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Overview

Over the past decade the critical importance of women's participation in peace processes and policies has been recognized through numerous international institutions, resolutions and state commitments—including UN Security Council resolution 1325 (SCR 1325), adopted in October 2000. A limited number of states have adopted SCR 1325 action plans, and a set of global indicators to track implementation was finally approved by the Security Council on 26 October 2010. Despite the promise of SCR 1325, many experts and advocates have been disappointed with the progress made by states and by the UN system.

This brief assesses the 10 years since the adoption of SCR 1325, identifying lessons learned and emerging best practices, as well as shortcomings. It suggests what can be done to energize and advance the implementation of SCR 1325 in the near future, and recommends ways in which new actors can contribute to this process, including the newly-established UN Women.

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Maximizing the Impact of UN Security Council Resolution 1325: 10 Years On

IT IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED THAT WOMEN BEAR A HEAVY burden in conflict and post-conflict societies, both directly through violence perpetrated against them and their families, and as survivors attempting to reconstruct destroyed communities. There is also growing recognition of women as agents of change, skilfully reshaping and rebuilding communities affected by conflict. Women worldwide—as government representatives, activists, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's networks, and other concerned citizens—have persevered through threats and conditions of violence to initiate transformative processes within conflict and post-conflict societies.

Over the past decade, the importance of women's engagement in peace processes has been recognized through numerous international institutions, resolutions and state commitments. In October 2000, the UN Security Council through its resolution 1325 (SCR 1325) formally recognized the relationship between women, peace and security, and the critical importance of women's participation as reflected in leadership, empowerment and decision-making. SCR 1325 provided the first international legal and political framework recognizing the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women as well as the pivotal role of women in peacebuilding. The resolution provides both a broad "blueprint" and concrete suggestions to help the international community incorporate gender perspectives into the peace and security agenda.

Recognizing that sexual violence is used as a tactic of war, the Council adopted two subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security—SCR 1820 and SCR 1888—which focus on gender-based violence and emphasize the need for women's participation in combating this violence.

The Security Council further continued the participation theme in October 2009 with SCR 1889, which affirms measures within SCR 1325 and calls for improved women's participation and empowerment across all stages of the peace process. SCR 1889 also incorporates concrete measures for increasing funding and access to resources, renewed efforts to involve women in the peacebuilding process, and



UN Security Council Resolution 1325

SCR 1325 defined women's participation as the "role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and ... 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".

The resolution characterizes women's roles beyond "victims", as equal participants and decision-makers across peace-making and peacebuilding issues. Through its 18 provisions, SCR 1325 provides a framework for participation in activities such as negotiating peace agreements, planning humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and rebuilding war-torn communities. The resolution places firm obligations and accountability upon all Member States, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and non-state actors to protect women's human rights as well as to ensure a gender perspective across all peace and security initiatives, including Security Council resolutions, mission mandates and Secretary-General reports. Finally, the resolution acknowledges and endorses the role of civil society in all aspects of the peace process, providing women's organizations and other NGOs formal recognition for their efforts.

stronger provisions on monitoring and reporting. It requests the Secretary-General to develop a set of global indicators to track implementation of SCR 1325. A set of proposed indicators on prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery was presented to the Security Council in April 2010 and was formally approved on 26 October of the same year.

This brief assesses the 10 years since the adoption of SCR 1325. What has and has not been achieved, what lessons have been learned, and what best practices have emerged? Has the role of women in peace and security been influenced by the shift in the concept of peace and security from the traditional, territorial security approach toward less military, more human security approaches? What have been the shortcomings in the implementation of SCR 1325? Were these shortcomings caused primarily by overly high expectations in 2000? Or has there simply been a lack of political will to implement the resolution?

The brief also suggests what can be done to energize and advance the implementation of SCR 1325 in the near future. Which new actors should be enlisted to help lead this process? What is the role of the newly established UN Women in this regard?

Defining Progress

Many experts and advocates working on women, peace and security issues have been disappointed by one or more aspects of the promise of 2000. Positive state rhetoric on gender masks many deficiencies in the application and enforcement of the resolution. Few states have developed 1325 "Action Plans". Efforts to motivate the Security Council to take a more active role in implementing SCR 1325 have been undermined by the scarcity of quality data on women's participation and a lack

of clear indicators that would allow governments, UN officials and civil society to accurately track progress (or in many cases, the lack of progress) towards the full participation of women in peace policies and practices.

There remains considerable confusion regarding indicators as many parts of the UN system—including civil society groups—have invested in creating indicators, but not always in a complementary manner. Moreover, information alone is insufficient to remediate deficiencies in women's participation. An immediate role for the new entity UN Women should be to help sort out the sometimes disparate indicator suggestions and make a strong case for information that can help convince those otherwise reluctant to embrace the promise of SCR 1325.

Indeed, there remains a lack of concrete, consistent, and ongoing (i.e. "trackable") information on the key elements of the women, peace and security agenda. This has resulted in serious problems for those advocating for women's rights in conflict, as information has tended to be ad hoc and sporadic. It has also meant that there have been few satisfying responses to the "causality" questions often asked by those unconvinced of the need to include women in decision-making: "What difference do women make to any of these processes? If we include women, what difference will it make in the outcome?"

For many, there is little doubt about the impact of women's participation in a wide variety of peace practices and policies. The need is to gather data and then use it strategically (and non-competitively) in the service of women's full participation. Information that leads to humane and concrete policies for women is needed—information that enables us to not only oppose and expose, but also to propose.



Participation and Impunity

There is a clear relationship between impunity for gender-based violence and women's participation. Research and advocacy conducted by many experts highlights the use of rape as an instru-

viewed through a similar lens. It also ensures that the security dimensions of participation are given ample attention. Small arms are the weapons of choice during formal and informal armed conflict and are largely used in the

“Impunity for sexual and other forms of violence continues to seriously undermine women’s leadership in all areas of conflict prevention and resolution.”

ment of war for which the recent horrors in the DRC provide a sober backdrop.

Although participation sends a stronger message than victimization, abuse and exploitation of women make it difficult for women to participate fully in peace policies and processes. While justice and empowerment are the larger goals, sexual violence and under-participation are clearly linked and need to be addressed together in all policy deliberations on gender. Impunity for sexual violence contributes to conditions (which include resource and cultural issues) that dampen women's enthusiasm for policy leadership and limit their options for breaking barriers to participation. As well as promoting women's rights, SCR 1325 also promotes women's *agentic* potential, and this is what makes the resolution distinct. However, the worrying feature is that the continued sexual exploitation of women undermines their personal confidence and minimizes their *agentic* potential to participate in peace processes, particularly in more traditional, patriarchal cultures.

The four relevant Security Council Resolutions—1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889—should be held together in analysis and policy development. This ensures that participation and protection are

commission of violations against women, including sexual violence. We cannot expect women to claim their rightful place while illicit weapons proliferate and the health and security of women are constantly threatened.

This security dimension incorporates a preventive dimension, but also a justice-related one. Impunity for sexual and other forms of violence continues to seriously undermine women's leadership in all areas of conflict prevention and resolution. For the remaining impunity-related challenges, we still have insufficient resources, political will and, in particular, legal infrastructure. These shortages stem from a variety of causes, including: prioritizing quick convictions over the comprehensive investigation of gender-based violent crimes (which can take longer and require more patience and specialist expertise to investigate successfully than other violations); gender bias (the belief that gender-based violent crimes are not as “serious” as other violent crimes); lack of resources (a particular problem in post-conflict countries where there are many urgent and competing demands on the government); and the lack of appropriate substantive and procedural criminal laws at the domestic level (e.g. laws that discriminate against women by making

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it difficult or impossible to successfully prosecute perpetrators of sexual crimes, and the scarcity of national laws implementing the ICC Statute, particularly its progressive provisions related to gender-based crimes).

While there has been more progress on issues of participation and impunity than some might realize, there is still a significant lack of capacity, transparency, accountability and demonstrable positive outcomes.

while women's involvement seems to have broadened and "softened" the security agenda, the evolving agenda, in turn, has encouraged and even enabled greater participation by women in many societies.

Unfortunately not all policymakers really understand the degree to which conflict is often rooted in poverty and other non-military security factors. Nevertheless, one of the implications of SCR 1325 is that we should promote

“Not all policymakers really understand the degree to which conflict is often rooted in poverty and other non-military security factors.”

Human Security and a Culture of Peace

Although there has been movement from traditional conceptions of security to a more human security based framework, this shift may be merely rhetorical rather than representing a real shift in perspective by policymakers. While the structure of the debate may have widened, many of the traditional barriers have remained. Women continue to be under-represented and even ignored regarding essential negotiations and conflict resolution mechanisms. Practically, the widening human security approach has done little to increase participation in critical security, judicial and governmental institutions—all key for women's progress in conflict and post-conflict societies.

The transition in policy and practice from “hard” security to human security has certainly not been accepted by all states or in all policy communities, but it is a fruitful line of engagement that has had a positive if limited impact on women's participation in peace processes. This relationship is reciprocal—

women's participation in the “hard” security sectors such as the formal military. While we should not focus too much attention on state-centred functions, it should be noted that the security sector has, in some cases, been an important partner in promoting women's participation and in sharpening the skills to make that participation successful.

Should women seek roles in a militarized world or one that is less militarized? Clearly the latter is preferable. For some experts, the challenge is not only to increase women's participation, but also to establish cultures worthy of women's contributions. In this view, SCR 1325 should be relevant both to areas of armed conflict, and to every country and community in the world where the security of women and their families is threatened. In Japan, for example, many women suffer from verbal and physical domestic violence, discrimination, isolation and bullying. Solving these problems requires building a culture of peace, a way of life that values non-violence and dialogue and is characterized by cooperation,



acceptance, hope, social responsibility and respect for life. In this interpretation of the spirit of SCR 1325, change is realized through empowering women at the grassroots.

Partnerships and Leadership

The mandates and responsibilities of SCR 1325 are defined, operationalized and assessed by a range of institutions, organizations and individuals. While there is no consensus on the contents of

of keeping pressure on Council members and ensuring that they will consider the gender implications of the security and civilian protection issues brought to their attention. But an over-reliance on the Council to solve women's participation gaps and inspire national movement on legislation to address those gaps is unwise. The United Nations is a place where change related to global security is often symbolic and where people (especially on the NGO side) some-

“The role of UN Women should be investigative, research- and policy-oriented as well as advisory.”

this list, specific concerns include the role of the Security Council, the potential impact of UN Women, and the many actors which have yet to be fully included or energized in the work of promoting participation and ending impunity.

Concerns about the Council stem largely from the issue of whether SCR 1325 was “too ambitious”. The Council is seen as a compromised and unrepresentative body by many states and others inside and outside the UN system. Thus, the Council's calls—however tepid or robust—to create national action plans and otherwise implement the spirit of the Resolution often fall on deaf ears. Moreover, 10 years is a long time to nurture commitments, no matter how sincere they might have been in the beginning. Given that the Council has done relatively little over this period to inspire or monitor practical commitments to the resolution, its authority in matters of women's participation has been predictably hampered. The “Monthly Action Points” submitted to the Council by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security is one important way

times put too much emphasis on the impact of resolutions passed by consensus and not enough on the difficult political and diplomatic engagements that are needed to bring consensus resolutions to fruition in the form of practical, implementable policy.

UN Women is a promising development, though it remains to be seen whether it has the ability to bring together the diverse and sometimes competitive threads of women's activity (including indicators) that are currently in evidence throughout the UN system. There has been welcome movement on the creation of a specific unit devoted to women, peace and security issues. More generally, there is cautious optimism that the development of UN Women will result in new energy for women's participation rather than in new bureaucratic or other restrictions on that energy.

The role of UN Women should be investigative, research- and policy-oriented as well as advisory; guiding all UN arms such as UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR to make programmatic interventions in areas requiring attention. Women's rights and gender issues are cross cutting—the



formation of UN Women must not undermine women- or gender-oriented interventions undertaken by other UN agencies. Transition is always a painful and confusing process, and it is hoped that UN Women will start to function efficiently once its four organs (DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM) have successfully completed the transitional phase.

Concerns over the sufficiency of capacity to carry out the work of SCR 1325 are by no means limited to the United Nations. There is a need to engage young people and also (indeed, especially) faith-based organizations, among other neglected areas of civil society. Civil society plays a critical role in implementing policy change and renegotiating gender roles, but the situation of those who seek to advocate for or protect women is precarious in so many parts of the world. We can and must do more to support women on the ground, to help address the “disconnects” between grassroots groups and their governments, and to help ensure that the concerns (and achievements) of these women find their way into policy discussions at the international level.

While the UN system and other international organizations must be strengthened, so must the skills, networks and resolve of civil society organizations and women from all walks of life. Networks of “citizen peacemakers” are needed to supplement and complement resolutions like SCR 1325 and other global initiatives.

Policy and Practical Recommendations

- The United Nations must set a better example regarding implementation of SCR 1325 by appointing women to key positions such as lead mediators. The Secretary-General and Security Council should also raise levels of urgency regarding member states’ commitment to full participation and should insist on regular reports—including from Foreign Ministry offices—on state compliance with SCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889.
- UN-based discussions on women’s roles must maintain their focus on participation and empowerment while addressing persistent and pervasive impunity for gender-based violence. NGOs, likewise, should adopt a model of empowerment and education as they advocate for structures to end impunity and promote justice.
- The United Nations must continue to develop and implement indicators that are non-competitive and culturally inclusive. The set of indicators recently adopted by the Council should be seen as a starting point. We must avoid further delays in implementation of the activities that the indicators are designed to measure.
- UN-based NGOs must do more to increase linkages and overcome barriers between civil society groups implementing SCR 1325 programmes in diverse global regions and the policymakers to whom they have access. NGOs must ensure that funding resources for work that references these groups are leveraged and distributed in good faith. NGOs must also ensure gender balance within their own institutions.
- In consultation with NGOs, the United Nations must offer more robust and accessible advisory/consultative capacity to assist states in creating and implementing national action plans on SCR 1325.
- The United Nations and member states must ensure that gender-based violence is expressly prohibited under the terms of cease-fire agreements, and that peacekeeping missions are explicitly mandated to investigate and document such violations within these agreements.



- UN Women should quickly move to launch and support a special division devoted to women, peace and security issues and concerns.
- NGOs, governments and others should advocate and invest more in training, technical support and basic security to ensure that more women are prepared to seek office in local and national governments, participate in peace negotiations, and assume other important policy positions.
- Governments should consult with NGOs and other civil society

representatives—and utilize their field experiences, networking capacity and training expertise—as they draft national policies on women and assess the success of those policies. Governments and NGOs should also do more to reach out to new and diverse constituencies, including religious and other traditional leaders and the many men from diverse backgrounds whose support can greatly enhance prospects for women’s full participation in political and peace processes.

About this Policy Brief

This Policy Brief is based on an expert’s panel held at UNU on 8 September 2010, in partnership with the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Soka Gakkai International and Global Action to Prevent War. The panel drew together a diverse group of academics, advocates and policymakers from UN agencies as well as organizations in Japan, the Philippines, Australia, Pakistan and the US. All participants have worked at various levels—academic, policy, direct-action—to contribute to efforts towards ensuring the full participation of women in peace policies and processes, and ending impunity for gender-based violence.

This brief also draws upon the report *Promoting Women’s Participation in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies: How Women Worldwide are Making and Building Peace* by Kavitha Suthanthiraraj and Cristina Ayo, published by Global Action to Prevent War in conjunction with the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.



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INSIDE:
Policy Brief

*Maximizing the
Impact of UN Security
Council Resolution
1325: 10 Years On*

The UN system, member states and civil society together must energize and advance the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325.

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