



IN BRIEF



PEACE AND SECURITY

The issue

Women's engagement in peace and security is essential to building sustainable peace, but progress toward gender equality remains slow.

On 31 October 2000, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This resolution, with its four pillars of prevention, participation, protection and peacebuilding and recovery, has become the focal point for galvanizing worldwide efforts to deal with the many challenges that women face in situations of conflict.

There now exists a strong evidence base that women's participation in peace and security processes is core to their operational effectiveness – by strengthening the protection efforts of peacekeepers, improving prevention of radicalization and accelerating economic recovery. Women's meaningful participation also helps the conclusion and implementation of more sustainable peace agreements.

Yet, fifteen years after the adoption of resolution 1325, more than half of peace agreements continue to make no mention of women, UN military peacekeepers remain 97 per cent male, and data gathered by OECD-DAC shows that only 2 per cent of aid to peace and security in 2014 targeted gender equality as a principal objective.

The contribution of women and girls to peacebuilding continues to go undervalued and under-resourced, leaving untapped an incredible tool for transformative

change and sustainable peace. The United Nations is now facing unprecedented challenges to global peace and security: the number of people in need of international assistance has tripled over the past decade, and traditional conflicts are aggravated by new threats including climate shocks, global health pandemics and a rising wave of violent extremist groups directly targeting women's rights. The women, peace and security agenda, now more than ever, is a critical tool for building sustainable peace.

Our strategy for change

UN Women's programmes on women, peace and security are guided by a series of commitments to women's rights. These include resolution 1325, and seven supporting UN Security Council resolutions—1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242. Other key reference points are the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Enhancing women's engagement for sustainable peace requires an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses conflict prevention, resolution and recovery, while strengthening national accountability and ensuring women's protection from all forms of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence. UN Women works in the following areas to achieve transformative change:

1. Mediation and conflict prevention: UN Women seeks to increase women's meaningful participation in formal

COVER PHOTO: Women attend the September 26, 2012 Open Day Workshop on the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Malha, North Darfur. Photo: UNAMID/Sojoud Elgarrai

and informal peace negotiations by raising awareness among mediators and parties to conflict as to the long-term, strategic importance of women’s inclusion. UN Women also works to make gender expertise available during negotiations, as well as to strengthen women’s capacities and influence to engage in these processes. UN Women has championed women’s participation in peace negotiations for Syria, Myanmar, South Sudan and Mali, and supported the Colombia peace talks which led to significant numbers of women at the table and a gender perspective in all aspects of the final agreement. UN Women has also held regional trainings of women mediators in West Africa and the Horn of Africa, Myanmar, South East Asia and Central Asia, and deployed gender advisors to the offices of special envoys in the Sahel, Great Lakes, Syria and Burundi.

UN Women in Action: Preventing Conflict

UN Women works to prevent conflict, and to promote women’s participation in early warning and mediation initiatives. For example, UN Women has supported Women’s Situation Rooms, which monitor and prevent election-related violence. In Uganda, the Women’s Situation Room facilitated women-led mediation between opposing political parties after the 2016 elections.

In Burundi, UN Women and the Peacebuilding Support Office have been supporting a new nation-wide network of women mediators. In collaboration with provincial and local authorities or key community actors, 516 women mediators addressed more than five thousand local conflicts in 2015. A large number of these were related to the current political crisis and conflict.



Women mediators and community members work together to resolve conflict. Photo: UN Women/Bruno Gumyubumwe

2. Peacebuilding and recovery: UN Women promotes women’s participation in peacebuilding and recovery planning, women’s economic empowerment within

recovery efforts, and the establishment of gender-responsive post-conflict institutions. Through a partnership with the Peacebuilding Commission and its secretariat, the Peace Building Support Office (PBSO), UN Women works to ensure that gender issues are addressed in all peacebuilding efforts of the UN and that 15 per cent of funds going to post-conflict recovery are earmarked for projects whose principle objective is to enhance gender equality. In numerous countries, UN Women supports gender-sensitive security sector reform and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. In addition, UN Women promotes efforts to increase the numbers of women in post-conflict governance institutions; a strategy that has proven effective at increasing social spending, and which contributes to long-term stability.

3. Peacekeeping: Women’s participation in peacekeeping has been recognized as a critical component of mission success – leading to greater credibility of the forces, more effective protection efforts, higher reporting of gender-based crimes and lower incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. However, on average, only 3 per cent of UN military peacekeepers are women. To incentivize troop contributing countries to deploy female peacekeepers in greater numbers, UN Women runs training courses for female military officers – providing a space where women in the armed forces can gain exposure, additional training and opportunities for professional advancement. UN Women also supports the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in training military peacekeepers in the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence in their areas of deployment, engaging with women’s civil society organizations on the ground, and piloting a methodology to track mission spending on gender equality and women’s protection.



The officers break for tea. 40 military women from 26 countries attended a two-week training course in South Africa in 2015. Photo: UN Women

4. Ending impunity: UN Women works to protect women's and girls' human rights and security by promoting access to justice, building the rule of law and supporting accountability for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Since September 2013, UN Women has co-located a Gender and Rule of Law Specialist with the Global Focal Point (GFP) on Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law. This specialist ensures appropriate gender mainstreaming in country programmatic support provided by the GFP. UN Women's 'Gender-Sensitive Transitional Justice' programme supports women's engagement in holistic post-conflict justice processes at the international level, as well as in Kosovo, Colombia and the Philippines. Further, through a roster managed together with Justice Rapid Response, UN Women has deployed gender advisors and sexual violence investigators to all UN Commissions of Inquiry established since 2009, fact finding missions, investigations of the International Criminal Court and national accountability processes. This roster – the only one of its kind – has been recognized by the Security Council and Human Rights Council, and in the past two years alone has contributed to the achievement of a number of 'firsts' in accountability for sexual violence crimes at the national, regional and international levels.

5. Countering violent extremism: The targeted violation of women's rights by extremist groups highlights the ways in which gender inequality underpins extremist agendas and is directly related to violent conflict. UN Women's efforts in this area promote a gender-sensitive approach to preventing and countering violent extremism which includes activities to: expand and deepen a data-driven evidence base on the drivers of extremist violence and its impact on women and girls; ensure counter-terrorism frameworks integrate gender and are informed by experiences of women; increase access to justice and essential services for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in the context of terrorism and violent extremism; and increase women's participation and leadership in counter-terrorism response and prevention efforts. At the global level, UN Women is an active member of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, co-chairing the new working group which ensures gender is considered in all efforts of the UN system in preventing and countering violent extremism.

6. National Action Plans: UN Women works to create an enabling environment for the implementation of national commitments to women, peace and security. As of May 2016, 64 countries have developed national action plans on resolution 1325 (NAPs); UN Women has supported

approximately half with technical expertise, with a specific focus on ensuring that action plans have concrete targets, resources for implementation and monitoring plans. More than two-dozen countries are currently drafting and negotiating NAPs, and have reached out to UN Women for support.

7. UN coordination and reporting: UN Women is responsible for the annual report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security, as well as the Secretary-General's report on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women. UN Women also chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security, which brings together all relevant UN entities with civil society as observers.

8. Engagement with the Security Council: UN Women is the secretariat for the Security Council's Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security. The IEG was formed in response to resolution 2242 (2015), to support the Council in the implementation of its commitments to women, peace and security. In the first half of 2016, the IEG briefed the Council on women, peace and security issues in Mali, Iraq, Central African Republic and Afghanistan. UN Women's Executive Director also regularly briefs the Security Council, and the Peace and Security section gives detailed technical briefings to new Security Council members.

9. Catalytic funding: In February 2016, the UN launched the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (GAI). The GAI is a pooled funding mechanism that aims to re-energize action and stimulate a significant increase in the financing of women's participation, leadership and empowerment in humanitarian response and peace and security settings. UN Women serves as a secretariat for the GAI, which is administered through the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

Related Knowledge Products

Radhika Coomaraswamy, [Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325](#) (UN Women, 2015).

Evaluation Office of UN Women, [Evaluation on the contribution of UN Women to increasing women's leadership and participation to peace and security and humanitarian response](#) (2014).

UN Women, [Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security](#) (2012).

UN Women, [In Focus: High-level Review on Women, Peace and Security: 15 years of Security Council resolution 1325](#).