INCLUSIVE SECURITY

Applying Global Tools to Improve National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325

December 2, 2015
Ariel Gordon

Over the past fifteen years, the international community has established robust structures to realize the objectives of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. National action plans (NAPs) are one of the key strategies for translating this policy into results. For example, through two successive plans, Bosnia and Herzegovina's security forces increased the number of women it sends to UN peacekeeping missions, including in leadership positions. In Afghanistan, the NAP is a platform for inter-agency collaboration, with representatives from 20 institutions committed to its implementation. This includes the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, which is working with mullahs across the country to deliver regular sermons on the importance of tolerance and social cohesion, including women's rights.

To mark the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, UN Women released "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace"—a global study on the implementation of the resolution. Despite increased emphasis on the importance of NAPs in recent years, major challenges remain, particularly lack of visible impact and inadequate data collection.

NAPs are typically implemented over the course of three to five years, making it difficult to sustain impact over the long term. As large, whole-of-government strategies, they can suffer from coordination, funding, and training issues. Implementers must address those barriers to increase plan sustainability. Governments must also collect more data to demonstrate progress related to women, peace, and security policies.[1] Insufficient evidence is a persistent problem.[2] Even with a meaningful system, governments tend to deprioritize resources—human and financial—that would ensure adequate data is collected and analyzed.

Fortunately, in recent months three new global policy tools have emerged that can increase the effectiveness of national action plans:

- UN Security Council Resolution 2242
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation 30

The following insights can help policymakers and practitioners leverage these international frameworks to increase women's inclusion in decision making about peace and security.

UN Security Council Resolution 2242

Since the passage of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000, the UN Security Council has adopted seven additional resolutions related to women's inclusion in peace and security. The latest of these is UNSCR 2242, adopted in October 2015 to recognize and address obstacles to implementation of UNSCR 1325. Resolution 2242 calls for renewed commitment to women's participation and articulates specific recommendations for making NAPs more sustainable.

- *Encourages Member States to increase capacity building for civil society organizations implementing women, peace, and security resolutions.*

- *Encourages Member States to increase funding for women, peace, and security through aid in conflict and post-conflict communities and support to civil society organizations.*

- *Calls on Member States to integrate women, peace, and security into national frameworks with sufficient resources associated for implementation.*

- *Calls on Member States to consult broadly with civil society and women's groups in particular to integrate the women, peace, and security agenda into other national policies.[3]*

Governments and NAP implementers should draw on UNSCR 2242 and other frameworks to:

1. **Coordinate implementation to increase efficiency and long-term impact.**
   Action plan activities are coordinated by a central entity, often a coordination board comprised of representatives from relevant ministries and agencies, security sector institutions, and key nongovernmental organizations. This managing body must regularly consult civil society and the international community to incorporate the priorities and needs of all relevant actors.

2. **Conduct regular skills-based training to increase practitioners' ability to effectively implement UNSCR 1325.** Frequent turnover in key positions means that trained practitioners are often replaced by individuals without necessary skills. Government and civil service employees responsible for implementing national action plans must receive adequate guidance. Mid-level civil servants often lack skills for planning, executing, and monitoring such a cross-cutting public policy. Staff must be equipped through regular specialized workshops to account for changes in personnel and help ensure that NAPs are effective. For instance, increased education for peacekeeping troops about gendered security concerns or training for armed forces to work with women in communities to identify early warning signs of violence.[4]

3. **Provide sufficient funding for action plan implementation.** The UN Global Study on implementation of UNSCR 1325 found that the majority of action plans lack specified funding streams. Plan-specific budgets are not sufficient. National actors must allocate and disburse resources to implement plan activities.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, the UN released seventeen development goals for the global community to jointly work toward over the next 15 years. The goals do not explicitly address women's inclusion in peace and security, although two contain some targets connected to this effort:

SDG 5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

5.1 *End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere*

5.2 *Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation*

5.5 *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.*

5.c *Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

16.1 *Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere*

16.3 *Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all*

16.7 *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*

16.b *Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development[5]*

The UN adopted these targets to guide goal implementation, but some have criticized them for being too vague. The targets will require further refining if they are to lead to meaningful results. The Inter-agency Expert Group (IAEG) on SDG Indicators developed—via an inclusive, consultative process—an indicator framework[6] that member states can use to track progress on each. The Group facilitated an open consultation period for some governments, regional and international agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and private sector representatives to review draft indicators.

Recommendations

NAP experts must contribute to the SDG indicator refining process to ensure that they reinforce the link between targets and women's inclusion in peace and security. Specifically, they should:

1. **Provide guidance to align goal indicators with NAPs.** Government and civil society NAP experts should contact members of the IAEG during open consultation periods[7] to offer specific targets for Goals 5 and 16 and propose indicators that align with their country's action plan.

2. **Advocate for national governments to prioritize Goals 5 and 16.** Government representatives are being asked to prioritize specific SDGs based on country context. NAP experts should identify individuals from government institutions who are influencing this decision and advocate for inclusion of Goals 5 and 16 in their country's priorities. Emphasis on these two goals at the national level will increase the political importance of a NAP that can help achieve them.

Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation 30

CEDAW, a legally-binding convention for all ratifying states, has been a global driver of gender equality for nearly forty years. Sometimes described as an "international bill of rights for women," it defines the parameters of discrimination against women and lays out an agenda to address it. Until recently, the convention did not explicitly link conflict to its disproportionate effects on women and girls.

In October 2013, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted General Recommendation 30 (GR 30) to supplement CEDAW. GR30 is a platform to apply CEDAW to conflict prevention, international and non-international armed conflict, situations of foreign occupation, post-conflict, and situations of concern within each of these.[8] To track progress toward its objectives, GR30 includes specified reporting requirements.

It requires all states parties to:

- *Report on the legal framework, policies and programmes that they have implemented to ensure the human rights of women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict.*

- *Collect, analyze and make available sex-disaggregated statistics, in addition to trends over time, concerning women, peace and security.*

- *Provide information on the implementation of the Security Council agenda on women, peace and security, in particular resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010)and 2106 (2013), including by specifically reporting on compliance with any agreed United Nations benchmarks or indicators developed as part of that agenda.[9]*

Unlike UNSCR 1325, GR30's reporting requirements are legally binding. This presents an opportunity for NAP implementers to align action plan monitoring and evaluation systems with CEDAW indicators and reporting requirements, which will strengthen plan implementation. This will help government entities avoid redundant data collection and reporting fatigue, as well as utilize the framework of CEDAW to make their NAPs more effective.

Recommendations

There are three ways to effectively link GR30 with national action plans:

1. **Connect state institutions implementing human rights and conflict-focused policies.** For many decades, CEDAW has been framed as a human rights convention, which is operationally independent from action plans for UNSCR 1325 (which are coordinated by conflict-oriented institutions, such as Canada's Conflict Policy and Security Coherence Secretariat). To leverage the link between these two frameworks, action plan implementers and evaluators must reach out across departments and identify points of synergy.

2. **Use GR30 as a framework for civil society to hold governments accountable.** Nongovernmental organizations typically assess CEDAW implementation and publish annual reports—known as shadow reports—that demonstrate progress at the community level. These shadow reports will likely now incorporate a component related to women's inclusion in peace and security. This is both an opportunity to collect more relevant data and a new entry point for civil society to encourage government transparency and accountability.

3. **Develop more specific reporting guidelines.** The CEDAW subcommittee should further develop reporting structures and requirements to streamline data collection. The basic framework in GR30 could be accompanied by specific reporting guidelines that enable implementing entities to easily align them with other national policies or programs.

Endnotes

1   UN Women Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, 268.

2   To address this, Inclusive Security created "What Matters Most: Measuring Plans for Inclusive Security," a step-by-step guide to developing effective monitoring and evaluation systems for national action plans: www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/matters-measuring-plans-inclusive-security/

3   UN Security Council Resolution 2242, S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015), available from daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/311/09/PDF/N1531109.pdf.

4   National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in Nigeria. 2013, 20.

5   For all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, see: sustainabledevelopment.un.org

6   Proposed Indicator Framework as of November 2015 can be found here: www.unstats.un.org/sdgs/news/

7   Timeline for indicator refining activities can be found here: unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/

8   Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, "General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30)" (New York: 18 October 2013): www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/GComments/CEDAW.C.CG.30.pdf

9   Ibid.

About Inclusive Security

Inclusive Security is transforming decision making about war and peace. We're convinced that a more secure world is possible if policymakers and conflict-affected populations work together. Women's meaningful participation, in particular, can make the difference between failure and success. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. We have also bolstered the skills and influence of women leaders around the world. Together with these allies, we're making inclusion the rule, not the exception.

About National Action Plan Academies

In December 2014, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton launched Inclusive Security's first National Action Plan Academy. This series of convenings is based on the prototype event held in July 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, which brought together 125 participants from sixteen countries across sub-Saharan Africa. They are designed to facilitate learning exchange and collaboration among practitioners implementing national action plans for UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Experts from government, civil society, and international organizations are developing these plans to incorporate women's expertise and leadership in peace and security processes around the globe. They are an invaluable resource, with lessons learned from plan implementation in their own country contexts and diverse best practices to share. Academy convenings provide a space for delegates to share their perspectives openly and to identify innovative approaches to overcome challenges.

To mark the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, Inclusive Security convened a second NAP Academy with fourteen government and civil society practitioners from eleven countries (Brazil, Canada, Finland, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the US). The group—comprised of participants who have influenced their country's efforts to design, implement, or evaluate a national action plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325—reflected on recommendations to increase the global impact of action plans to date. They also discussed how international frameworks can be leveraged to reinforce the sustainability of these national-level policies. The results of the discussion informed this brief.

Ariel Gordon

ariel_gordon@inclusivesecurity.org

1615 M Street NW, Suite 850, Washington, DC 20036

202.403.2000 | @InclusvSecurity

inclusivesecurity.org

INCLUSIVE
SECURITY