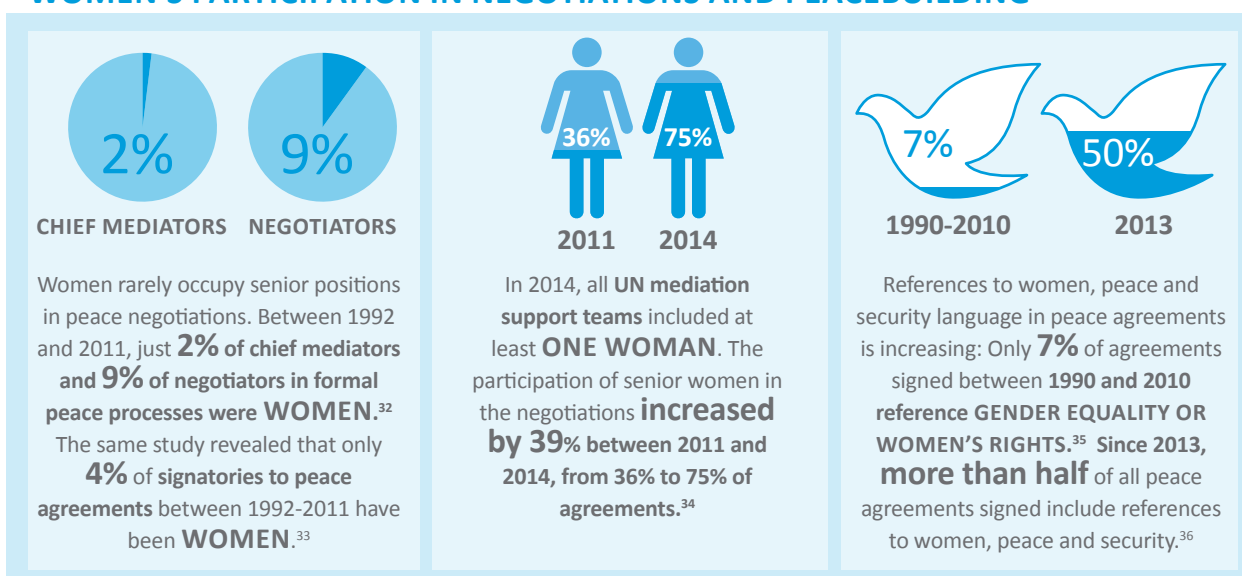
STATUS OF PROGRESS

> ❝ *There are an awful lot of important successes to celebrate in the sense that 20 years ago, certainly 50 years ago, it would be unimaginable to feminists to see where we are today. Women, peace and security is a topic that's discussed by the Security Council fairly regularly, sexual violence is a matter that the council is extremely highly seized of, and takes action on.*❞

– Anne Marie Goetz, Clinical Professor at the Centre for Global Affairs at New York University, previously Chief Advisor on Peace and Security at UN Women[30]
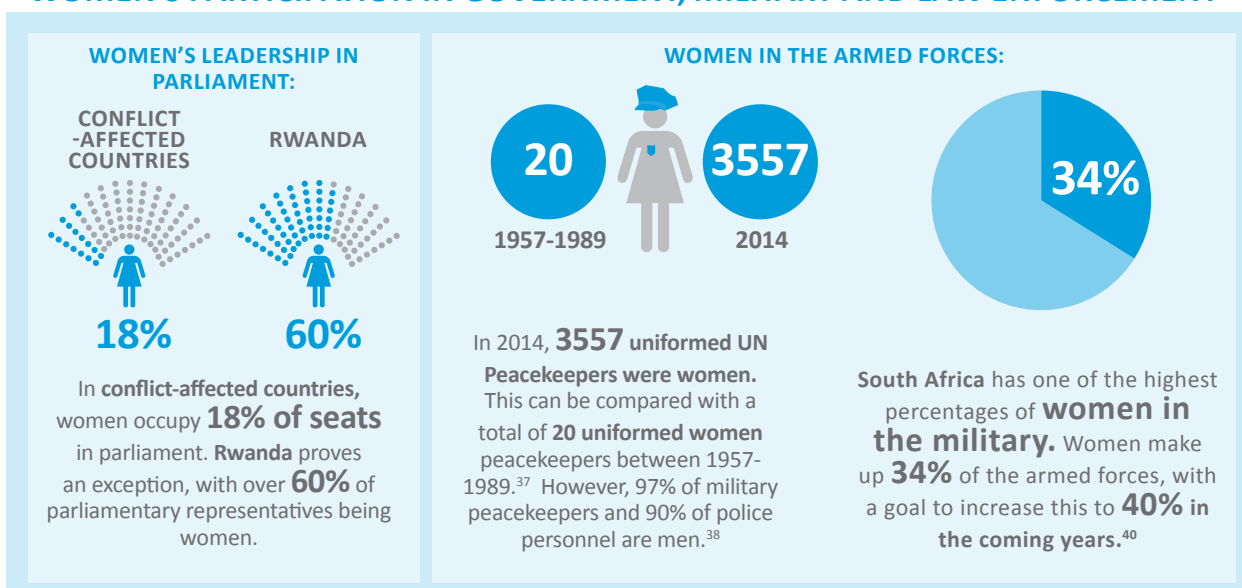
FAST FACTS

While these statistics indicate progress in some areas and demonstrate the work to be done in others, a major difficulty in implementing UNSCR 1325 is a lack of data. Without gender disaggregated data that tracks precisely how women are affected by conflict and attempts to measure the impact of women, peace and security policies and initiatives, the task of developing sustainable and effective solutions for women affected by conflict is more difficult. [31]

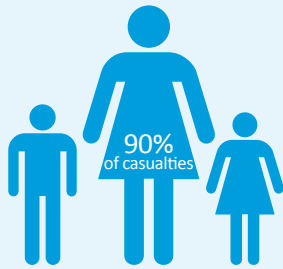## WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACEBUILDING

2% — **CHIEF MEDIATORS**
9% — **NEGOTIATORS**

Women rarely occupy senior positions in peace negotiations. Between 1992 and 2011, just **2% of chief mediators and 9%** of negotiators in formal peace processes were **WOMEN**.[32] The same study revealed that only **4%** of **signatories to peace agreements** between 1992-2011 have been **WOMEN**.[33]

36% — **2011**
75% — **2014**

In 2014, all **UN mediation support teams** included at least **ONE WOMAN**. The participation of senior women in the negotiations **increased by 39%** between 2011 and **2014, from 36% to 75% of agreements.**[34]

7% — **1990-2010**
50% — **2013**

References to women, peace and security language in peace agreements is increasing: Only **7%** of agreements signed between **1990 and 2010 reference GENDER EQUALITY OR WOMEN'S RIGHTS.**[35] Since 2013, **more than half** of all peace agreements signed include references to women, peace and security.[36]

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, MILITARY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN PARLIAMENT:

CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES — **18%**
RWANDA — **60%**

In **conflict-affected countries,** women occupy **18% of seats** in parliament. **Rwanda** proves an exception, with over **60%** of parliamentary representatives being women.

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES:

20 — **1957-1989**
3557 — **2014**

In 2014, **3557 uniformed UN Peacekeepers were women.** This can be compared with a total of **20 uniformed women** peacekeepers between 1957-1989.[37] However, 97% of military peacekeepers and 90% of police personnel are men.[38]

34%

South Africa has one of the highest percentages of **women in the military.** Women make up **34%** of the armed forces, with a goal to increase this to **40% in the coming years.**[40]

THE EFFECTS OF ARMED CONFLICT ON WOMEN

WOMEN IN CONFLICT:

90% of casualties

Although women do not often engage in combat, up to **90% of casualties in recent conflicts are civilians** – most of these, women and children.[41]

While men account for 90% of war prisoners and 96% of the missing during conflict, women and children are more **greatly affected in the long term by war.**[44]

This impact includes increased **sexual violence, restricted access to healthcare and poor disease control,** higher **infant mortality** and deaths during pregnancy, and acute or chronic **malnutrition.**[45]

VIOLENT EXTREMISM EXACERBATES THE RATES OF CONFLICT RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD MARRIAGES.
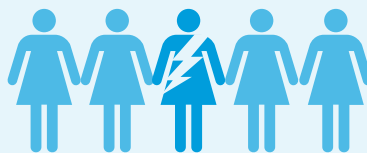
2,500
WOMEN & CHILDREN CAPTURED

1,500
WOMEN FORCED INTO SEXUAL SLAVERY

In late 2014 in Iraq, ISIS **captured** approximately **2,500 women and children** – many from ethnic and religious minorities - with at least **1,500** forced into **sexual slavery.**[46]

A study on Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq found that **one in five women** had **experienced rape or the threat of sexual abuse.**[47] Nearly half of the women surveyed in the study felt that there had been an **increase in violence** in the home since leaving Syria.[48]

13-17%
CHILD MARRIAGE **BEFORE** CONFLICT

51%
CHILD MARRIAGE **AFTER** CONFLICT

Before conflict erupted in Syria, the percentage of girls being **married under 18** was estimated to be between **13-17%.** After the outbreak of the conflict, a 2013 assessment of Syrian refugees in Jordan estimated that this percentage had increased to **51%.**[49]

THE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT EXTENDS BEYOND DIRECT ACTS OF VIOLENCE:

CONFLICT AND POST CONFLICT
531

GLOBAL RATE
210

EDUCATION:
While education rates for all children drop in conflict environments, education rates for girls are consistently approximately **5% lower** than those for boys.[50]

PREGNANCIES:
Maternal Mortality Ratios are also much higher in conflict due to lack of sexual and reproductive healthcare. In conflict and post conflict situations, the ratio is **531 per every 100,000 live births.** The average global rate is 210 per 100,000.[51]

DISEASE:
The percentage of women with **HIV/AIDs in conflict** and post-conflict settings is **consistently higher** than that of men.[52]

2,000 delegates 120 countries

International initiatives have emerged to target gender based violence against women during conflict. In 2014, the **Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict** was held in London, with almost **2,000 delegates** from over **120 countries** meeting to address conflict-related sexual violence against women.[53]

52 NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

National Action Plans: At the time of writing, 52 National Action Plans have been implemented internationally. National Action Plans demonstrate the commitment of individual countries to the women, peace and security Agenda.

DENMARK implemented the first National Action Plan in 2005.[54]

NEW ZEALAND is the most recent country to implement a NAP.

AFGHANISTAN implemented the 50th NAP in July 2015.[55]

AUSTRALIA'S National Action Plan is a six year plan, spanning 2012-2018.[56] 2015, marking the halfway point, will be marked by the release of an Interim Review of the success of the NAP.

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

National Action Plans (NAPs) are recognised as one of the key ways to implement the women, peace and security agenda. In 2002, the President of the UN Security Council called upon States to use NAPs to measure their progress on UNSCR 1325.[57] NAPs vary between countries, but are generally used as an instrument that sets out the processes and initiatives that the Member State will pursue domestically and internationally to promote UNSCR 1325. While some NAPs have specific goals, the Global Study observed that most NAPs have more of a focus on processes than outcomes: countries indicate what steps they will take to implement UNSCR 1325, but do not set specific goals or targets to be achieved.[58] In July 2015, Afghanistan became the 50th country to implement a National Action Plan.[59]

Importantly, while National Action Plans are designed to be developed by the governments of Member States, in countries where the governments have not yet developed NAPs, local civil society organisations – with the assistance of international NGOs and UN Women – have assisted in drafting NAP-type documents that increase awareness of women, peace and security issues and hold government and other actors accountable through monitoring and reporting on progress. Similarly, the development and implementation of UNSCR 1325 Action Plans is not limited to states – NATO has an Action Plan aimed at mainstreaming UNSCR 1325 and subsequent women, peace and security resolutions into its policy and practice.[61] The NAP model demonstrates the importance of monitoring and reporting as a tool for enforcement. It simultaneously underscores the importance and power of the relationship between government and civil society in policy development, and the role that NGOs and the UN can play in assisting with policy development.

WHAT SHOULD A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN DO?

❝ *I would say the most important, the most urgent at this point is at least on two counts. One is to create awareness so that all men – particularly the troops and police force – have gender equality in mind; their mindsets have to be changed. So awareness raising, the change of attitudes and values, this is important because otherwise I don't think it will work. And the second thing is capacity building, because you also have to come up with all kinds of interesting modules for training and so on, and these need to be contextualised in some ways to fit our situation."*

- Dr Saisuree Chutikul, Adviser to the UN Sub-Committee on UNSC 1325, speaking on the National Action Plan for Thailand, intended to be released in 2015.[60]

FOCUS NAPs

Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, 2007

Cote d'Ivoire became the first developing country to adopt a NAP, and the first country in Africa to adopt a NAP. Its NAP had a strong focus on peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. After Cote d'Ivoire released its NAP, many other Sub-Saharan African countries followed its lead; however, the NAP has not been renewed since its expiration in 2012.[62]

Nigeria, 2013

Nigeria's NAP focuses on the government's commitment to preventing sexual violence during and after conflict. As a part of the NAP, special courts were established to prosecute conflict-related sexual violence. The use of special courts acknowledges that the nature of sexual violence requires alternative mechanisms to pursue justice and support women who have experienced sexual violence.[63]

Netherlands, 2012

The Dutch NAP is the only NAP to be co-signed by civil society organisations. Responsibility for implementation is shared between government and civil society bodies. This encourages innovative thinking and strong relationship building between government and civil society.[64]

Indonesia, 2014

The Indonesian NAP establishes a Central Co-ordination Team and Working Group to implement the NAP. The Central Co-ordination Team is comprised of government ministers whose responsibilities relate to women, peace and security. The Working Group is comprised of community organisations, NGOs, researchers, and academics. Indonesia's NAP also mandates local level implementation. In each province, a governor is assigned to oversee and facilitate implementation. The governors are assisted by local working groups, consisting of representatives from local offices, law enforcement organisations, community organisations, NGOs, researchers, religious figures, community figures and peace activists.[65]

UN WOMEN

UN Women has been working internationally to further the women, peace and security agenda, including facilitating NAPs. Recently, collaboration between UN Women and civil society organisations in Afghanistan led to the development of a NAP, which was implemented in July 2015. UN Women has also provided support in developing NAPs in Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and in the Pacific region.[66] Internationally, UN Women chairs the Standing Committee on Women Peace and Security of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The Committee coordinates the collection and analysis of data for the UN Secretary-General's annual report to the UN Security Council on women, peace and security.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA

"United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) was adopted almost 14 years ago. It set an historic precedent in recognising the central role of women to the development and maintenance of international peace and security, and calling for an end to the impunity of sexual-based violence in conflict situations."

– Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash[67]

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ACTION PLAN: KEY STRATEGIES

1. Integrate a gender perspective into Australia's policies on peace and security.
2. Embed the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Australian Government's approach to human resources management of Defence, Australian Federal Police and deployed personnel.
3. Support civil society organisations to promote equality and increase women's participation in conflict prevention, peace-building, conflict resolution, and relief and recovery.
4. Promote Women, Peace and Security implementation internationally.
5. Take a co-ordinated and holistic approach domestically and internationally to Women, Peace and Security.

BRINGING TOGETHER DIFFERENT SECTORS OF GOVERNMENT

Australia's NAP confers specific actions and responsibilities on government departments, including the Office for Women in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Defence (including the Australian Civil-Military Centre), the Australian Federal Police, and the Attorney-General's Department.[68] Additionally, the Women, Peace and security Inter-Departmental Working Group meets annually with civil society representatives to review and discuss progress regarding implementation of the NAP.[69] Since developing the NAP, the Department of Defence, the AFP and DFAT have introduced gender-training to increase awareness and engagement with women, peace and security principles.[70] The Australian Government has also worked on women, peace and security initiatives globally in Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.[71]

MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE: THE ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Dialogue brings together representatives from government and civil society organisations to discuss progress and future focus areas for Australia's NAP. With support from the Office for Women and the Australian Civil-Military Centre, the Dialogue is organised by the Australian Council for International Development, the Australian National Committee for UN Women, the Australian National University Gender Institute, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Following the Dialogue, civil society organisations collaborate to release an annual Report Card on the government's performance on women, peace and security.[72] The Dialogue and Report Card system of feedback has received international recognition for being an innovative way to enhance accountability and offers grassroots organisations a method to provide constructive feedback to government and policymakers.[73]

Photo credit: Australian National Committee for UN Women
Participants in the 3rd Annual Civil Society Dialogue in Canberra, Australia, 2015.

PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY: GOVERNMENT PROGRESS REPORTS

The Australian Government has committed to maintaining accountability for its commitments under the NAP by releasing biennial progress reports over the six years of its duration. 2014 saw the release of the first Progress Report, outlining the various initiatives that Australia has contributed to and supported in the first two years of implementing the women, peace and security agenda. Accountability is further bolstered by two independent reviews during its lifespan – in 2015, halfway through, and in 2018, at its conclusion.[74] The 2015 interim review is anticipated to be published in late 2015. The purpose of the reviews is to assess the relevance of the NAP during its implementation, and to draw attention to emerging issues in the women, peace and security space that Australia should consider.

Photo credit: The Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation / Mari Lindgren
Members of the Women in Peacebuilding Network gathered in a peace hut in
Liberia. The Liberian Peace Huts are an initiative supported by UN Women.

CONCLUSIONS ON PROGRESS

The first 15 years of UNSCR 1325 have demonstrated substantial progress in identifying and addressing women, peace and security issues in international and domestic policy. Increased recognition and inclusion of women, peace and security issues in peace agreements, and renewed efforts by international actors, including the UN, to increase women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding demonstrate the support behind UNSCR 1325. There remains, however, room for improvement.

FUTURE

> " *[Recent reviews on the progress of UNSCR 1325] have painted a stark picture of the current peace and security context. It is characterised by blatant violations of human rights and humanitarian law, complex drivers of conflict, involvement of a growing number of non-state armed actors, new technologies and transnational connections that are changing the nature of warfare. These challenges have underlined the need for stronger focus on prevention, more holistic and consistent approaches, and a focus on mechanisms that place human rights at the core of security, protection, political, humanitarian, peacebuilding and socio-economic development work."[75]*

RESISTANCE AND OBSTACLES

UNSCR 1325 has been praised for stimulating a conversation about gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict and post-conflict settings. Drawing attention to the need to discuss and develop policy initiatives for women, peace and security is crucial to laying a strong foundation for addressing the needs of women during conflict. However, it is in practical implementation where UNSCR 1325 attracts the most criticism. Natalie Florea Hudson, who has served as a consultant on gender mainstreaming and UNSCR 1325 for the European Union and the United Nations, comments that:

"...the critiques of the women, peace and security agenda are all too familiar. From the lack of consistency, to the lack of concrete data, to the lack of political will and gender expertise, questions about how to move this agenda forward will continue to be critically important."[76]

The 2015 Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security sheds additional light on Hudson's comments. The Secretary-General also recognised funding, a lack of gender-specific data and analysis, and 'attitudinal obstacles' taking the form of a lack of political will as limitations on the full realisation of UNSCR 1325. Attitudinal obstacles are indicated by a continuing resistance to women's participation in peacebuilding,[77] as well as a lack of consultation with women's organisations and demand for gender specific expertise during negotiations.[78] These obstacles to facilitating participation are problematic, in that it increases the likelihood that peace agreements fall short of creating policies that target issues affecting women in post-conflict situations.[79] While political motivation and a lack of resources – both financial and political – has hampered some UNSCR 1325 efforts, the Secretary-General observed that, "robust and predictable funding, committed, accountable and visible leadership, inclusive, rights-based and gender-responsive processes and a strong gender equality architecture have all featured prominently when tangible results have been achieved."[80] While the UN Secretary-General has called for action from Member States, civil society organisations have called for stronger leadership by the UN Secretary General and UN Secretariat.[81]

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES AND APPROACHES

Existing perspectives, frameworks and approaches to policies and government agencies that relate to the women, peace and security agenda do not adequately facilitate the inclusion of women, peace and security issues or the meaningful participation of women. Included in this is the way one thinks about conflict, the way one perceives women's (and men's) roles in conflicts, traditional modes of negotiation,

traditional military and law enforcement structures, and traditional avenues for legal accountability. After developing an understanding of how all of these existing frameworks are gendered – often in ways that disadvantage women and inhibit the women, peace and security agenda – government policy makers should adjust these frameworks to ensure that women are actively included.

A GENDER ANALYSIS CHALLENGES A NUMBER OF ASSUMPTIONS:

1
That men and women experience and cope with conflict in the same way.
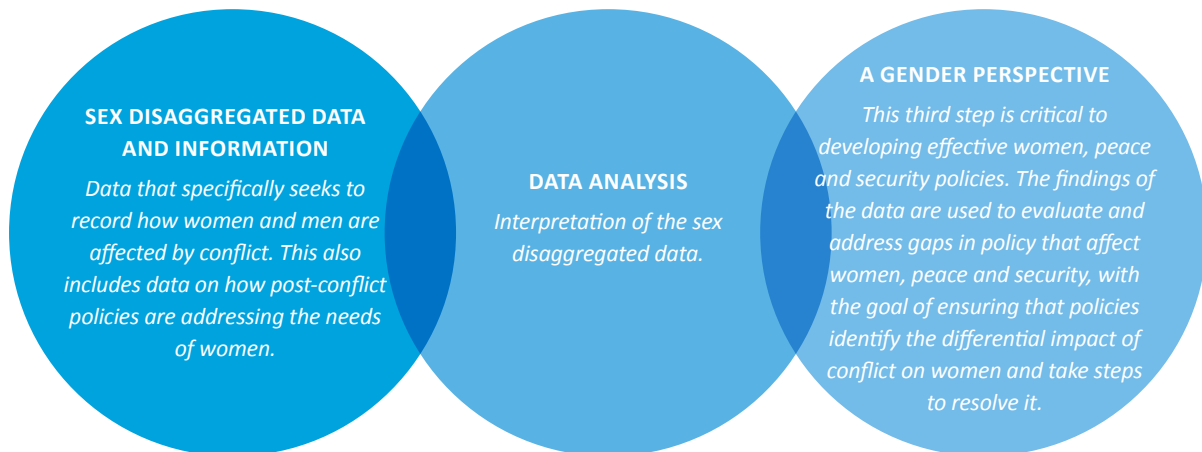
2
That men and women have the same needs and priorities.

3
That policies and programs affect everyone in the same way.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF A GENDER ANALYSIS

SEX DISAGGREGATED DATA AND INFORMATION

Data that specifically seeks to record how women and men are affected by conflict. This also includes data on how post-conflict policies are addressing the needs of women.

DATA ANALYSIS

Interpretation of the sex disaggregated data.

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

This third step is critical to developing effective women, peace and security policies. The findings of the data are used to evaluate and address gaps in policy that affect women, peace and security, with the goal of ensuring that policies identify the differential impact of conflict on women and take steps to resolve it.

This table is based on a table that appears in the Institute for Security Studies Paper, 'Gender in Peacekeeping: A Practitioners' Manual for Police Gender Advisers in Peacekeeping Missions', 2013, p 19.

CONFLICT, MILITARY, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The increase of sexual violence and the use of sexual violence as a weapon during times of conflict must be acknowledged and addressed. Margot Wallestrom, the former United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, stated:

"I think we are fighting these three misconceptions. Firstly, that it is inevitable, that it is part of every war since the beginning of time. Secondly, that it is unspeakable, that this is about sex. They think that it is about something so shameful that it should not be mentioned, and shaming the victims and not the perpetrators. Thirdly, that this is a lesser crime."[82]

Wallestrom's statement emphasises the need for Member States to recognise conflict related sexual violence as a crime, and as one where the perpetrators should be brought to justice. Addressing conflict related sexual violence is difficult. The rates of reporting for acts of sexual violence are low, which subsequently means that the data and information is lacking and impunity is high. Even when it is reported, many justice systems lag in properly recognising the atrocity and severity of the crime.

The integration of women into law enforcement has shown positive results. The introduction of all female patrol units in India and Liberia has increased the number of women

Photo credit: UN Photo / Marco Dormingo

reporting crimes. However, a major barrier to increasing female participation in law enforcement is the perception that this change will threaten the stability or effectiveness of existing, male-dominated, military and police forces. As Robert Egnell, an academic specialising in military studies, puts it:

"Integrating women with the aim of minimizing damage to the existing structure and culture of the organization provides a negative starting point for these processes. Instead, the introduction of women in combat units – or the implementation of a gendered perspective in military organizations – should be seen as an opportunity to revise the culture and structure of the armed forces for increased effectiveness in contemporary warfare."[83]

Restructuring systems to promote gender inclusivity should not be seen as destabilising or weakening existing structures. Rather, older systems are being modernised to increase compatibility with contemporary values and needs. The fact that there is a demonstrated connection between increased reporting of crimes perpetrated against women and the increased appointment of women in police and military forces indicates that the revision of culture approach Egnell suggests yields positive results.

The use of alternative justice systems and specialised training for military and police personnel has proved useful in preventing and identifying instances of violence. Collaboration with local grassroots organisations and local community networks also enhances the effectiveness of law enforcement. For example, systems in place which track when women are leaving the house less, going to the market less, when girls stop going to school, when there is a spike in women seeking abortions or other reproductive health care is indicative of increased sexual violence that is occurring under the surface.[84] Another example is the use of female translators and officers when investigating sexual violence, which have, in a number of instances, resulted in more honest and detailed information regarding violence.[85]

Member States implementing UNSCR 1325 should reassess military and law enforcement frameworks to promote women's participation and subsequently increase the effectiveness of law enforcement for women.

CASE STUDY:
AFGHANISTAN:
Increasing women in the police force

Afghan police forces have been committed to increasing the number of women in the force for years. Despite efforts, the number of women in the force remains at 1%. Female officers have no basic toilet or changing room facilities, and are said to have faced harassment from their male colleagues, including assault and sexual assault. In 2013, Sub-Inspector Negara, one of the top policewomen in the southern province of Helmand, was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen. Following the incident, a spokesperson for the government noted that women serving in the Afghani police forces receive threats from "insurgents and extremists that are against the women's rights and women's independence in the country," also noting that some female officers even receive threats from their family and friends.[86]

These allegations and reports of assault and harassment are largely ignored by the police force and government officials, and are in many cases denied. This emphasises the need to carefully consider the implementation of policies championing women's participation to ensure they succeed in their aims, without allowing or encouraging gender-based discrimination.

NEGOTIATION AND PEACEBUILDING

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the prominence of women, peace and security issues in peacebuilding has increased. Since 2013, more than half of the peace agreements signed include references to women, peace and security.[87] However, the participation of women in the peacebuilding process needs attention. Traditionally, the positions of negotiators – those representing the reconciling parties, or third party mediators – are perceived to be men.[88] This perception hinders the ability of women to fully participate in the peacebuilding process. It limits their inclusion during peacebuilding negotiations, and discounts the value of their contributions where they are included.[89] This needs to change if UNSCR 1325 is to be suitably implemented. Importantly, women's participation during peacebuilding must be meaningful. Presence during negotiations, while positive, is not enough. Similarly, consultation with women's advocacy groups and civil society organisations marks an improvement, but is hardly an end point for women's participation in the peacebuilding process.

Beyond addressing participation, Member States should improve the way that women, peace and security issues are addressed in peace agreements. Increased acknowledgement of women, peace and security issues, demonstrated by the increased use of women, peace and security language, is a positive first step.[90] However, the women, peace and security agenda must be incorporated into as many international and domestic policies and peace agreements as possible. The women, peace and security agenda must become a cross-cutting issue that is spread across multiple government and policy sectors, not just those concerned with women.[91] Increasing awareness of women, peace and security issues in policymaking can be done by increasing the accessibility and awareness of women, peace and security and UNSCR 1325. Professor Elisabeth Porter, Anuradha Mundkur and Dr Danielle Every suggest the translation of UNSCR 1325 and the Beijing Platform for Action into as many local languages and dialects as possible to maximise attention paid to women, peace and security.[92]

Photo credit: UN Photo / Rosenberg

Photo credit: US Pacific Fleet / Senior Airman Peter Reft

Photo credit: Inter-Parliamentary Union / Pierre Albuoy

Women's participation in peacebuilding (from left to right). Dorothy Detzer of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom questions a speaker at the San Francisco Conference establishing the United Nations in 1945; a gender specialist from Counterpart International talks with Bougainville community leaders in the Solomon Islands during a family violence prevention workshop in 2015; Women Parliamentarians meet to debate CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 in Geneva, 2015.

POLICY AND EVALUATION: IMPLEMENTING RELIEF AND RECOVERY

The development of sustainable and effective women, peace and security policies relates to UNSCR 1325's relief and recovery pillar. It is highly complex, and is arguably the pillar with the broadest and most diverse scope. Relief and recovery is about how to address the impact of conflict on women: finding recourse for women who have experienced conflict related sexual violence, investigating the root causes of conflict and the best way to prevent conflict in future, and how to ensure that women and girls have access to pathways for leadership to enhance meaningful participation. It encompasses the collection and analysis of data on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, the development of government policies to promote women's participation, the full implementation of these policies, and evaluation of their effectiveness.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
Obstacles to Relief and Recovery

In November 2012, soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) raped at least 76 women and girls, although counts have been estimated up to as high as 1,000 women, children, and men.[93] The outcome three years later demonstrates the barriers faced to achieving relief and recovery.

The attacks were condemned nationally and internationally. The Congolese Minister of Justice, the wife of President Joseph Kabila, UK Foreign Minister William Hague and UN Refugee Agency Special Envoy Angelina Jolie paid high profile visits to the women. Many aspects of the trial demonstrated the pressure on the DRC to hold the perpetrators accountable. Since the women could not afford to travel to testify against the perpetrators at trial, the court came to them. Psychologists were available to provide counselling prior to the women giving witness testimonies of the events (of the potential 1,000 survivors, only 47 testified). 37 soldiers were accused of rape in the trial, compared with only 1 in a similar rape trial that had occurred in 2013 in Mupoke. The majority of the soldiers who were prosecuted were low ranking. The mid-ranking officials charged were all acquitted, and no high-ranking members of the FARDC were ever charged.

Of those charged, the military court hearing the trial convicted just two lower-ranked soldiers of rape. Despite extensive measures taken to maintain the witnesses' anonymity, the vast majority of those that testified have since been identified and targeted with threats. The trials triggered some policy changes in the DRC. Following the Minova trials, the DRC government announced the appointment of a special representative on violence against women and children, accompanied by law reform to address impunity regarding human rights violations.[94]

Minova demonstrates the difficulties in achieving accountability for perpetrators and the barriers to addressing the widespread and endemic nature of conflict related sexual violence. It also demonstrates the protracted process of seeking justice for these crimes, and different perspectives of progress. Victoria Dove Dimandja, co-founder of the Congolese Women's Group in the UK, emphasised that for survivors of Minova, two convictions and only 37 accused falls far from achieving justice. However, the fact that the any of the perpetrators were prosecuted was considered to be a watershed moment in the DRC.

Photo credit: Al Jazeera / Diana Zeyned Alhindawi
A Minova survivor testifies during the trial in Lake Kivu in eastern Congo. Reporting for Al Jazeera, Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi writes that '[s]pecial care is taken to provide rape survivors with disguises, curtains, veils, whatever they may need to feel secure when given their testimony. The women are referred to by numbers instead of by name to maintain their anonymity'.

The way that conflict affects women must be assessed and analysed. Statistics clearly demonstrate the differential impact of armed conflict on the safety and wellbeing of women and girls. This impact extends beyond direct threats, and affects basic needs, such as food, water, healthcare, and education. In the 2015 Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, many international and regional organisations expressed concern regarding the lack of data collection and record maintenance in the women, peace and security area.[95] A priority for Governments should be to increase the collection of sex disaggregated data on the impact of conflict on women and girls, to measure that impact and guide future policy decisions in the area.[96] Actors should also make an effort to use data and evaluation mechanisms for existing policies to identify areas for improvement.

Data collection and analysis should include consultation with women's advocacy groups, civil society organisations and local community groups. Policymaking at the domestic and international levels must be tailored to the needs of the women for whom it is designed. In WILPF's 2015 Through the Lens of Civil Society Report, it emphasised that:

"There are diverse needs and perspectives among women, given that women themselves are diverse and their role and participation during and after conflict varies, for instance as peacemakers, combatants, sympathizers, human rights defenders, survivors of sexual violence, and others. As such, women's role in women, peace and security is not homogenous either."[97]

The diversity of priorities, needs, and viewpoints of women must be recognised. Women are not a homogenous group with a single, unified voice. Actors should not treat them as such by restricting the scope of consultation or by developing overly broad policies that do not account for the specific needs within the country or region, or issues specific to the nature of the conflict. Broad consultation engaging as many community groups as possible should be encouraged, ensuring women from different ethnic, economic, and religious groups are included.

A lack of accountability in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 has also been identified as problematic. WILPF observed a 'lack of international coherence' on how to approach women, peace and security integration. This concern stems from a lack of clarity regarding responsibility for policy development, data collection, monitoring, and community consultation.[98] Criticism is directed towards the lack of formal accountability mechanisms. Although dialogue between civil society organisations and the government of Member States is encouraged, there is "no indication of how to hold officials accountable if they fail to hold consultations or to respond constructively to women's concerns and proposals."[99] In the recently adopted UNSCR 2242, the Security Council commended the use of NAPs by countries to encourage domestic accountability but emphasised the need for countries to provide updates on their UNSCR 1325 progress.[100]

Photo credit: UN Photo / Amanda Voisad
The UN Security Council debates women, peace and security and UNSCR 1325 for the 15th anniversary in October 2015.

Another challenge is ensuring that policies are properly supported so that they translate to practical change. The Director of the University of California, Berkeley's Human Rights Centre sexual violence program, Kim Thuy Seelinger, emphasised the importance of ensuring that results flow from the passing of new laws addressing women, peace and security issues:

"A state can't pass a shiny new law against sexual violence but then not provide the tools or resources for meaningful implementation… If a nurse doesn't have the right post-rape examination supplies, or if a police officer doesn't have enough fuel to ride out to a crime scene, then they can't do their jobs. Survivors won't receive the support or justice they are entitled to. The most basic systems still require material and human resources to function properly." [101]

The disconnect between policy reform and on-the-ground impact has also been felt in relation to increasing women's participation in peacebuilding processes. After extensive lobbying including support from UN Women, a sub-committee on gender was included as part of wider peace negotiations in Colombia with the purpose of increasing women's participation in the negotiations. However, despite the establishment of the sub-committee, civil society organisations were not given a formal role in the negotiations, nor was their participation in the peacebuilding process mandated.[102] The result was a policy in theory that did not translate to real change or participation in practice. Increasing on-the-ground impact requires political will from Member States and cooperation and consultation with civil society organisations, as recognised by the Secretary-General in the 2015 Report.[103]

The lack of funding to support women, peace and security initiatives has repeatedly been identified as "perhaps the most serious and persistent obstacle to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda over the past 15 years."[104] The Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 found a "consistent, striking disparity between policy commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the financial allocations to achieve them."[105] The Study also found that only 6% of aid going to conflict affected countries is directed to women's needs, participation and empowerment. Only 2% of aid directed towards gender equality was also peace and security specific.[106] These figures are disappointing. In line with Seelinger's observation, if the objectives and goals of UNSCR 1325 are to be met by Member States, women, peace and security policies need to be appropriately supported. This includes financial support. Pushing for this change will be critical to progress on UNSCR 1325 in the coming years.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the UN Security Council's adoption of UNSCR 1325, UN bodies, Member States, non governmental and civil society organisations have worked to advocate for women's empowerment and gender equality in conflict and post-conflict environments. The results include slowly increasing women's participation, the development of initiatives to assist women and girls experiencing conflict and violence, as well as a push to gain a better understanding of these experiences and what can be done to address the effects of conflict. In the next 15 years, implementation of UNSCR 1325 should be ambitious, with a focus on setting goals and indicators and measuring the success of implementation. Political will, funding, and consistency in implementation stand as major barriers for the women, peace and security agenda. Traditional frameworks that do not facilitate women's participation or needs must be adjusted. Opportunities for women to occupy leadership and decision-making positions in government, military and law enforcement must be created, and must be used by Member States. Member States should continue to use NAPs as a mechanism to track their progress on UNSCR 1325. Education and awareness in the form of gender training must continue to be used to ensure that those providing frontline support for women in conflict, and those making critical decisions affecting women in conflict fully understand women, peace and security issues.

In its beginning stage, UNSCR 1325 has been about raising awareness and increasing the understanding of the differential impact of conflict on women and girls. The next stage must focus on using this understanding to mobilise further change. In this respect, ongoing dialogue between government and civil society is critical to ensuring that policies reflect needs on the ground. Increasing accountability for implementation and raising the bar for indicators is also vital to increasing the momentum for change. Women, peace and security needs to become a cross-cutting issue internationally and domestically, and attention must be directed to all four pillars of the agenda. For far too many years, women have been those that suffer the most during conflict. The next 15 years must facilitate a transition so that women are those that create the most change.

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Women attend classes in the Abu Shouk IDP Camp in North Darfur, classes are offered in Arabic, the Koran and Mathematics

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