

FHSMUN 31
SECURITY COUNCIL

WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY

Introduction

The world can never comprehensively address the causes and consequences of armed conflict and war if it continues to ignore or minimize the disproportionate effects of armed conflict and war on women and girls. At all stages of armed conflict, before, during, and after, the pernicious effects on women and girls are almost never given the same consideration as the effects on men and boys. Yet, given that the majority of the victims of armed conflict are women and girls, it is absolutely essential that the international community reorient its priorities to incorporate the particular needs of women and girls during all stages of armed conflict.

In the Security Council's deliberations, the assembled delegates will need to analyze not only the impacts of armed conflict and war on women but also the pivotal roles that women are capable of playing in resolving conflicts as well as in creating more stable and just societies in the aftermath of conflict. One crucial component of any comprehensive solution to the problems posed by the effects of armed conflict on women is accelerating the ongoing process of gender mainstreaming throughout the entire UN System. Gender mainstreaming must be implemented at all levels, from the personnel deployed in peacekeeping missions, all the way to contingent commanders, to civilian monitors and high-level UN personnel in New York and around the world. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon observed that as of July 2008, "women constituted 2.2 per cent of military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations compared to 1 per cent in July 2004, and 7.6 per cent of civilian police personnel compared to 5 per cent in 2004."¹ The international community must not fall victim to the assumption, however, that just adding more women to peacekeeping missions will automatically obviate the very real problems experienced by all civilians, especially women and girls, a phenomenon referred to in feminist analyses of peacekeeping as "add women and stir."

Addressing the myriad and complex issues associated with post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction remains a momentous responsibility for the Security Council, and indeed all international actors committed to the cause of global peace. Throughout the often tense process of rebuilding fragile war-torn societies, women and girls must shoulder many burdens and responsibilities, including reconstituting broken economies, assuming political leadership, and providing evidence to post-conflict truth and reconciliation commissions. Traditionally, however, women are overwhelmingly ignored during the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes; in the case of El Salvador, "women fighters held 40 percent of leadership and 30 percent of combat roles during the civil war, but the government neglected them during the DDR process. Seventy to eighty percent of female combatants received no benefits under the government's land

¹ Ban Ki-moon, "Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General" S/2008/622 September 25, 2008 p. 11.

transfer program.”² It is not only female combatants who are ignored, however; civilian women all too frequently find themselves denied access to the machinery of justice as well as the political levers of power that are necessary to enact real change within their societies.

The Security Council began addressing the concept of women, peace and security more systematically in October 2000 when the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325). Donald Steinberg, Deputy President of the International Crisis Group (ICG), recently noted that “Resolution 1325 is, in effect, a game plan for ensuring gender equality in political leadership, building gender-sensitive security forces, supporting women as they return to their homes, ensuring safety for women in refugee camps and settlements, and insisting on accountability for sexual violence and other abuses.”³ Over the subsequent 8.5 years, gender mainstreaming and addressing the problems posed by the treatment of women and girls during and after armed conflict have been emphasized by the Security Council and the international community, but perhaps not emphasized enough. “According to the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor for Gender Issues (OSAGI), fewer than 15% of the 261 resolutions adopted by the Security Council since 1325 contain specific language relating to women and gender issues.”⁴ In 2008, the Security Council more specifically addressed sexual violence in resolution 1820 (S/RES/1820), but it is very clear that the Security Council needs to address the gender dimensions of all situations of armed conflict.

Impacts of Conflict on Women and Girls

Women and girls are not the only victims of armed conflict and war but they frequently comprise the majority of the victims. It is essential that the international community confront this troubling reality, while simultaneously bearing in mind that women and girls are more than just victims. Women and girls fulfill all of the roles that men and boys perform during armed conflict; they are soldiers, government ministers, farmers, businesspeople, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP’s), victims, and even victimizers. Recognizing these interrelated and often overlapping roles is a crucial first step in addressing the impact of conflict on women and girls. The international community must push far beyond this first step, though, if any serious efforts at addressing the pernicious effects of armed conflict and war on women and girls.

The disturbing realities that women and girls comprise the majority of the victims of armed conflict and war must give the international community considerable pause, particularly when most of these victims are civilians. Women and girls suffer the effects of armed conflict disproportionately because they are frequently intentionally targeted because of their gender. These instances of gender-based violence (GBV), including rape and sexual assault not only disrupt the lives of the immediate victims but also of their

² Christina Binder, Karin Lukas, and Romana Schweiger, “Empty Words or Real Achievement? The Impact of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women in Armed Conflicts” *Radical History Review* Issue 101 Spring 2008 p. 25.

³ Donald Steinberg, “Protection and Participation: Women and Armed Conflict” Presentation to the Salzburg Global Seminar September 10, 2008 p. 3.

⁴ Chineze J. Onyejekwe, “Women, War, Peace-building and Reconstruction” *Transnational Processes* UNESCO 2005 p. 281.

families and communities, in part because women and girls must assume such a disproportionate responsibility for maintaining their families and communities in the midst of armed conflict. One reason why violence against women and girls in the context of armed conflict and war is so prevalent because the perpetrators of gender-based violence (GBV), including rape and sexual assault, rarely face serious judicial consequences.

The tragedies of sexual violence in the midst of armed conflict include the direct health and psychological tolls on the victims and their families as well as the frightening frequency of rape and sexual assault during armed conflict. In Afghanistan, Colombia, Darfur⁵, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)⁶, and the former Yugoslavia, the use of systematic sexual violence by various armed groups reached epidemic proportions.⁷ While government soldiers and rebel groups typically commit the vast majority of acts of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence, UN peacekeepers have been accused of significant acts of sexual violence in the DRC, Haiti, and other locales.⁸ Female soldiers and peacekeepers are also targeted for acts of gender-based violence and rape and sexual assault; this has been one of the principal reasons cited by many governments for not sending women into front-line combat operations or not sending female soldiers as peacekeeping soldiers. As a result of the pressure stemming from women's groups, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and some governmental leaders, the UN and the International Criminal Court (ICC) now define the use of systematic rape and sexual violence as a war crime and are now trying former Congolese Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba for directing the commission of these crimes in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2002-03.⁹ While Bemba's trial may provide at least a small measure of justice for the victims of his policies in the Central African Republic and the DRC, the cruel reality is that there are still dozens of Bembas ordering and directing these crimes around the globe today.

Women and girls confront considerable and interwoven consequences from armed conflict beyond, and sometimes stemming from, sexual violence. Due to the prevalence of men and boys in armed conflict, women and girls must assume an even greater degree of responsibility for their local economies. When situations of armed conflict deteriorate such that the local residents must flee, women and children comprise the overwhelming majority of internally displaced persons (IDP's) and refugees; frequently, female IDP's and refugees confront special cultural, economic, health, legal and political problems. In refugee camps, women are frequently subjected to rape; other women turn to prostitution to support themselves and their families.¹⁰ The Security Council and its international partners, especially the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), must improve their performance in terms of addressing the needs of female refugees.

Impacts of Women on Resolving Conflict

⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Darfur: No Redress for Rape" April 6, 2008.

⁶ *BBC News*, "Rape legacy of DR Congo conflict" November 5, 2003.

⁷ *The Economist*, "Women and children worst" February 19, 2009.

⁸ *BBC News*, "Peacekeepers 'abusing children'" May 27, 2008.

⁹ *BBC News*, "Congo's Bemba to stand ICC trial" June 16, 2009.

¹⁰ Katherine Zoepf, "Desperate Iraqi Refugees Turn to Sex Trade in Syria" *New York Times* May 29, 2007.

One traditional assumption is that women are uniquely qualified to resolve armed conflict because of their maternal instincts and nurturing natures. These views can never be proved conclusively although many analysts cite anecdotal evidence for these claims. If women are more qualified to resolve armed conflict, or at the minimum have unique skills and talents for resolving armed conflict, these skills and talents more likely stem from patterns of socialization. Chineze Onyejekwe asserts that “women’s different skills, perspectives, and leadership styles acquired during war and conflict situations can prove extremely useful in ensuring human security, by contributing to changing perceptions, building relationships and developing common understandings and visions that benefit families, communities and nations worldwide.”¹¹ The international community must integrate the perspectives and skills that women possess to bring about comprehensive peaceful resolutions to situations of armed conflict and war.

When situations of armed conflict are being resolved, particularly through negotiations, women must be actively involved throughout the resolution process. Without the inclusion of women during the negotiations, it is very likely that the eventual peace settlement may neglect the concerns and needs of women and girls, including land distribution schemes and judicial hearings and trials for those accused of war crimes and atrocities. Armed conflict, especially prolonged wars, frequently breaks down traditional social structures, including the accepted roles for men and women. During armed conflict, women often create new civil society associations and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) to address immediate needs as well as to lay the foundation for peace. Since women have assumed such critical and nontraditional roles in their societies during the conflicts, it stands to reason that these changes in social roles need to be reflected in the conflict resolution process.

When examining peacekeeping missions, female peacekeepers are increasingly considered integral to the success of peacekeeping missions as they are often perceived as less confrontational and much easier to approach for other women and girls. Johanna Valenius further notes that “in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, in Hebron, even the male population perceived female peacekeepers to be more approachable than male ones.”¹² Other studies have confirmed many of these impressions about the relative approachability of male and female peacekeepers but the international community must not draw too many deep conclusions at this point as too few male peacekeepers still receive significant training about gender issues and gender mainstreaming before being deployed in the field; as the UN and the international community remedy this particular deficiency, it is likely that male peacekeepers will be seen as more approachable in the future than they are currently.

The Impact of Post-conflict Situations on Women

The dangers and insecurities that plague societies during armed conflict do not automatically cease once the situation of armed conflict is declared to have ended.

¹¹ Chineze J. Onyejekwe, “Women, War, Peace-building and Reconstruction” *Transnational Processes* UNESCO 2005 pp. 279-280.

¹² Johanna Valenius, “A Few Kind Women: Gender Essentialism and Nordic Peacekeeping Operations” *International Peacekeeping* Vol. 14 No. 4, August 2007 p. 515.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that “for women, the lawlessness of many post-conflict situations, with its widespread violence, is as dangerous as a situation of armed conflict.”¹³ Commenting on the specific case of Angola in the 1990’s, but with lessons that are applicable for many post-conflict situations, Donald Steinberg of the International Crisis Group (ICG) pointed out that “the men were sent back to communities that had learned to live without them during decades of conflict. The frustration of these men with no skills and no futures often exploded into an epidemic of alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce, rape, and domestic violence. In effect, the end of civil war unleashed a new era of violence against women.”¹⁴ Creating a post-conflict environment that is safe and allows for sustainable human development as well as the (re)establishment of effective systems of governance and justice requires the full and equal participation of women.

One measurable aspect of post-conflict situations that has drawn considerable media attention is the increase in the numbers of female parliamentarians and politicians in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Rwanda. Under the Taliban regime, Afghan women were thoroughly excluded from political decision-making as well as the overwhelming majority of economic activities. By 2008, women comprised 31% of the members of parliament, a much higher rate than many wealthier established republics. In October 2008, Rwanda became the first country to elect a female-majority parliament, with 56% of the parliamentarians being women.¹⁵ Liberia even elected the first female African president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and women comprise 25% of the Iraqi parliament. While these accomplishments are laudable, conditions on the ground, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, are by no means ideal for women. In Afghanistan, warlords guilty of war crimes, including rape and sexual assault, “have been given positions of authority and power” and “the failure to build a modern justice system has left women subject to the application of Shar’ia law, which in traditional Afghan society has been highly discriminatory against women, especially in the area of family law. Further, women suffer broadly from the lack of security, corruption, rights abuses and civilian casualties.”¹⁶ Post-conflict settlements need to include provisions guaranteeing gender equality as well as legal and financial components to address gender-based violence (GBV) and property destruction committed during the conflict.

UN System Actions

The UN System’s commitment to gender mainstreaming as well as to achieving gender equality by 2015 means that all UN agencies and bodies must be actively reforming their practices to achieve these goals. Within the UN System, a number of agencies and

¹³ Ban Ki-moon, “Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General” S/2008/622 September 25, 2008 p. 2.

¹⁴ Donald Steinberg, “Protection and Participation: Women and Armed Conflict” Presentation to the Salzburg Global Seminar September 10, 2008 p. 2.

¹⁵ Stephanie McCrummen, “Women Run the Show in a Recovering Rwanda” *Washington Post* October 27, 2008.

¹⁶ Donald Steinberg, “Protection and Participation” September 10, 2008 pp. 2-3.

offices are directly responsible for gender mainstreaming, including: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); the UN Office of the Special Advisor for Gender Issues (OSAGI); the UN International Research and Training Institute of Women (UN-INSTRAW); the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE); the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); the Security Council; and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The UN System's ongoing initiatives include "Stop Rape Now: UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict"¹⁷; the UN System-wide Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325, with the updated 2008-09 Action Plan¹⁸; UN-INSTRAW's program to train peacekeepers in regards to gender issues¹⁹; and the continuing efforts of UNIFEM and the Security Council to address the causes and consequences of armed conflict as they relate to women and girls. As diligent as delegates and member states often are, the impetus for some of the UN System's most critical work on the topic of women and peace and security has been provided by civil society representatives and non-governmental organizations (NGO's), such as the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. These vital contributors must be included in the Security Council's deliberations.

The Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) are the UN bodies most immediately responsible for addressing the problems posed for women and girls during situations of armed conflict. One increasingly critical task for many peacekeeping operations is the training of peacekeepers, civilian peace monitors, and newly constituted national security forces, including the police, about gender and human rights issues during post-conflict reconciliation. Incorporating gender perspectives and improved human rights training must coincide with the necessary national political will of states committed to ending these egregious human rights abuses and causes of further conflict. In Resolution 1820 (S/RES/1820), the Security Council encouraged "troop and police contributing countries, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to consider steps they could take to heighten awareness and the responsiveness of their personnel participating in UN peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, including women and children, and prevent sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, including wherever possible the deployment of a higher percentage of women peacekeepers or police."²⁰ Positive developments along these lines need to be fostered and implemented as quickly and profoundly as possible.

Resolution 1325

Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325) has evolved from a stand-alone resolution into an organizing principle for the Security Council. Passed unanimously on October 31, 2000, Laura Shepherd of the University of Birmingham (UK) asserts that "the Resolution has since been translated into 80 languages and is used all over the world as a policy tool for

¹⁷ <http://www.stoprapenow.org>

¹⁸ http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/implementation_review_20082009.html

¹⁹ <http://www.un-instraw.org/en/gps/general/gender-training-for-peacekeepers-5.html>

²⁰ S/RES/1820, June 19, 2008 p. 3.

implementing gender-sensitive formal and informal political arrangements after the cessation of conflict and as an advocacy tool for securing gender equity in demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs and peacekeeping operations.”²¹ A group of member states was motivated by the adoption of Resolution 1325 to form “Friends of 1325” which “continues to play a catalyst role in mobilizing intergovernmental action on the resolution.”²² Resolution 1325 created further responsibilities for the Secretary-General and other leading UN officials to present annual reports on “Women and Peace and Security” to the Security Council and led to the adoption in June 2008 of Resolution 1820 (S/RES/1820); in Resolution 1820, “the Council recognized sexual violence as a security problem requiring a systematic response.”²³ While Resolution 1325’s effects have been generally positive, a number of women have criticized the UN System for continuing to treat women “mainly as victims and peacekeepers” and “that women are not seen as agents who are able to improve their own prospects.”²⁴ Security Council delegates will need to be very familiar with Resolutions 1325 and 1820 as well as the actions taken by the UN System, the wider international community, their own member states, and relevant actors in situations of armed conflict.

Country Specific Actions:

National governments are also responsible for addressing the vital and varied issues involving women and peace and security. One key responsibility of UN member states is to prepare National Plans of Action to implement Resolution 1325 and to increase gender mainstreaming in their own national security forces and organizations; to date, 13 countries have deposited these National Action Plans with the Security Council.²⁵ The Security Council may wish to use its institutional influence and prestige to spur more member states to develop, deposit, and implement these National Action Plans. Currently, 6 of the Security Council members are directly affiliated with the aforementioned “Friends of 1325”, with Japan serving as an observer to the group. Expanding the “Friends of 1325” so that its membership is universal might be a useful first step for the Security Council.²⁶ Not surprisingly, Norway is setting a positive example for other countries; since 2007, “Norway has allocated more than \$77 million to implement the resolution” and “has even mandated that all developing country partners report their efforts to implement the resolution as well.”²⁷ At the regional level, the African Union’s (AU) Constitutive Act requires gender

²¹ Laura J. Shepherd, “Power and Authority in the Production of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325” *International Studies Quarterly* 2008 52 p. 383.

²² Ban Ki-moon, “Women and peace and security” S/2008/622 September 25, 2008 p. 6.

²³ Ban Ki-moon, “Women and peace and security” S/2008/622 September 25, 2008 p. 3.

²⁴ Johanna Valenius, “A Few Kind Women” *International Peacekeeping* August 2007 p. 520.

²⁵ 3 of the current Security Council states have deposited these National Action Plans with the Security Council: Austria, Uganda, and UK. For a full listing and access to these National Action Plans, please see: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/national_level_impl.html

²⁶ The Security Council states that are currently members are: Austria, Croatia, France, Mexico, UK, and USA. For a full listing of the “Friends of 1325”, please see: http://www.peacewomen.org/un/UN1325/whoswho_un.html

²⁷ Jacqui True, “The Unfulfilled Mandate: Gender Mainstreaming and UN Peace Operations” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2009 p. 44.

mainstreaming and the AU subsequently created the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, the African Women's Committee, and eventually appointed an envoy to investigate gender-based violence, including sexual violence, in Darfur. The European Union (EU), through the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, established the European Union 1325 Partnership to coordinate regional efforts at implementing Resolution 1325, and the Arab Women's Organization hosted a conference on "Women, the concept of human security, and related issues" in Abu Dhabi in November 2008.²⁸ Governments and their civil society partners, including non-governmental organizations (NGO's), must continue to push for full implementation of Resolution 1325 and gender mainstreaming.

Conclusion: Achieving Peace With the Help of Women

The international community will best serve its own interests as well as the needs of women and girls by moving beyond its reflexive view of women and girls as solely being victims in situations of armed conflict and war. By recognizing and integrating the invaluable and insightful contributions and wisdom of women and girls into the processes of resolving conflict and demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR), the relevant international actors will avail themselves of more of the requisite opportunities and resources for just and lasting peace settlements. Comprehensive and lasting peace settlements are only possible when the affected populations believe that the settlements are just and address critical concerns of the people. Jacqui True recommends that the UN System expand "global indicators, such as the UNDP's Gender Development and Gender Empowerment Indexes, to include statistical indicators of violence against women" to "allow the UN to rank nations so that donor countries, international organizations, and civil society actors could reward or censure particular nations based on their practices."²⁹

Before the international community becomes too seduced by its own rhetoric, it must dispassionately analyze the real amount of progress that has been made. Donald Steinberg very recently noted that "in recent peace negotiations in Indonesia, Nepal, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, the Philippines and Central African Republic, not a single woman served as a negotiator, mediator, signatory or witness."³⁰ The increased emphasis that the Security Council has placed on women and peace and security is both laudable and necessary, but according to Jacques Fomerand, "the elimination of gender-based violence in armed conflict raises daunting challenges, including institutional fragmentation, inadequate financing for gender-related projects and lack of capacity for oversight and accountability, as well as acts of sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers themselves."³¹ The Security Council may contribute considerably to the furtherance of global peace and security by accelerating the processes that were formally initiated 9 years ago.

²⁸ Ban Ki-moon, S/2008/622 September 25, 2008 p. 5.

²⁹ Jacqui True, "The Unfulfilled Mandate" *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2009 p. 48.

³⁰ Donald Steinberg, "UN Resolution on Women, Peace and Security: Anniversary Worth Celebrating?" *Reuters: The Great Debate* June 19, 2009.

³¹ Jacques Fomerand, "Progress for Women: A Long Way to Go" *A Global Agenda: Issues Before the United Nations 2009-2010* UNA-USA New York 2009 p. 120.

Guiding Questions:

How might the Security Council and its UN System partners accelerate the process of gender mainstreaming throughout the UN System?

What actions does the Security Council need to take to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) during situations of armed conflict? How might the prosecutions of those accused of committing gender-based violence during armed conflict be made more effective?

How might the Security Council and the international community most effectively incorporate the contributions and wisdom of women and girls during conflict resolution processes? What steps need to be taken to successfully incorporate women and girls into the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration processes (DDR)?

Has your government drafted and/or deposited a National Action Plan regarding Women and Peace and Security? How might the Security Council and other relevant UN bodies persuade more governments to draft, deposit, and implement these National Action Plans?

If your government is affiliated with the “Friends of 1325”, what role has your government taken to advance gender mainstreaming in peace and security? If your government is not affiliated with the “Friends of 1325”, does it intend to join the “Friends of 1325”?