

Reports on Women and Armed Conflict

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT ON WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted on 31 October 2000 called for the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women, adolescent girls, and girl children, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. For this purpose, the Secretary-General and the office of the Assistant Secretary-General on Gender Issues have engaged expert consultants and a taskforce, including DAW, UNHCR, UNDP, DPA, OHCHR, UNICEF, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, to examine the issues. The final study is expected in September and should touch on various elements raised in Resolution 1325 such as, international humanitarian and human rights law, women in peace processes and peace building, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian response to armed conflict, reconstruction and rehabilitation, recommendations for policy and action. This results of this study will go to the Security Council and be made available to all Member States of the United Nations.

INDEPENDENT EXPERT REPORT ON WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, were appointed by UNIFEM to produce an Independent Expert Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace Building. Their report will be available in September, 2002. Countries visited by the experts were East Timor, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Republic

of Yugoslavia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel, occupied Palestinian territory, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

During their visits, the Experts heard widespread accounts of violence against women. The Experts heard that women and girls were reportedly raped both by government and rebel forces. They were attacked in their homes, in their communities, or while fleeing for safety. Women who fled from violent groups recounted story after story of trying to hide their daughters to get them to safety. But as refugees fell into the hands of rebels or government soldiers, no woman or young girl was exempt from violence. For example, it is estimated that 94 % of households surveyed had at least one family member sexually abused in the past 10 years in the Mano River Region.

Displaced women in camps testified to the Independent Experts that adolescent girls were specifically targeted, because they were believed to be virgins and therefore free of HIV/AIDS. Older women were not spared, either. Pregnant women had their legs spread and their wombs punctured with sticks or guns. Even after finding refuge in villages and towns, or in camps for displaced persons, these women were again violated by fellow refugees, by the military that were supposed to protect them and, as is being currently investigated, by humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel.

Although the fate of children born of rape is not known, a large number have been born. The Experts also observed the wholly inadequate provision of reproductive health services and reports of a large number of unsafe "backstreet" abortions.

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PeaceWomen E-News is raising the visibility and maintaining the momentum of SC Resolution 1325

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These have not been consensual relationships. Some of the abducted women managed to escape, only to be eventually rejected or treated with suspicion and disdain when reunited with their families. Others, including those addicted to drugs, chose to remain with their abductors who, in essence, became their families, providing drugs, food and shelter.

Despite the devastating effect of conflict on women in war-affected countries, women have demonstrated enormous leadership and courage in mobilizing support networks for peace, justice, and reconciliation. The work of the Mano River Women's Peace Network, the Women in Black in Palestine and Israel, as well as the Former Yugoslavia are just a few examples. Many local NGOs are providing support for women in the recovery and reconstruction process with the help of international organizations and donors. However, the needs are overwhelming and the assistance provided has proven inadequate. The women who met with the Independent Experts pleaded for education of women and girls. Without education and job skills, women have no means of supporting themselves or participating in decision-making.

Given the magnitude of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the conflicts visited, it is imperative that the perpetrators of such violations be held accountable for their crimes. Special Courts and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions must make provision for gender sensitive mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting violations against women. The Independent Experts welcome and endorse recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur to this end in the case of Sierra Leone, including for gender-balanced composition of the Court, witness protection mechanisms, and the establishment of a special unit investigating sexual crimes.

FINLAND HOSTS ADVISORY GROUP MEETING FOR INDEPENDENT EXPERTS GENERAL DESCRIPTION

In April 2001, UNIFEM asked Elisabeth Rehn of Finland and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, to carry out an independent assessment of the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building. The experts formed an Advisory Group, which met for the second time in Helsinki, Finland from 11-12 March, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Advisory Group discussed the findings and recommendations of the report and gave the independent experts guidance on cutting-edge policy issues and recommendations. Expert group members were drawn from UN agencies and NGOs including the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Women in Black, the East Timor Constituent Assembly, and the National Union of Guatemalan Women. The Advisory Group also met with the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen and the Speaker of the Finnish parliament, Riitta Uosukainen and spoke at a well attended public forum along with the experts.

PeaceWomen Feature Organisation

Women's WORLD

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Women's WORLD Mission Statement:

We have formed the Women's World Organization for Rights, Literature, and Development, or Women's WORLD, because nowhere on earth are women's voices given the same respect as men's. In a few countries, a few women are heard some of the time; in most countries, our words are greeted with polite indifference and mere lip service is paid to our concerns; and, in far too many countries, women who try to have a public voice are met with hatred, contempt, suppression, exile, or death. Whether the agency of suppression is the state, the publishing industry, religious authority, or the family, all forms of silencing and exclusion must be seen as censorship. When certain subjects are made taboo to women-subjects like war and peace, religion, or law-this is censorship. When people who write critically about gender arrangements cannot find publishers, this is censorship. When girls are not taught to read and write, this is censorship. Gender-based censorship is a human rights abuse that must be fought. The world cannot afford to use less than half its wisdom.

For an extensive database of organizations worldwide working on women and peace issues, go to:
<http://www.peacewomen.org/contacts/conindex.html>

1325 RECENT RESOURCE

International Alert's summary report from their recent regional/national consultations on Resolution 1325. The summary aims to distil some of the main findings and focus issues from three recent consultations in Nepal, Russia, and Uganda. [<http://www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/ngopub/CSLTFIN.html>]

New Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE) publication "Gender mainstreaming for invisibility or women's Empowerment" is a report of WIDE's Annual Conference 2001, hosted by the Spanish WIDE platform Grupo Mujeres y Desarrollo from 4-6 October in Madrid. (price: o 5,00) please contact Barbara Specht at bs.wide@xs4all.be (www.eurosur.org/wide)

For a comprehensive annotated bibliography of books, articles and analyses on women's peace theory and activities, as well as NGO position papers, reports, speeches, statements and tools for organisational building. Please go to: <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/resindex.html>

PeaceWomen and the United Nations

This document that has all references made to the possible Gender Unit in Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) from a variety of UN documents - from the original proposal in December of 2000, to the latest input from the Special Committee on Peacekeeping of March 11, 2002. The 5th Committee meeting of the General Assembly that received the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) rejected the proposal of a Senior Level Gender Post in the DPKO. Men and women experience the impact of armed conflict differently and therefore everyone involved in the DPKO must realize the gender dimension of conflict as a vital component to build sustainable peace in the future. <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/genderunit.html>

For more information on women and the UN please visit: <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/unindex.html>

How to Subscribe to PeaceWomen News

Previous 1325 PeaceWomen E-news can be found on-line at
<http://www.peacewomen.org/news/1325News/1325ENewsindex.html>

At this time the Newsletter is only available in English. The PeaceWomen Team hopes to translate the Newsletter into French and Spanish in the future, however, if you would not like to receive the English News Letter but would like to be placed on a list when translation is possible please write to

1325news@peacewomen.org

Questions, concerns and comments can be sent to 1325news@peacewomen.org

PEACEWOMEN CALENDAR

Facing Global and National Crises: Women Define Human Security

The National Council for Research on Women Annual Conference 2002, Thursday, May 30 - Saturday, June 1, 2002
The Roosevelt Hotel, New York City <http://www.peacewomen.org/frame/calendar/calendar.html#may02>

Women and Peacebuilding

June 10- 18, Eastern Mennonite University

The Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University includes all kinds of classes on nonviolence, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and give a special focus to women and peace-building. This Institute features international instructors. <http://www.emu.edu/ctp/spidesc.html#IV>

For a listing of other upcoming events: <http://www.peacewomen.org/frame/calendar/calendar.html>

PEACEWOMEN CAMPAIGNS

URGENT ACTION - WOMEN'S POLITICAL & CIVIL RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

The Bonn Agreement looks forward to "the establishment of a broad-based, gender sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government in Afghanistan". Given the involvement of the international community in funding the implementation of this Agreement, we have a responsibility to ensure that the process of government and state building meets international standards and commitments over women's rights. As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Afghanistan is committed to the participation of women on equal terms with men and the implementation of necessary affirmative action measures.

To sign the petition go to: <http://www.peacewomen.org/campaigns/featured/afghanistan%20women/afghanistan.html>

PeaceWomen Call for Translation of SC Resolution 1325 into local languages Greater political pressure for the implementation requires greater public awareness of Security Council Resolution 1325 as well as organizing around it. Little is known about Security Council Resolution 1325 outside the UN. In order to gain public awareness around the world and to mobilize various women's organizations and NGOs around the Security Council Resolution, we need the translation of Security Council Resolution 1325 into many more languages besides the official UN languages. If you are interested, please contact info@peacewomen.org

For more information and links to outreach and campaigning efforts, programmes and activities, designed by women's peace organisations in various regions and countries go to: <http://www.peacewomen.org/campaigns/outreachindex.html>

PEACEWOMEN NEWS

April 30th, 2002: On-line Gender Training

Minister Bill Graham announced at the last plenary meeting of the Canadian Committee on Women, Peace and Security (April 30th), the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs with the UK Department for International Development have developed an on-line training course on gender for military and civilian personnel involved in peace support operations. The web site was designed by Ottawa-based firm, Zed Communications. <http://www.dfaitmaeci.gc.ca/genderandpeacekeeping/>

MAY 24, 2002: International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament

Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) joins women who network for peace and justice all over the world to celebrate this day and reflect on its implications. We commend our government on the efforts it has made towards disarmament in the country, and for being part of the International Action Network on Small Arms to control the flow of small arms, as well as create awareness about their dangers. Read Further: <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/may/May24.html>

May 30th, 2002: Gender Representation in the ICC

The 10th and final session of the Preparatory Commission will be held from 1-12 July 2002. Government delegates at the last PrepCom (April 2002) began negotiating rules of procedure that will govern the nomination and election of judges, prosecutor and deputy prosecutors. There seemed to be less real commitment at the Ninth session to carry forward the gender mainstreaming mandates of the Rome Statute when it comes to the elections of judges and other posts. The ICC will be the first international institution of the 21st century and it is time, that women be accorded a presence in such institutions on an equitable footing. Read Further: <http://www.iccwomen.org> For More News please go to: <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/newsindex.html>