Security on whose terms?

If men and women were equal

Agneta Söderberg Jacobson

Security on whose terms?

If men and women were equal

KVINNA TILL KVINNA

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation addresses the needs of women in areas affected by war and armed conflict. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation cooperates with women's organisations in the Middle East, South Caucasus and the Western Balkans.

Contents

Preface

THE ISSUES OF freedom and security have been top of the international political agenda for the past couple of years. As we all want to be free and secure this ought to be good news. But honestly, do the two words in reality include all people equally? Women's freedom and women's security are rarely incorporated in the concept of the two words.

In the autumn of 2004 the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation held a seminar in Stockholm to discuss our report *Rethink! - A Handbook for Sustainable Peace*. We invited experts from conflict areas to raise the question of the necessity of ensuring women's participation at all levels and phases in the peace process. One of the crucial issues raised by all the speakers during the seminar concerned security for women. Without security, participation in peace negotiations, in political or civil life, is impossible. The seminar participants wrote recommendations to the UN Security Council on how to ensure women's participation in the peace process. The basis of this report is the outcome of the seminar and the recommendations.

Since the *Beijing platform for action* was taken in 1995 and *UN Security Council Resolution 1325* on women, peace and security was adopted in 2000 very few initiatives have been taken to implement the two documents. We welcome the attempt in Secretary General Kofi Annan's report *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human rights for All* (March 2005) to see the interconnection between development and security. It is not possible to speak about one without the other. With this in mind, it is alarming to note the lack of gender analysis and a gender perspective in the report. International women's organisations have expressed their concern to the UN that gender equality is mentioned only as an aspect of development and is absent from the sections on security, human rights and institutional reform. Gender perspectives must be included in the UN reform process.

We believe that the question of how women and men are affected before, during and after war or conflict has to be looked upon and dealt with in new ways. The fact that the international community very rarely conduct inquires based on data disaggregated by sex makes it difficult to distinguish these differences. Furthermore, it makes it even more difficult to take the right measures to ensure security for women. Both the international community and national initiatives often take the all too easy way out of letting

women stay at home to escape the threats. By denying women the opportunity to take part in political or civil society, their security and thereby their possibility of fully exercising their human rights, will never be guaranteed.

We hope that *Security on whose terms? If men and women were equal.* will provide new insights into the hard work of rebuilding destroyed societies. Equality and just peace cannot be achieved without the equal participation of women (and men) and a full integration of a gender perspective. To achieve that, security for all is crucial.

Kerstin Grebäck
Secretary General
The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

Introduction

ALMOST ALL SOCIETIES have obstacles for women participating fully as actors in politics, civil society and in their daily lives. When threats to women's security are not recognised and measures are not taken to ensure they are, women become marginalized. In this report the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation highlights security threats faced by women in conflict areas divided into four separate chapters: The presence of the international community; Repression in the name of culture; Militarised societies, and Health and psycho-social support. When society and the international community address and actively work to diminish these threats, a radical change for women will be achieved. Instead of being victimised, women can become important actors in society as a whole and in the peace building process.

Security for whom?

During recent years, the traditional view that the source of security threats emanates from aggressive states has shifted. Instead, globally organised networks, many times labelled as terrorists, are considered the cause of security threats. In some ways this changes military doctrines and security systems. The rapid national and international initiatives that have been taken to combat terrorism have increased the feeling of insecurity for the individual; and also tend to overrule international law and human rights. The provision of human rights is on a collision course with the fear of terrorist attacks.

Meanwhile, states continue to mobilise against each other in order to create security for themselves. Countries, military groups and alliances are spending enormous amounts of money on arms and military equipment and global military expenditure is increasing.[1] Arms exports to unstable regions, human rights violators and poor countries is also continuing. Hence, countries around the world are still building their security on deterrence. Nuclear weapons are a vital element in this form of security policy. The old established nuclear states have not progressed as fast as hoped with nuclear disarmament; instead the United States, Russia and China are developing new nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the desire to possess and develop nuclear weapons is spreading to other states.

The Small Arms and Light Weapons category ensures the continuance of armed conflict for generations to come. Due to their long service life, these weapons are recycled from conflict to conflict and contribute to both the legal and illegal arms export. Another factor in modern conflict is the private security companies who work as bodyguards, provide various military services and are utilised as private armies by warlords and rebel and guerrilla leaders.

To whom do these arms, security companies and military solutions provide security? Does it really meet the security threat towards people or is it just adding to the growing feeling of non-security and fear felt by both individuals and nations? In other words, is it making the world more insecure?

It is clear that the traditional concept of security, referring to the safety of states and focusing on borders, armed defence and military deterrence, is not primarily occupied with security matters concerning individuals and civilians. It is also true that security and peace studies have long been biased towards men. This instrumental safety approach has deep cultural and historical roots but has lately been challenged. During the past decade a human concept of security has emerged through the need to develop a new security approach to meet new challenges and threats.

Human security

The 1994 Human Development Report introduced a new concept for human security. It equates security with people rather than territories. *"/Human security means "…" safety from constant threats of hunger, disease, crime and repression. It also means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily lives, whether in our homes, our jobs, in communities or in our environment."*[2]

A few years later the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung proposed a new model for human security. He wanted to create a more holistic and comprehensive definition of security. Galtung argued that poverty, hunger and deprivation of human rights are all factors that constitute real threats to international – and national – security. Security in this context is a question of to what extent people live in freedom and safety, under just and fair laws and with their essential needs met. [3]

Since then the human security doctrine has come forward as an important complement to traditional security thinking. Insights into the connection between war and conflicts on one hand and poverty and deprivation

It is clear that the traditional concept of security, referring to the safety of states and focusing on borders, armed defence and military deterrence, is not primarily occupied with security matters concerning individuals and civilians.

Human experience and research has shown that peace is not sustainable unless the welfare of individuals is taken into account.

on the other have facilitated this shift in thinking. Human experience and research has shown that peace is not sustainable unless the welfare of individuals is taken into account.

This alteration in security thinking is also a reaction to changes in incidence and patterns of global warfare that have occurred since the early 1990s. War has traditionally been fought between states, but today more than 90 per cent of wars and conflicts take place within states. As a result warfare has come to target civilians to a much greater extent. Of the estimated five million people killed in wars during the 1990s, a majority were civilian and mostly women and children.[4]

After September 11, 2001 there are a growing number of conflicts assumed to be connected with terrorism. This assumption affects security thinking and policymaking in different ways. It also affects the strategies on how to provide security. In the UN context, the war against terrorism has increased the interest in finding the root causes of terrorism, i.e. looking at poverty and development in connection with security issues.

All these changes in warfare have made it plain that new thinking is required with regard to security. Yakin Ertürk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, states: *"Regrettably, the struggle to eliminate violence against women is taking place in an international environment that is less than enabling. Conservative political trends and the response to global terror increasingly favours the adoption of policies and measures that restrict civil liberties and undermine some of the gains made with regard to the universality of basic human rights for women and men. This poses the question of whether national security is emerging as the new arena for contesting international human rights law?"*[5]

In the reconstruction and transformation of any post war country reforming the security sector is key. There is an urgent need to transform, and even redefine, the purpose of security institutions like military, police, secret service and intelligence. In some cases the entire shape and focus of the armed forces can be reformulated during this phase. This is a critical process when a new military doctrine is drafted. In such a framework the government states the nature, roles and intentions of its military forces: should it be defensive in nature and who should it have responsibility to protect?

Women's security is human security

"As we move into the twenty-first century, women's status in society will become the standard by which to measure our progress toward civility and peace. The connection between women's human rights, gender equality, socio-economic development, and peace is increasingly apparent. International political and economic organisations invariably state in their official publications that achieving sustainable development in the global South, or in less developed areas within the industrialised countries, is unlikely without women's participation."[6]

MANAZ AFKHAMI, PRESIDENT SISTERHOOD IS GLOBAL INSTITUTE

Women's participation in peace building and reconstruction after war and conflict has been on the international agenda for quite some time. A lot of effort has been put into creating and writing plans for action and resolutions that will guarantee women "full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolutions of conflicts"[7]

In 2000 the UN Security Council adopted *resolution 1325* on women, peace and security that demands the involvement of more women in peace building and conflict mediation work and promotes women as advocates for peace. There is no doubt that progress has been made. The awareness of gender perspectives on war and peace is growing and there are many good initiatives to change old patterns within the international community. But so far progress is mainly visible at policy level. The problem is that resolutions easily develop into mantras; arrays of words that make it possible to stay on the level of policy rather than becoming instruments for a more profound change in practice.

The actual content of *resolution 1325* is to ensure female participation at all levels in a peace process. Considering the low participation of women there seems to be something keeping them outside the discussions and decision-making arenas. Many times the invitations never reach women. When they do get invited but are unable to attend for various reasons, it can be used as an excuse for not inviting them again. There are further obstacles facing women in this regard. To achieve the goals of *resolution 1325*, women have to be safe and secure to be able to take part in the negotiation and decision-making processes. *"In Kashmir and Afghanistan "…" women experience a constant and high level of insecurity despite the presence of two armies whose mandate is to provide security to their respective nations. This however does not provide security to women, first because women are subjected to atrocities by military personnel and more fundamentally because the presence of the armies guarantees at the most the absence of a full-scale war but cannot in any way guarantee peace."*[8]

When security is ensured for women, they will become important actors. There is a resistance within the international community to seeing women's participation as a necessary precondition for any decision-making. When women are seen only as victims, their roles in society are diminished.

The lack of data disaggregated by sex is one obstacle in improving security for men and women. There is no doubt that men and women are exposed to different kinds of threats, but few inquiries strive to distinguish these differences. With gender blind statistics not seeing the differences between the living conditions of women and men, the safety of women is not likely to improve.

There are several quite basic and inexpensive measures that could, and should be taken to make it possible for women to participate. Information directly to women, meetings arranged exclusively for them or scheduling meeting hours when both men and women can take part. Utilising women's organisations active in the area is another way of reaching women. The international community must therefore state the importance of women's equal participation. There should be a firm demand for women's participation in peace negotiations and decision-making.

Early warning system

The human security doctrine could be a promising platform and framework for the international community to promote peace, human rights and human development. With its focus on people instead of states, the doctrine also makes it easier to argue for women's empowerment. If women were not deprived of power over their lives it would reduce poverty and help to eliminate risks for war and conflict.

However, the ambition to enlarge the security concept does not mean that women's security and perspective is taken into account to its full extent. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's report *In Larger Freedom* (2005), which outlines the Secretary General's vision for the future of the UN and its opportunities and challenges, clearly and sadly proves this. In spite of the attempt to interconnect security and development, the report reveals that the concept of security focusing on military threats and measures still dominates. Where other perspectives have been taken into account, for example poverty, it is still from a gender blind perspective. Under the heading Freedom from Fear, not a word is said about women's right to live free from violence, despite the fact that one in every five women is exposed to sexual violence during her lifetime.[9] The focus is on issues like war and armed violence, nuclear weapons, terrorists, organised

crime and poverty. The analyses of the threats lack a gender dimension and there is no mention of the urgent need for women to participate in decision making to ensure security for the whole population. Neither are there any references to documents about women's human rights or even *UN Security Council resolution 1325* on women, peace and security.

On the other hand, the UN Commission on Human Security report (2003) integrates gender. The report discusses the differential impact of poverty on women and men and specific problems that women face as immigrants as well as the important role women play in peace processes, including conflict resolution. But the report fails to identify as core matters the issues of physical integrity that women have identified as central, such as domestic violence and women's reproductive rights.[10]

The fact is that gender-based violence is still not regarded as violence of concern for international and national security. There are some aspects that qualify as "threats against groups" and gender-based violence is now being defined as a war crime, but domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence targeting females are still seen as matters for individual security. This division of security is being questioned by the women's movement who argues that gender-based violence must be fully incorporated in the concept of international security.

In 2000 UNIFEM compiled a report on how Kosovar women perceived and defined violence against women. They conducted a series of exploratory workshops after which women were given a questionnaire. Although only 213 women completed the questionnaire the group was representative, covering ten regions and a balance between women from urban and rural areas as well as a wide range of ages. 23 per cent, almost one in four women, reported to have been victims of domestic violence. When asked when they had experienced the first incidence of violence, 44 per cent of the women answered that it had happened in 1998 or 1999. Two per cent experienced violence for the first time in 2000, 54 per cent answered that it was between 1980 and 1998.

Even though the findings show that domestic violence was not a new phenomenon in Kosovo, it also shows that it has increased since the conflict became more severe in 1998. According to the UNIFEM report, possible explanations for this include: *"…increased acceptability of violence as a way to solve problems, the break down of tight family and social structures, a general rise in instability and uncertainty, the increased sense of powerlessness amongst the community, decreased income in many families as workers sending back remittances from abroad are returned by governments, general levels of unemployment, increased inequalities in society."*[11]

With gender blind statistics not seeing the differences between the living conditions of women and men, the safety of women is not likely to improve.

Could widespread, systematic gender-based violence on a mass scale be reason enough for the international community to act?

Early warning systems could play a crucial role in the international arena in identifying areas at risk of violent conflict. Signs of instability like violent escalatory developments can be enough for the international community to use diplomatic and political strategies to prevent the conflict developing further.

If gender-based violence did get included in the concept of international security it would make radical change. Domestic violence, for example, would then not only be an affair for individual states to deal with but also for the international community. This would urge the international community to act if confronted as with severe threats to women's (or men's) physical integrity.

We would then have to ask ourselves anew: what is conflict and what are the warning signs we should look out for in order to prevent war and conflicts? When violations against an ethnic group are widespread, systematic and on a mass scale the international community has to intervene. Could widespread, systematic gender-based violence on a mass scale be reason enough for the international community to act? A report from Women Waging Peace and International Alert outlines gender-based violence and other forms of gender-based indicators on early warning systems. The warning signs could also include long-term political exclusion of women, economic discrimination and discrepancies between men and women's educational levels or position in the workforce. The international community should also look out for gradual trends from an open and tolerant society towards a more closed one, particularly these imposing or implementing restrictive laws relating to women.[12]

One example is the recent law introduced in Indonesia that says women face arrest if they do not dress properly. Is that a sign of escalating tension within the society that might lead to armed conflict or war? Feminist theorists argue that it is crucial to see the interconnection between different kinds of violence: local violence, domestic violence, national and global violence, and gender hierarchies to fully comprehend the reasons and the mechanisms behind violence in armed conflicts.[13]

Structural violence

"The cycle of oppression and exclusion of the female population almost always indicates a general trend in the country. Patriarchal societies in which women play subservient role to men are also societies in which men play subservient roles to other men, and meritocracy takes backseat to connections and cronyism."[14]

PATRICK BASHAM, CATO INSTITUTE

Who is secure, and who is not? Whose interests are served? These are questions that the human security paradigm attempts to address. The ultimate goal is safety for all people from all forms of violence and harm, both direct/personal and indirect/structural. For example, violence against women can be direct and personal when a man assaults a woman but there is also another level of structural violence like sexism and racism. In 1969 the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung stated:

"We shall refer to the type of violence when there is an actor that commits the violence as personal or direct, and to violence where there are no such actors as structural or indirect. There may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances. …Thus, when one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence. Correspondingly, in a society where life expectancy is twice as high in the upper as in the lower classes, violence is exercised even if there are no concrete actors one can point to directly attacking others, as when on person kills another."[15]

Structural violence can be institutionalised in discriminatory legislation and legal practices and sometimes be very subtle and difficult to pin down. It can be about the acceptance of violence against women in the family and of violent practises such as forced marriages and female genital mutilation. It can also be about an absence of women's right to inherit, work or right to own property – all of which makes women economically dependent on their husband or male relatives. These factors threaten women's safety and independence and undermine their opportunities to participate in society on equal terms with men.

Reports on women being deprived of power and resources are not hard to find, although strategies to combat this are not as easily found. The World Bank states that one of the biggest obstacles facing women today is the lack of legal rights and they stress that the high wage gaps and the lack of access to land are two big issues that must be solved. According to the

"When one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence."

JOHAN GALTUNG

UN, women are subject to structural exclusion from economic resources and as much as 70 per cent of the poor population in the world is made up of women. [16]

"… the family is seldom the unit for equal distribution of resources that is often assumed by economists. Women and girls receive less food, money and education etc. The unequal distribution of resources and power in families and societies also mean that the women of a family may be poor even when their husbands and sons are not."[17]

Even though women make up an unequal proportion of the poor population it does not mean that they do not produce essential goods. Women contribute to families, communities and to national economy without gaining more rights, independence or power. They, and in particular rural women, are responsible for half the world's food production and produce between 60–80 per cent of the food in most developing countries. War, migration of men in search of urban jobs and HIV/AIDS has lead to an increase in women-headed households. However, despite their crucial role in contributing to global food security, women farmers are too often neglected in development strategies.[18]

In times of conflict and post conflict the issues of inheritance, property ownership and the right to be able to work is of great importance. Algeria has experienced a long internal conflict with widespread human rights violations including thousands of disappearances. Due to the discriminatory legislation many women suffer economic hardship as a consequence of the conflict. If for example a male relative disappears, the woman is not automatically entitled to pensions, savings or property. Women have a legal duty to obey their husband and husbands have the right to unilateral divorce with no duty to pay maintenance or provide housing.[19] The latter make it almost impossible for a woman to leave an abusive relationship.

Structural violence is not just about the written law. Developed mechanisms and educated legal professionals with the will and resources to implement the law are of equal importance. In many cases the laws guarantee equal rights but the police, lawyers and judges interpret them in a discriminatory way, undermining women's trust in the judicial system providing them with any form of protection or support.

But women's organisations around the world are making a change, calling for justice and pointing out the importance of removing the obstacles for women enjoying their rights to long-term stability. Female ministers, lawyers, and judges from conflict-affected countries from Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Afghanistan, came together in 2004 to discuss gender justice in a meeting arranged by UNIFEM and ILAC. They declared that the

access to justice for women in conflict-affected areas is the key to establishing long-term stability and security. They called for non-discriminatory legislation and practices, such as inheriting property, to be addressed at the highest level and for women to participate in the development of legal, judicial and constitutional structures.[20]

In Azerbaijan the Association for Women's Right Protection (AWRP) provides legal aid and support to women. They say the main problem is not the actual law but its implementation and interpretation and the fact that the courts are corrupt and take bribes. The AWRP has been fighting domestic violence and for women's right to property, divorce and work since 1989. Today they win 70 per cent of their cases. The number of people contacting them about human rights violations is increasing and cases are coming in from all over the country. Accordning to Novella Jafarovna Appelbaum, head of the association, legal support to women is an effective way of giving women power. She says that in the long run this work can influence the judicial system and contribute to an increase in the number of fair sentences.[21]

Access to justice for women in conflict-affected areas is the key to establishing long-term stability and security.

Changing
security concept

"For women, gender is itself a risk factor threatening human security; the secret violence of household abuse, the private oppression of lack of property or inheritance rights, the lifelong deprivations that go with lack of schooling and the structural problem of political exclusion."[22]
MARY ROBINSON, FORMER UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The terms "peace and security" are closely interwoven in speeches and documents almost as though they mean the same thing. Still it is obvious that peace cannot guarantee security for civilians, either in terms of ceasefire or a peace accord. During peace negotiations and in the reconstruction process, a great deal of attention is paid to security matters such as disarmament, demilitarisation and the setting up of a legitimate army while numerous threats of real and acute concern to civilians are not taken into account or given priority. Measures to ensure women's security are, in particular, still considered a luxury; "fine tuning" that will be attended to later when what is perceived as real security threats has been taken care of. With the focus security has today it is easy to forget or even to neglect women's security.

Threats to women's security are not always easy to distinguish without looking through gender-tinted glasses. Viewing all civilians as a homogenous group is not constructive; it is necessary to study women and men, girls and boys separately to see what needs there are for each group. When doing so it becomes clear that there are many hidden aspects of security that needs to be highlighted. Take the question of location of threats for men and women as an example. With a gendered analysis we learn that men are most likely to be exposed to violence in public places whereas violence against women is much more common on the domestic front. This is true not only for countries affected by conflict and war but for most of the world.

The Presence of
the International Community

The importance of information

The presence of the international community in conflict affected regions is of great importance; many times it is a precondition for the peace and rebuilding processes. In order to fulfil the mandate for civil and military actors present in a conflict area, the compilation of information from the local population is of vital importance – and this means collecting information from both women and men. Today women are too often neglected from this process, which then loses women's views on security problems and solutions. This can severely affect the international actors' ability to provide security for women and more so affect the possibility of actually overcoming the security deficits. Women's voices are not heard and that affects the missions of the international organisations and the women and men in the mission area.

Women often lack access to information on security issues as well as other information regarding their own society. This puts women at risk. Women are rarely included in formal and informal information flows and in decision-making bodies. When international actors turn to local decision-making bodies, such as for instance a local village council, it is not guaranteed that women will get hold of the information. Considering that it is the obligation of the international community to communicate with and give and gather information to and from the local population, ways to reach women has to be developed. It cannot be accomplished without a gender analysis of the means and issues that are important for women. To reach women with information, other channels are needed like using radio broadcasts, visiting market places or organising special meetings just for women.

One of the most secure ways of reaching women is through local women's organisations. International actors have to see and interact with these organisations and activists. Unfortunately there is a neglected interest

in seeing and engaging with them from the international community. This affects the information flow between women in the local population and the international community. Support, in the form of cooperation with principal actors and the supply of information and material and financial resources, is rarely extended to women activists. Many times women activists do not know or have the time to get to know the means that will allow them to increase their visibility and to acquire backing from international actors. This lack of recognition, both internally within their own communities and from international actors, is a great obstacle for women's activists' actions and participation, and for women's participation in general.

The invisibility springs from the perception of women as passive victims in armed conflicts. As stated by the Urgent Action Fund *"This is reflected in the oft-quoted statistic that some 80 per cent of conflict victims are women and children. Such a reading is compounded by a lack of information about activists themselves, especially who they are and the nature of their capacities and strategies. Consequently, during the emergency assessment and programme design phases, international actors rarely, if ever, seek out and consult with women activists; sometimes because they do not realise they are there, other times because they do not value their work."* [23]

Lack of information and reconciliation work

Considering that it is the obligation of the international community to communicate with and give and gather information to and from the local population, ways to reach women has to be developed.

In building peace it is necessary to include all societal groups. It is especially important to reach people in rural areas with information and security measures to prevent them from becoming isolated. In regions struck by conflict and war, most of the attention from the international community is focused on big cities and hot spots that make the rural areas isolated and without information. The isolation creates problems since propaganda raising fear and hate can flourish unanswered. This can put the work of NGOs addressing for instance issues of reconciliation and return at danger, the kind of work that many women's organisations are engaged in.

In Visegrad, a city in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, a long period of isolation followed after the war. There was no electricity and the citizens in the region could not get news from any kind of neutral information source. All they got was more or less nationalistic propaganda. In a small town like Visegrad there are also fewer possibilities to get information from the Internet (Internet cafés etc.). In spite of the isolation and ethnic concentration to one group, the few international organisations that came to the town requested of the NGOs to be given "multi-ethnic" projects. This was

difficult, not only because the community and municipal heads would dislike any multiethnic attempts, but also because there was nobody from the other ethnical groups to work together with.

The women's organisation Most in Visegrad, started working with reintegration of people who were forced to leave their homes during the war when a group of internally displaced persons (IDP) returned to a village outside Visegrad. This was difficult and dangerous as the authorities in Visegrad were nationalistic and opposed reintegration programmes. Also because the returnees were isolated and afraid, they too had only access to biased and more or less nationalistic propaganda. For several years Most worked in almost total isolation. The reintegration and reconciliation project was very fragile due to the lack of information and the fluent access to nationalistic propaganda and actions against return.

Director of Most, Dubravka Kovacevic:

"It was very difficult for us to find support from international bodies. The donors had only opened offices in the capitals. It is also difficult for us in rural groups because among us there is a lack of knowledge in English. Unfortunately the international community still does not know and understand what the situation is like for us out in the villages. We wish that international officers would travel to visit women's groups and projects around the country."[24]

Many times international actors enter a conflict or post-conflict society with an agenda, for instance promoting projects with a reconciliation aspect. It is true that reconciliation is necessary and that it has to be done at grassroot level to be sustainable. Nevertheless it is also a matter of timing. In many conflicts the fear of the "other" has been firmly set in peoples' minds, to attempt to meet with them you have to be brave and it has to come from a conviction that this is needed. As could be seen from the above example, working with reconciliation is not necessarily something that is promoted by the authorities; on the contrary they could be actively opposing it.

The goal for international organisations should be to make sure that they do not push individuals to taking steps towards reconciliation before they are ready for it and when it can put them at risk. At the same time it is important to open up for the possibility to meet and to show that the individuals or organisations that are willing to meet can get help to make the trip to meet each other in a safe and secure way.

It is necessary for the international community to let any attempt of reconciliation take its time. In doing so, the interventions will be more sustainable and the fear within society will decrease. If international actors

"Unfortunately the international community still does not know and understand what the situation is like for us out in the villages. We wish that international officers would travel to visit women's groups and projects around the country."

DUBRAVKA KOVACEVIC

are not patient there is a risk that the presence of the international community at some point might worsen the conditions for civilians and NGOs. International organisations that are present have to be transparent about their commitment and the duration of their stay. Women's organisations are often engaged in this kind of activity (refugee return, reconciliation) and they need to know that they have long-term support to be able to continue in spite of threats coming from those opposed to their work.

Well-communicated mandates

When it comes to the relations between UN missions, or other international or multinational organisations, and the local population it is important to raise the issue of information deficit. All too often civilians live in ignorance of what the different missions, organisations and agencies actually are there to do. The mandate is not known among the population, neither is it thought a priority by the international community to communicate it.

This information deficit might lead to misunderstandings and also to high expectations among the local population. Sometimes this results in a feeling of mutual disappointment, the local population cannot understand why the particular mission/organisation cannot meet their expectations and the international staff might find the demands from the population to be way above what they can, or should deliver.

For the international community it is important to analyse possible effects of interventions from a gender perspective. One challenge is to broaden the activity and include more local organisations, regardless of whether they operate in large cities or rural areas. In his report of the results since resolution 1325 was adopted, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sees a couple of good steps taken regarding mandates for peacekeeping missions. "*In recent resolutions, the Security Council reaffirmed resolution 1325 (2000) and included specific mandates for the protection of women and children in the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).*"[25] That is that the vulnerability of women and children is stated and thus their need to be protected. This is of course a first step towards seeing women and starting to address their situation in the conflict. But it cannot stop there with women as victims in need of protection. Women must be seen as actors and obstacles for their active participation in the decision making process have to be removed. Women need to be in power to formulate their needs and views on society for the security threats to be dealt with.

Limited freedom of movement

Measures taken to ensure women's security cannot, in any way, limit the freedom of movement for women and girls. Sadly enough this often happens when addressing the actual security threats can seem to be too difficult to handle. It can be about rumours that spread that it is not safe for girls or women to walk freely, rumours are not necessary true but that all the same will affect the lives of women and girls. Most of the time this is a question of ensuring that girls and women are not exposed to sexualised violence and that the safest, and easiest, solution to this is keeping them at home.

As long as women are not seen as actors who have the right to attend meetings and work outside the home, there will be limitations in their freedom of movement. And if the freedom of movement for all women, men, girls and boys is not a prioritised issue then certainly the freedom of movement of women and girls will not be prioritised at all.

An issue much discussed is the connection between trafficking in human beings and conflict. In a post conflict society with a shattered economy and little room for dreams of a future, women and girls may become easy prey for traffickers with promises of jobs in richer countries. Another connection is that whenever the international community moves into a country a large number of people who want to earn money are usually one step ahead of them to make sure that they will be provided with everything that they might need, which often includes women and girls.

There are numerous examples of an increase in brothels in connection with the influx of internationals and sometimes it seems to be something that most people have accepted as a fact, as something that will always happen when the internationals enter. This has consequences for women and girls in the country, the ones that should be protected and the ones that should be given the possibility of taking an active part in society.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the trade with women and girls also affected the way people looked upon the internationals. A Bosnian women activist from Bijeljina, Mara Radovanovic, says: *"Soldiers and representatives of different international organisations are associated with trafficking. People say: if they hadn't come here we would never have had this problem"*.[26] This is the perception; partly coming from seeing international agency cars parked outside bars and brothels. The local population then sees that the international actors supporting organised crime in contradiction to the human rights, democracy and peace building mandates they are supposed to be working under. In the long run, living in a town where the increase in numbers of brothels was visible during the years after the peace accords

"Soldiers and representatives of different international organisations are associated with trafficking. People say: if they hadn't come here we would never have had this problem".

MARA RADOVANOVIC

Mara Radovanovic also sees more long-term consequences *"Sex trading is not only a crime against the individual, it is also a threat to our attempts to build up a democratic society after the war"*.[27]

Rumours of kidnapping of girls can also be a hinder for their freedom of movement. In Albania the fear from kidnapping had some alarming consequences. A Save the Children UK report shows a dramatic fall in the number of girls over the age of 14 attending high school. As many as 90 per cent of the girls did not receive high school education. Even though this could be happening for several reasons, the fact that pupils living in remote areas had to walk for an hour or more to get to school made the parents say that the reason for not letting the girls attend school was because their security on route was not guaranteed.[28] The consequences when girls are no longer receiving high school education could be severe. If a larger number of the female population have low education, female participation in decision-making processes in the future is also likely to suffer.

One of the places that are talked about as possible recruitment centres for traffickers are refugee camps. The population there might have little hope for the future and almost no possibility of finding work. To be offered a possibility to leave the camp and to have a paid job might sound interesting enough for the girls and women to take a chance. Provisions for having some control as to who has access to the camps has to be established, without hindering the freedom of movement for the ones living in it.

Planning and running refugee camps is often a task for the international community. The structure of the camps is in itself problematic. The refugees are often isolated and totally dependent on help from the international community. Besides the risks of human trafficking, other forms of sexual exploitation and sexualised violence targeted towards women and children are a great risk both inside and outside the camps. One difficulty for the international community to handle is how to administrate basic duties like fetching water and collecting firewood. For instance there have been several reports from the Darfur province in northern Sudan on women being raped during the conflict. 90 per cent of the women, who got in contact with the organisation Médecines Sans Frontières because they had been raped, were raped outside a populated village or refugee camp. The majority, 82 per cent, were raped while pursuing their ordinary daily activities.[29] The threat of being raped became an acute problem to solve in the refugee camp. It was known that men would get killed if they went outside the camp, so having them fetching wood was not a good solution. One alternative would be to include firewood in the packages of aid that were

"Sex trading is not only a crime against the individual, it is also a threat to our attempts to build up a democratic society after the war".

MARA RADOVANOVIC

sent to the camp, but this would mean that the women were isolated and also signify defeat in normalising the country and decreasing the fear the women felt.

It is important that these kind of basic security issues are discussed when planning and running refugee camps. Of course there are no clear answers to the right way to act. The solution should nevertheless never be to keep women more or less locked up and isolated in refugee camps or villages because of the security threats towards them. These kind of security threats – mass rapes and sexualised violence towards women – will not disappear by themselves or with women being kept away from potential danger. The danger comes from lack of equality and the low status of women. Rape as a concept of manifesting power and creating fear was not invented during the war. As long as women are seen as being owned by men it is possible to harm a man – the enemy in a war – by raping his woman. Attitudes towards women and the lack of equality between the sexes have to be addressed in peacetime as well as in war and conflict and post conflict.

International community limiting the freedom of movement

When international peacekeeping and police forces enter a country during or after a conflict it is to protect the population from further human rights violations. They need to have the trust of the population and to be able to move freely to conduct their task. But it is equally important that women and girls feel free to move around without having to add additional fear that they might be assaulted by the people that are there to protect them.

There have been some alarming reports about sexual abuses where the protectors become perpetrators. It is important that these incidents are reported as the human rights violations they are and that they are firmly dealt with – whether it is military or civil international interventions. The connection with the security for the female population and their right to move freely also has to be addressed.

An example of not reporting violations of human rights is the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) intervention in Sri Lanka. Although the IPKF intervention was at large seen as a failure, there were almost no detailed reports on human rights violations, including rape, conducted by IPKF forces. A woman activist in Sri Lanka says, "It seems (that) when the IPKF was here, there were more rapes and more sexualised violence. A woman

> The danger comes from lack of equality and the low status of women. Rape as a concept of manifesting power and creating fear was not invented during the war.

couldn't go out of the house. The ladies, girls, they were living in fear".[30] This fear made many women seek shelter outside their own home and prevented girls from attending school.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other places the presence of UN peacekeeping missions has affected parts of the civilian population in a negative and inhuman way. In DRC, several investigations have come to the same conclusion – sexual exploitation and sexual abuse has been conducted by peacekeeping personal (MONUC). There were also accusations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by UN peacekeeping personnel in Haiti. Despite policies, reinforced by administrative instructors, the accusations of abuse continue to surface from different missions in different countries. So far we have probably only seen the tip of the iceberg, the vast majority of abuses have most likely gone unreported. It is very dangerous for the whole of the UN and the organisation's ability to work if there is any suspicion that the problems is not just about a few individuals but a much bigger structural problem within the UN itself.

In a letter to the Security Council in February 2005 Secretary General Kofi Annan restates his commitment to fighting sexual abuses in DRC and elsewhere. However there are some issues in the argumentation that stresses the structural aspect of this problem. In the letter the phrase "opportunities to alleviate stress" among UN personal is used in the context of fighting sexual exploitation. This implies that it is natural that men abuse women and girls in stressful environments if they do not have access to sex, i.e. men cannot control themselves. This perception can create real problems for women, and it is far from true. Of course both women and men can control their sexual drive if and when needed. If this is not firmly stated, women's security is again at risk.

To prohibit all kinds of contact between peacekeeping personnel and the local population is hardly a fruitful solution. Civilians, and especially women, often ask for peacekeepers to be present as monitors. It is also of great importance that UN-personnel and other representatives of the international community are "out there" to collect information from groups that do not have access to the public peace process, like women and children.

Attention is given to investigations and disciplinary measures to solve the problem with sexual exploitation by UN and other international community personnel. This is crucial and necessary but not enough to prevent these crimes from occurring again. A holistic approach is required. To avoid further exploitation of women and girls it is necessary to have provisions and possibilities of reviewing the recruitment policy of UN peacekeeping personnel from a gender perspective and increasing the number of

women in peacekeeping missions, including in high-level positions. It is also important to ensure regular training, before and during missions, of peacekeeping personnel on how to interact with local populations and how to collect information and knowledge from both women and men.

It is needed that the security of women and girls as an issue to focus on from the start is included in the mission mandates. At a UN Expert Group Meeting in Ottawa, Canada in November 2003 this matter was discussed and resulted in several recommendations on how to provide security for women and girls. When the need arises for protection for women and girls under threat of physical violence it has to be provided with the freedom of secure movement ensured. Security also has to be provided to ensure that women and girls can be active members of society (e.g. access to education, health facilities, markets etc.). In mine clearance, priority has to be given to areas used for agriculture, or in proximity to health clinics or schools, where predominantly women seek access. It is also vital with safe passages for women who are internally displaced or refugees returning safely to their homes.[31]

Work to reduce the fear

The various types of violence that women are potential victims of during and after conflicts affect the self confidence and feeling of safety for women and girls. As mentioned earlier the fear is there even though in reality the risk of each women or girl becoming a victim is not that high in all areas. Sometimes rumours about the threats that women can be exposed to (women's dignity and moral) are used to limit their freedom of movement. In a conflict affected area there are of course all types of fears emanating from the conflict itself that can and has to be addressed. Fear is a source of hate and for ensuring the conflict continues.

In Georgia, the Fund Sukhumi women's organisation, run by internally displaced persons from Abkhazia together with the Association of Women of Abkhazia, is trying to find methods of reconciliation in the conflict between Georgia proper and Abkhazia. With small funds they manage to get women from both sides to communicate despite numerous obstacles. The tension in the area is high and the conflict is frozen since 1993. Surrounded by warnings, most people thought it was too early for communication between the two conflicting groups, Fund Sukhumi and the Association of Women of Abkhazia started to look for ways for women from both sides to exchange information. Each of the two organisations gathered women for talks about security. The events were videotaped and the tapes afterwards

Sometimes rumours about the threats that women can be exposed to are used to limit their freedom of movement.

exchanged over the border. The aim was to get the women to meet 'the other', the supposed enemy, virtually in an attempt to reduce tension and fear. They had the chance to see each other and talk about their fears.

Fund Sukhumi also helps refugee women in Georgia to visit their relatives in Abkhazia. This enables women to exchange newspapers and information across the invisible barrier between the two parties. These are examples of efforts that only require small funds but can bring about great change. It is often difficult for the international community to see this.

Alla Gamakhari, President of Fund Sukhumi:

"Security issues are vital in our society as they are present in our everyday lives. The problems and needs apply to both sides of the conflict (Abkhazia and Georgia). Today the greatest danger comes from ourselves. We are dangerous to each other. One key aspect of security is that we lack influence over our government. Today our representatives of authorities proclaim peaceful solutions of conflict and the next day there is aggression and militant rhetoric in their speeches."[32]

In the conflict between Israel and Palestine there is fear for "the other" on both sides. Palestinians are separated from Israelis by a barrier and Israelis are prevented from crossing the border to Gaza and the West Bank. The Israeli organisation Coalition of Women for Peace is addressing the fear for the Palestinians that is building up in Israel with the separation and the lack of knowledge of Palestinian living conditions. They have arranged what they call Reality Tours geared toward Israelis (women and men) who are willing to expose themselves to travelling and meeting Palestinians. Led by trained guides, the tours expose the participants to the social, economic, political, and environmental realities of the conflict – checkpoints, refugee camps, the barrier. The tour shows participants a reality that most have never before witnessed. Approximately 1,500 Israelis participated in these tours in 2004. In several cases, participants became directly involved in activism following the tour, and almost all send friends and family to participate.

AFGHANISTAN, SAHAR SABA

Under the Taliban-regime in Afghanistan the situation for women was really harsh. Women suffered from various kinds of oppression and did not have access even to their basic rights. Prior to the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 women's rights was high on the agenda as a reason for invasion. Colin Powell, former US Secretary of State, declared that the rights of the women of Afghanistan were not negotiable. But four years later the focus on women is lost.

– Women are actually less secure than before. The oppression is no longer official, but the government does not have control over the country so the warlords can continue controlling society and women," says Sahar Saba from Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA).

RAWA is one of Afghanistan's oldest and most influential women's organisations. It was founded in 1977, and has since been fighting for human rights and social justice in Afghanistan. During the Taliban regime, when women were denied education, RAWA established underground schools for women and girls. This work is still going on, explains Sahar Saba.

– Unfortunately we still have to work underground. This is what the situation is like for Afghan women today. But we understood that there would not be much change when we saw that the US-led coalition cooperated with the warlords.

More than one third of the country remains controlled by regional and local warlords. The fact that the warlords continue to operate with impunity is seriously undermining the conditions for developing democracy and human rights.

President Hamid Karzai and donor organisations are compromising and cooperating with the warlords, who often have similar views about the role of women as the Taliban, explains Sahar Saba. But as many of them have been considered key allies in the continuing armed conflict with the Taliban and al-Quaida, the US-led coalition has not made the warlords' treatment of women a high priority issue.

– Countries engaged in the reconstruction of Afghanistan have to stop supporting the warlords. This is the only solution for a better future. There is no doubt that the international community can stop the warlords if they so wish.

The instability in Afghan society affects women disproportionately. Women are constantly at risk of becoming victims of sexualised violence. They also suffer from lack of food, electricity and job opportunities. Every 30 minutes an Afghan woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth. [33]

– The situation is really tough for women, but there is also hope. Something has happened with women's mentality, there is a new awareness. The fact that 41 per cent of all women registered to vote in the presidential elections is a very good sign!

INTERVIEW WITH SAHAR SABA, APRIL 2005

Repression in
the name of culture

ALL TOO OFTEN women's rights are compromised in the peace processes. The fact that women have low status in society and are structurally subordinated affects the treatment of women's rights. Issues concerning women and gender roles are routinely referred to as cultural, and therefore expected to be more difficult to influence. Within the international community respect for culture is sometimes cited as a reason for not tackling gender discrimination and violence against women.[34] This is, however, not put forward with regard to gender-neutral harmful customs such as slavery.

When the international community entered Kosovo at the end of the NATO bombings (June 1999), many of its staff came to Kosovo with prejudice that it is an extremely patriarchal society without any women's movement or activists. The old book of Leke Dukagjini, a compilation of ancient customary law from the 15th century containing rules on family law, hereditary law, criminal law and other issues of relevance for the traditional Albanian pastoral society, was re-discovered by some of the international staff. In doing so they also gave importance to parts of culture that reflect old fashioned attitudes against women and children that could severely affect their rights and lives. Its pre-eminence has been very much eroded for over forty years by institutionalisation of modern laws under the socialist system and even though there are some more extreme traditionalists in Kosovar society who still claim the validity of Leke Dukagjini, this is not the feeling among the general population.[35]

Instead of sticking to international human rights law and the law as it had been when they entered the country the international community seemed inclined to stress the more backward traditions, which undermined the position of women. This resulted in several absurd situations when international staff told Kosovar women that they were not "sensitive" enough to their own culture.[36] In the words of one woman activist: *"Instead of dedicating all our energy to helping women and their families put*

together lives shattered by war, we expended effort in fighting to be heard and in proving to UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo) that we knew what was best for us, that women in Kosovo were not just victims waiting to be helped – they could help themselves, as they did in the past, and they could be key and effective actors in building their own future."[37]

Statements like; "In this culture it is impossible to talk to women…" or "but you have to understand that they (women) do not want to speak to us in this kind of society" are much too often heard as explanations when international actors are confronted with the lack of women's participation in their programmes. It can be used as an answer to why there are no women involved in the programmes, as well as an excuse for why no information was gathered from women. The latter is usually explained by the fact that the specific country or region one is working in has a culture where men and women live separate lives. This explanation is a very good reason as to the importance of gathering information and facts from women. If they are in charge of collecting wood and fetching water they will know about landmines, if women are in charge of children and the elderly they will also know the kind of services required for these groups. Even in countries where women and men do not live separate lives the argument is still used. Women should be consulted in all societies and cultures as their knowledge and capacity is a source that is greatly underused.

When the international community accepts gender-biased circumstances as facts that cannot be changed this contributes to the isolation of women in these cultures and creates two levels of repression: from the culture itself and from the international community.

The infringement of women's rights is usually exercised in the name of tradition, religion, social cohesion, morality, or some complex transcendent values. Always, it is justified in the name of culture, states former minister of women's affairs in the Iranian government, Mahnaz Afkhami.[38] She emphasises that the whole concept of development and progress hinges on cultural change. A cultural dialogue is necessary to pose the crucial questions of why in so many societies women encounter so much opposition when they demand the most rudimentary rights to civil treatment? Why is it that the denial of these rights is always based on some fundamental point of culture? Is this culture real, or is it rather a fetish that is used to maintain some economic, social or simply psychological privilege?

"Everywhere, change in women's status has meant a change in the culture of patriarchy. In other words, cultural change is both a by-product and requisite of change in women's status. The contemporary threat to women and their rights in the Muslim world springs mainly from a resurgence of

"We had to prove to UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo) that we knew what was best for us, that women in Kosovo were not just victims waiting to be helped – they could help themselves, as they did in the past, and they could be key and effective actors in building their own future."
IGBALLE ROGOVA

radical fundamentalist thought and politics in the last quarter of the 20th century. The fundamentalist resurgence forces Muslim women to fight for their rights, openly when they can, subtly when they must. The struggle is multifaceted, at once political, economic, ethical, psychological, and intellectual. It resonates with the mix of values, mores, facts, ambitions, prejudices, ambivalences, uncertainties, and fears that are the stuff of human culture. Above all, it is a casting off of a tradition of subjection."[39]

In the long term, if international actors do not see women who are working for change and to attain their rights, it will make these women's lives less secure. People who want change are often disapproved of by their own authorities, if the international community also turn away the women become more isolated.

Today no partner in peace building or development cooperation can refer to culture and customs as a reason for not preventing discrimination of women. On the contrary all states have to guarantee human rights for all. At the UN Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, an agreement was reached that: "*no state may refer to national customs as an excuse for not guaranteeing all individuals human rights and fundamental freedoms*".[40]

IRAQ, ZAINAB SALBI

Since the US-led invasion in November 2003 women in Iraq report escalating harassments and violations. Zeena, a pharmacist and business-woman, was kidnapped, murdered and dumped on a highway in a traditional headscarf she never wore. Zeena is just one of the victims of the violence against women in Iraq. Professional wo-men are especially exposed, explains Zainab Sal-bi, president of Women to Women International.

– Under Saddam women were targeted for political reasons, with torture, rape etc. Now, for the first time, women in public life are tar-geted. This violates a strong cultural norm – the society is in shock, she says.

There are no reliable statistics on how many women have been murdered or kidnapped since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, but at least 14 women were murdered between March and December 2004; all with a position in pub-lic life. Some were journalists, other women ac-tivists or entrepreneurs.

– They had the same profile; they were active, visible women. How these women are treated is a message of a fundamentalist nature and a very dangerous indicator. The international community has to pay attention before it's too late.

Zainab Salbi underlines that bad and good things often start with women. Women can be seen as kitchen doors to society, and if violence enters the kitchen door it will soon spread throughout society.

– Women's security and women's rights should not be seen only as "women things". This is im-portant for civil liberties at large. When women are forced to go back into the house they pull everybody else back with them.

Unfortunately the US-led coalition that gov-erned Iraq during the first year after the war did not take gender issues seriously enough. There was no gender agenda to help Iraqi women take part in the political process and re-building of the country, explains Zainab Salbi.

– It has been a complete failure. There was an open window of opportunity after the war had ended. Iraqi women were so excited; they wanted to take part in the process, but they were not included. And the donor bodies were not good examples because they were mainly represented by men.

The mistake was that the US-led coalition did not guarantee representation for women in gov-erning bodies, but relegated this to the discre-tion of the political parties. There were no "seats" reserved for women as there were for most religious and ethnical groups. Zainab Salbi argues that if women had been given a chance to influence developments to higher degree things might have turned out differently. The fundamentalists are now getting stronger grip in Iraqi politics and it is likely that the new con-stitution will contain a great deal of Islamic law. For women this means a radical backlash. Under the Saddam era Iraq had one of the most secular constitutions in the Middle East. Iraqi women can now expect to live under Sharia law in the near future, predicts Zainab Salbi.

– Sharia law is not necessarily a bad thing for women; their rights might be negotiated within Sharia. Personally I wish we could leave these frameworks of religious and national law. The most important thing is what the laws say. And there is still time to negotiate about this. The window is not closed!

INTERVIEW WITH ZAINAB SALBI, APRIL 2005

Militarised societies

"Almost every place where suicide attacks took place in Israel is familiar to me. These are the places where I live, work, do my shopping, walk with my daughter. I need no convincing regarding Israel's legitimate need for security. It is my basic right. But this very basic need and right for security has transformed in front of my eyes into a monster, a monster nourished and fed by the Israeli government and the Israeli Army. This monster called "security" is now threatening to swallow us all – oppressing, dehumanising and terrorising the entire Palestinian people, and along with it, brutalising and corrupting Israeli society as well."[41]

MOLLY MALEKAR, BAT SHALOM

After a violent conflict society is militarised, filled with arms and people are used to violence. There is a need to disarm combatants and civilians alike as the presence of weapons makes peace building a very difficult task. How to disarm the fighting fractions is a key consideration in peace negotiations along with demobilising fighting units and aiding their transition to civilian life. Those who used to bear arms in the conflict need to be reintegrated into society and at the same time the victims, such as women who have been sexually abused during the conflict, have to be given support and help to reintegrate into society. For society to function again, reintegration, support and reconciliation need to embrace everybody. In many conflict areas today international and local organisations and national authorities introduce Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes to transform conflict affected societies into peacetime.

On the international agenda, the topic of gender and armed conflict has focused somewhat on women's role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. But women are still denied equal and full access to decision making, peace negotiations and rebuilding processes. The inability to see women as actors – both good and bad, combatants and peace workers – deprives women of full access to the rebuilding of society, development and DDR programmes.

Women in conflict

Women are deprived of power in peace processes and therefore constitute an unutilised peace building resource. Women are seen to be absent in the fighting and are thus not included in stopping the fighting and negotiating peace.

But in reality women are not absent from the actual war scene. Women are active in warfare and women and girls operate in regular and irregular armies during conflict. During recent years female combatants have been active in forces in for example Algeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Israel and Palestine, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. Women, as men, are joining armies for different reasons. Some do it voluntarily while others are forced into serving as combatants, support workers, abductees, "wives" and prostitutes. In practice, women in armies usually combine more than one role. The fighting experience of women is complex, women could be abductees and dependant but at the same time involved in the planning and the fighting. The proportion of female participation varies and generally ranges from ten per cent to one-third of combatants. In Sri Lanka, for example, women constituted one-third of the fighting force. [42]

In the DDR-programmes, often run by national governments or international organisations, the prime criterion to participate is usually in handing over a weapon.[43] In return combatants get benefits like food, money and vocational training. Keeping combatants off the street and 'buying peace' are the main approaches used in DDR programmes to restore security. Thus, the programmes do not deal with the psycho-social needs of ex-combatants. This is common criticism as to why the DDR programmes are not more successful. They need to give the demobilised persons a possibility of seeing a future in peacetime and deal with what they have been through.[44]

As female combatants are not directly regarded as major security threats (due to prejudices about women's behaviour and roles in society), they are insufficiently targeted in these programmes. Furthermore, the majority of women who make up the fighting fractions are not actually engaged in fighting. The fact that the majority of women do not carry weapons also often excludes them from opportunities and benefits that are offered combatants in the demilitarisation process.

Women who have been abducted and forced to become "wives" of soldiers and regarded as property by their captors during the war, do not wait for the start of a DDR or complementary assistance programme but escape from the fighting forces as soon as possible. These women and girls often face reintegration problems and in many cases end up in sheer isolation and poverty after conflict. Many of them become social outcasts.[45] While male combatants are often welcomed back after the war, female combat-

Keeping combatants off the street and 'buying peace' are the main approaches used in DDR programmes to restore security. As female combatants are not directly regarded as major security threats, they are insufficiently targeted in DDR programmes.

ants have problems being accepted. Many women ex-combatants opt out of the demobilisation process because they do not want to reveal their identity as female combatants out of fear of stigmatisation as they might be associated with killing, sexualized violence, rape and giving birth to illegitimate children.[46] This means that when planning DDR programmes measures have to be taken to reach all women including those who opt out to meet the risk of women being marginalized and stigmatised.

But even when DDR programmes are aimed at also supporting women who joined armies it might be difficult to find them. Women tend to quickly disappear from the scene of the fighting after the war is over and traditional gender relations are reintroduced. In this phase women are supposed to revert to more traditional roles, which creates two problems for reintegrating female combatants. Firstly they might not be accepted by their community, secondly during the conflict they have stepped out of the traditional woman's role and acquired new skills, like being in a leadership position and working outside of the family. This new role (position in society and increased power in relation to men) and skills they might want to keep after the conflict. The opportunity to get access to more power than women are usually entitled to can also be a reason for joining armed forces. In Nepal, government forces and the communist party of Nepal-Maoist, (CPN-Maoist) have been locked in conflict since 1996. Around a third of CPN combatants are believed to be women. The majority of women in Nepal have traditionally only participated in the public sphere through their fathers and husbands and have suffered social, legal and cultural discrimination. The CPN-Maoist has capitalised on this and attracted women into their armed forces by promising greater gender equality.[47]

The role these women acquired in conflict is incompatible with traditional women's roles. But the negligence of earned new skills is not only a backlash for women but also a loss of social capital for society in general. Women who have taken part in the fighting forces need long-term support as they have stepped out of their traditional role.

The key challenge for the designers of DDR programmes and complementary development assistance programmes is to adequately address the needs of all who joined armies during conflict. Analysing the post-conflict situation with a gender sensitive lens raises other issues: What are the specific security needs for women and for men in this phase? What can be done to include women in the DDR process? How should DDR programmes be designed to reach women, men, girls and boys and fulfil their needs?

Support needs to include all

DDR programmes focus on ex-combatants. In order for post-conflict society to function, resources and support also have to be available to the victims. Women who have been exposed to sexualised violence during the conflict are in great need of medical and psycho-social support. Furthermore, they too need help to reintegrate into the community. Sexualised crime, during both peace and conflict, builds on existing discrimination of women in society. Sexualised violence during an armed conflict is an act of domination over an entire group. This discrimination becomes an additional barrier in trying to help the woman to overcome the violence. Since there is no collective understanding or community support for a victim of sexualised violence, they often become excluded from their community and have to carry their shame alone.[48] There is a need for programmes and resources to support victims of sexualised violence in being accepted by their communities and by society in general.

"Reconciling 'rewarding' the combatants by establishing DDR programmes but not establishing a similar type of mechanism for victims? This is a paradox! Women combatants get a stipend (30 USD) while civilian women who did not fight get nothing"…"Are these women to feel like they are to be penalised? If another conflict is triggered, this disparity will result in an even more significant increase in the number of women involved in fighting"…"Combatants get education and allowance while the civilians don't. Absence of economic well-being can become an underlying cause for resentment [of the women victims] within society."[49]

It is important to note that resentment towards ex-combatants can emerge when they return home from war if they have received DDR benefits, while non-combatants in the home community receive nothing.[50] Either way the DDR programmes have to be sensitive enough to adequately address the needs of combatants, civilians and victims. DDR programmes have to be complemented with long-term development programmes.

A strong reason for providing all enlisted women and men and victims of violence with DDR and complementary development assistance is that it will reduce the chance of their re-recruitment and reduce violence within society. Without viable alternatives for making a living and establishing a future, these women (and men) may again be drawn into armies and become a genuine threat to society. Also, women engaged in the armies should have the same rights and opportunities as men, regardless of whether they have taken part in armed combat or have had other functions.

Small arms causing gender-based violence

"In many countries that have suffered violent conflict, the rates of interpersonal violence remain high even after the cessation of hostilities – among other reasons because of the way violence has become more socially acceptable and the availability of weapons."[51]

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, WHO

Small arms and light weapons are widely used in conflicts, especially in the many internal and low intense conflicts of today. Widespread, unregulated access to small arms and ammunition following ceasefire and peace agreements further facilitates armed violence against women. High levels of sexualised violence against women are usually maintained after a conflict has ended officially.[52] Large numbers of small arms after conflict makes the society unstable. It contributes to increased crime rates and sometimes results in more deaths in peacetime than during war.[53] Guns may be used to facilitate different forms of abuse, including gender-based violence. Following a return from years of war, women and men face many problems. The tension between families and returning ex-combatants can be extreme and increased domestic violence is common.[54]

In Israel people live with a feeling of insecurity. Incidents of suicide bombing against civilians in coffee shops, buses or other every day situations has put the whole society on constant guard. The government and business sector response has been to position armed guards at the entrance of every building, public institution, and café. This situation, when so many civilians serve as armed guards, has created a new phenomenon, according to the Isha L'Isha-Haifa Feminist Centre.[55] *"Suddenly there are arms readily available in the hands of many citizens (almost all of them males). Many of them are from the most disadvantaged and poorest segments of Israeli society. And we have recently seen an alarming increase in the number of murders of women by men in Israel."*[56]

"In many countries that have suffered violent conflict, the rates of interpersonal violence remain high even after the cessation of hostilities – among other reasons because of the way violence has become more socially acceptable and the availability of weapons."

WHO

Demilitarisation

Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325, PARAGRAPH 8

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration is part of demilitarising society. Even if women are not armed actors in the conflict, practical disarmament must involve women. Very often they receive information on the location of small arms and light weapons. Women's organisations in Albania used the knowledge women had about the whereabouts of their men's private weapons to disarm society. They also informed their own communities of the importance of DDR programmes, as violence could reoccur and crime could surge if that process did not get underway.[57]

Another reason to involve women in practical disarmament is that as women are less suspected they are used as weapon smugglers or to hide illegal arms. In Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in the early 1990s, women carried weapons for the resistance fighters under their traditional clothing. In the Central African Republic on the other hand women often served as "gun collectors" following the flight of mutineers, later turning them in to the UNDP voluntary weapons collection programme in exchange for vocational training.[58] Following war, women often have information on the location of arms that is useful for the disarmament process.

Clearly because women have lived in the society during the conflict they know how society has been affected, about disarmament and demobilisation needed. And for them to be able to participate in the rebuilding process and in the reinstating of security for all, they need to have access to the power of demilitarising society, regardless of whether or not they have taken an active part in the armed violence. Women's being an underused resource affects the whole society.

"Suddenly there are arms readily available in the hands of many citizens (almost all of them males). Many of them are from the most disadvantaged and poorest segments of Israeli society. And we have recently seen an alarming increase in the number of murders of women by men in Israel."

DANA MYRTENBAUM

SIERRA LEONE, FLORELLA HAZELEY

The DDR programme in Sierra Leone after the war in 2002 has been regarded as successful. For the first time female combatants were included in the programmes in an organised way. Women, as well as men, were offered vocational training, kits for self-employment etc. It was known that women were relatively well represented in the armies in Sierra Leone, and the programme had been designed accordingly. Women did turn up at the DDR camps, but far from as many as had been expected.

– We couldn't understand why they didn't come. But we found out there were many reasons. Some women had totally given up the thought of coming back to society, and stayed as "wives" to combatants, others had become prostitutes. Many of them thought that no man would ever want them because of what they've been through during the war. Some were so badly scared that they just wanted to hide.

Florella Hazeley works for the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone. She underlines that the DDR programme has been good, especially for the women who actually served as combatants, but women and girls who played support roles did not get enough attention and help. One main problem was that they were considered as dependants of demobilised male soldiers and were not granted individual rights. Only a few efforts were made to provide them with protection and support, but these were largely outside the official DDR programme.

According to Florella Hazeley, many women were actually strengthened during the war. Despite widespread atrocities and sexualised violence women managed to unite and create strong women's organisations. When a ceasefire finally came, and later a peace accord, there were several strong women organisations prepared to deal with all the problems connected to the post-conflict phase.

– We are working hard with demystifying gender-based violence such as rape and domestic violence. When we pick up these issues to public debate it automatically affects people's awareness. For instance we try to engage the judicial system so that they take stronger action against perpetrators. We are fighting the culture of silence!"

INTERVIEW WITH FLORELLA HAZELEY, MARCH 2005

Health and
psycho-social support

THE LACK OF access to adequate healthcare is a severe threat to women's security before, during and after conflicts. The difference between the health of men and women is not just about biology but a question of unequal power relations. Women have less access to secured health than men. This affects women's ability to participate in society, claim their rights and to raise themselves out of poverty. Due to many societies ambition to control women, their bodies and sexuality, women face particular health risks compared to men. During and after conflicts the lack of health services for women and the guarding of reproductive rights tend to be put on the backburner.

Sexual and reproductive rights

"It is important that women's sexual and reproductive rights are ensured and discussed openly by the international community. The goal must be that women should have the right to say yes, and no, to sex."[59]
YAKIN ERTÜRK, UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON WOMEN

To decide over your own body is the most basic condition of being a free person with equal rights and responsibilities. Many women do not have full possession of their own bodies. This results in them not being able to plan their lives, which jeopardises their health and lives. Every year an estimated 68 000 women in the world die as a consequence of unsafe, often illegal, abortions.[60] The World Health Organisation estimates in its World Health Report from 2005 that out of a total of 136 million births a year worldwide, less than two thirds of women in less developed countries and only one third in least developed countries have their babies delivered by a skilled attendant. The report says this can make the difference between life and death for mother and child if complications arise.[61] Since women often have

the main responsibility for the welfare of the family they are also disproportionately affected when children are in need of extra care and attention.

Women's reproductive health problems during conflict range from life threatening pregnancies, injuries from gender-based violence to the lack of sanitary supplies for menstruation. As mentioned above, during and after conflicts women's sexual and reproductive rights tend to be neglected.

In Colombia health policies have failed to protect and support women's sexual and reproductive health rights. Reproductive health services in Colombia are not free, which restricts access to women from poor regions and the internally displaced. This has a serious impact on women's access to health, especially poor and internally displaced women. In Colombia unplanned pregnancies and gynaecological and obstetric emergencies have serious repercussions for women and girls and may result in an increase in maternal mortality. In areas under military dispute it has become increasingly difficult for women to gain access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. Many women are forced to travel long and dangerous distances for help.[62]

This is not just a problem in Colombia. In other conflict-affected countries such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, women's sexual and reproductive health services are not free either and are seriously lacking in resources. During conflicts health clinics and services are badly affected which of course makes it harder to provide healthcare for all. However, sexual and reproductive health services are often neglected and at the bottom of the priority list despite proof of mass rape and that women and children are increasingly affected by conflicts. Rape has long-term consequences on women's mental and physical health if not adequately treated.

International donors have failed to fully recognise and address women's health needs and its consequences. The Democratic Republic of Congo has an acute health crisis. Tens of thousands of women and girls were raped during the conflict (1996–2003), and now in 2005 in the Eastern parts of the country there are only two hospitals with one or two gynaecologists and medical equipment capable of treating the serious physical injuries caused by rape. A number of Congolese women's, human rights, church and development organisations have mobilised to respond to the urgent health need at local level and could be a successful model for the DRC government and the international donors to systematically use throughout the country.[63] However, so far they have done very little to address the crises, despite a great deal of international funding having reached the country. There are many needs during and after a conflict and the countries' re-

sources are extremely stretched making it even more important for the international community to step in and ensure that resources are provided to women's sexual and reproductive health and psycho social support.

Another example of the need for sexual and reproductive healthcare is in Afghanistan were pregnancy is a real threat to women's lives. Healthcare for women and girls has been scarce for a long period of time. Early marriages have increased with girls who get married and pregnant long before their bodies are ready to cope with the pregnancy. Due to this, Afghanistan has the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. In the northeast, as many as 6,500 women dies out of 100,000 births. The average figure in Afghanistan is 1,600 deaths per 100,000 births.[64] This clearly shows that the international community has not made maternity care and reproductive healthcare a priority, even though women's rights were claimed to be high on the agenda before and after the fall of the Taliban regime.

It is alarming that the issue of sexual and reproductive rights is missing in key documents such as the Millennium Development Goals (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000). According to one of the architects behind it (Jan Vandermoortele) issues sensitive for the US administration, such as abortion and sexual education, where excluded when deciding upon the goals.[65] Hereby, a political choice was made in favour of "consensus and harmonisation" which here is to the disadvantage of women's reproductive rights and other central issues related to power, discrimination and lack of involvement. Sexual and reproductive rights are constantly under attack and questioned by cultural, religious and ethnic movements trying to control women's behaviour and lives.[66] The US administration cut their family planning funding to reproductive healthcare providers if these in some way can be connected to provisions for abortion. This has serious consequences, especially in underserved areas, where women's ability to access pregnancy-related care is limited, since family planning, and services for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible infections, decreases. Cuts in family planning funding, mean higher rates of unwanted pregnancies and higher rates of abortion. The USA is a big international donor, including within the area of family planning so this decision has a widespread international impact.[67]

As long as sexual and reproductive rights are negotiable, women will not be safe. To deny a big part of the population in the world their basic right – the power over their own body – is a security issue not just for each single woman but for society as a whole. The facts about the effects of neglected sexual and reproductive rights are there: increased mortality among women and girls as well as for men and boys, an increase in the spread of

As long as sexual and reproductive rights are negotiable, women will not be safe.

HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and psychological traumas, facts which all contribute to destabilisation, deprivation and increased poverty. Sexual and reproductive rights are at the heart of equality, making women an independent actor instead of an object. Fighting for sexual and reproductive rights challenges the power structure prevailing today.

The character of women's health situation has become even clearer after UNAIDS and other international organisations revealed in 2004 that women bare the brunt of HIV/AIDS today. The number of women living with HIV/AIDS is increasing in each region of the world and in Sub-Saharan Africa 76 per cent of young people between 15–25 living with HIV are girls (UNAIDS). Gender is a factor that strongly affects the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Patriarchal traditions help to enhance the risk of HIV infection for women, as women are seen as subordinate to men. When women are economically and socially dependent (on men) they often lack control over their sexuality and reproduction and it limits their opportunities to negotiate safe sex.

The pandemic of HIV/AIDS, spreading especially in poor and unstable countries, is in itself a major threat to security and the UN Security Council recognises that HIV/AIDS is a growing security threat at all levels.[68] The virus destabilises society and the state in various ways; families, households, workplaces, and communities are disrupted; income levels are reduced, the social fabric undermined and economies are weakened. In some farming communities the impact of AIDS is undermining 40 years of progress in agricultural development.[69] The International Crises Group underlines that *"HIV/AIDS threatens social and economic progress, worsening trends that we know contribute strongly to the potential for violent conflict and humanitarian catastrophe".*[70]

Not dealing with sexual and reproductive rights and women's health in general threatens not just women's lives but also their ability to move freely and participate in society. Warring parties and the international community must recognise women's health in peace processes, and provide resources to health clinics, gynaecologists and women's organisations working with psycho-social support. The answers to the problems are often there. By listening to women and local women's and human rights organisations many problems could be solved in a sustainable way. For long-term change and to avoid conflicts re-emerging it is also essential to work on a structural level to address stigmatising structures. Women's sexual and reproductive rights and access to adequate health services is a security concern, and must be recognised as such.

Gender-based violence

Despite the fact that violence is one of the most acute security threats to women worldwide very little is done by governments and the international community to put an end to it. The broad spectrum of violence against women and its effects on women's health is not recognised in discussions about peace and security. Living under constant threat and fear of violence affects women's mental health and all aspects of daily life, including the freedom of movement.

However, during the last decade the international community and the media has given more attention to rape as a weapon of war and some important steps have been taken. In November 1998 a crucial landmark was set when the prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for the first time in history defined rape as a crime under international law stating that rape on its own can be a crime against humanity.[71] The verdict recognises the cruelty and the physical and psychological damage rape leaves and that it should not be reduced to something connected with women's honour. The sentence in ICTR was part of a shift in international law regarding women's rights in war and conflict. With the Rome statute from 1998 establishing the permanent International Criminal Court, rape, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilisation can be labelled as crimes against humanity and war crimes.

But there is a long way to go for women to have access to and gain justice and for the violence to stop. As mentioned earlier rape and sexual violence is an integrated part of conflicts. It is used as a strategic weapon of war to punish, inflict fear, to eradicate the future of the enemy and to humiliate men by sending a message that they cannot protect "their" women. After being raped women face new hardships, not just from the direct physical injuries but also from the psychological impact which increases by the risk of being infected by HIV/AIDS or having an unwanted pregnancy. The stigma attached to rape threatens women who speak out about the abuses to be abandoned by their husbands, ostracised by the community, left with no economic assets or income and putting her at risk of further human rights violations and deteriorated health.

First of all, victims of gender-based violence need medical treatment. But to have access to healthcare, and to feel entitled to use these facilities, is nothing that every woman takes for granted. The woman herself does not or cannot always prioritise seeking medical help for treating problems caused by the violence she has been exposed to. As sexual and reproductive rights are difficult to talk about and since gender-based violence is often connected with stigma, the feeling of shame might stop her. This requires

"HIV/AIDS threatens social and economic progress, worsening trends that we know contribute strongly to the potential for violent conflict and humanitarian catastrophe."

INTERNATIONAL CRISES GROUP

opportunities for the women to visit a gynaecologist without feeling stigmatised. The international community along with national governments need to declare women's health a priority and that woman need to have their sexual and reproductive rights secured.

Women's organisations and international organisations in conflict areas have found ways to help women receive healthcare. One way is to arrange workshops where health issues are discussed and another way is to arrange group visits to a gynaecologist to make sure that the women feel comfortable by going there.

In Abkhazia, Georgia, it is taboo to talk about women's bodies and sexuality. Domestic violence is widespread and many women live with traumas from the armed conflict. The lack of healthcare mirrors the low status of women in the Abkhazian society. Women know very little about their rights and their bodies. The Avangardi organisation saw this urgent need and opened a women's health clinic where women can get free information and visit the gynaecologists. The clinic has become an important meeting point for women where many for the first time began to express their concerns and dreams. Increasingly more women are coming to the clinic and it has become evident that sexualised violence by husbands is a big problem. Avangardi has also started to visit schools to educate teenagers about their bodies, sexuality and contraception. Many girls are married young before finishing school and have little chance of earning an income of their own. To strengthen girls and inform them about their rights and choices Avangardi also began to communicate women's rights in general.

Psycho-social support

"The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatises; the group bear witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanises the victim; the group restores her humanity" [72]

JUDITH L HERMAN

During, and especially in the aftermath of war, the healing process of the people that have lived through the war needs to be a priority. For the people to be able to move forward and think of the future, to start rebuilding society, there is a need to deal with what happened during the conflict. Reconciliation and open discussion is vital for the society not to get into armed conflict once again.

For women victims of gender-based violence during the conflict, including rape, it is important to find ways to offer an atmosphere where they can feel safe and talk about what they have gone through. As said by Nino Makhasvili, Georgian Center for Psycho Social and medical Rehabilitaion of Torture Victims: *The secrecy is poisonous. We must create an environment where victims of sexualised violence can speak more freely about their trauma – otherwise, it can never heal.*[73] When the physical health problems have been addressed, time must also be given for the women to overcome the trauma and continue with their lives. As Nino Makhashvili points out, silence is not a real option if women are to overcome the trauma and be able to actively partake in their society again.

Many women's organisations create women's centres, safe spaces, where women can meet and talk about their experiences during the conflict and also about hardships in their daily life. These spaces help women feel safe and comfortable and where they dare to talk about difficult matters. Many times the centres are the only place where women get to meet other women, a legitimate place for them to go to, leaving their daily duties behind for a while. Once there, women can, when they are ready for it, start dealing with traumas and talk about what they have survived during the war. This is sometimes done in support groups led by professionals or women who have received special training. These women's centres become a secure haven in a non-secure environment.

Being able to share grief and problems with others has a healing effect and is a crucial part of the reconciliation process of war and armed conflict. Talking face-to-face also reduces the stereotype and destructive image of the 'other', the 'enemy', transforming feelings of aggression and fear into more constructive action. To be able to first speak of the feelings of hate, and then find ways out of the hatred turns the insights into a tool to prevent conflicts that we have not yet seen the full potential of from re-emerging.

Many good things derive from safe meeting spaces. Iman, a woman who has worked in a project with psycho-social support groups in Bethlehem says *As soon as women feel comfortable in a group more or less all of them give voice to feminist ideas and thoughts about women's rights. That is my experience from ten years as a social worker. It is the same everywhere, in Hebron, Ramallah, Jerusalem and in the villages. Everywhere women are frustrated since old traditions are holding us back. Now the discussion on women's rights is emerging in our talking group in Al Khader as well.*[74]

"The secrecy is poisonous. We must create an environment where victims of sexualised violence can speak more freely about their trauma – otherwise, it can never heal."

NINO MAKHASHVILI
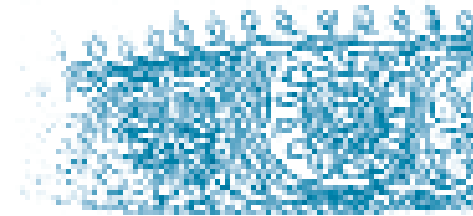
"As soon as women feel comfortable in a group more or less all of them give voice to feminist ideas and thoughts about women's rights."

IMAN, WOMEN STUDIES CENTER

PALESTINE, LIVING IS THE MEANING OF LIFE

Fourteen women came regularly to the group at the town hall in Nablus, on the Palestinian West Bank. Together they drew up rules for the group and committed to follow them. They were of different ages and backgrounds but had one thing in common – they had all suffered from painful loss or trauma due to the political violence.

– All our women have been exposed to serious traumas, which they are trying to handle. At the same time they live in constant fear for their own and their families lives, says Rawda Bassir, one of the social workers who worked with the psycho-social support group.

Rawda Bassir explains that the aim of this kind of group therapy is to let feelings out in the open in safe surroundings. If this is done early on in the process there are good chances that traumas can be healed. To be seen and listened to, being taken seriously is crucial for someone who has been exposed to serious threats. To see that it is not something wrong with you but rather that the world around you is mad and inhumane, can change lives and give hope for the future.

The support groups lasted for three months. All women who participated were positive about the experience. Despite having suffered severe losses they all managed to grow and get on with life thanks to the support from the group. This happened even though the conflict and their difficult life conditions persisted.

One woman in the group, Maysoun, lost her husband on the way to the hospital to give birth. On the way to the hospital they had to pass a checkpoint on the road. It was a tense situation; Maysoun had to show her stomach to prove that she was pregnant. Finally they were let through but after fifty meters gunshots hit the car and killed her husband. When Maysoun first came to the support group she was constantly thinking about revenge. After three months participation in the talking group this changed.

– I was full of hate and wanted to kill the soldiers that had killed my husband. Now I've stopped thinking like that. But I still want to see those Israeli soldiers charged in court for what they did.

Quoted from "Att leva är meningen med livet. Om samtalsgruppens läkande kraft – kvinnor på Västbanken berättar." ("Living is the Meaning of Life. The Healing Effect of the Discussion Group – women on the West Bank tell their story.") The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation report written by Birgitta Albons, 2004 (only available in Swedish). The support group was run by The Women's Studies Centre (WSC), a centre that conducts research into the needs and living conditions of Palestinian women. In a larger research project, the WSC initiated and ran support groups for women in Nabulus, Betlehem and Jenin.

Conclusions

"Dependency and subordination are never in the best interest of the protected for they rule out real participation, denying agency and silencing those voices that might have something different to propose. Those who defend and those who are defended can never have the same position in the societal order, that's the logic of it"[75]
JOAN W SCOTT

Women need to be seen as actors in their own right, to be able to take decisions regarding their own lives and to be equal to men in decisions taken regarding society. This is the first and foremost condition for women to feel and be safe. At the same time, we know that obstacles and threats to women's security deprive women of being actors.

With this report we aim to open up for new thoughts on the meaning of security and the kind of safety women, men, girls and boys, can demand. We want to inspire new ideas, new information being collected, and new analyses into what needs to be done and vice versa, foremost by international actors, to achieve as much security as possible in conflict and post conflict regions.

Many times lack of adequate information is the problem in meeting the threats and obstacles facing security. The lack of information on, for instance, threats to women in a refugee camp, stems from lack of interest and insight in the importance of gathering that information. The information deficit leads to the problem not being prioritised and no resources set aside to deal with it. The lack of information and interest leads to no action taken to provide security. Women are forced to live in non-security. If women were perceived as actors, of vital importance for the work of international agencies, this would counteract the security deficit.

When efforts are made to provide security to women, the measures taken are not targeted towards the threats but towards the potential victims. If for instance incidents of young women being sexually abused on their way to school occur and rumours spread that all women and girls are in danger of sexual abuse walking on a particular road, the solution is to prevent women from exposing themselves to danger, that is – not leaving home and going to school. The solution becomes to limit women's human rights. The long-term solution must be to deal with the actual threats towards women's security. One part of this is to change the notion of men building

47

their manhood in imposing fear (to men) by sexually abusing women and girls. Of course there are no quick and easy solutions to getting to the roots with these kind of security threats but efforts have to be made to address them to be able to achieve sustainable peace and security, for women as well as men. And to achieve that, the position of women and girls in society needs to be strengthened.

As said by Maud Eduards, Professor in Political Science: *"…if men and women were equal and autonomous citizens who (in principle) had the right to defend themselves and their interests, would it be possible for men to humiliate other men by raping and hurting women?"*[76]

When women are deprived of their right to be actors on the premise of making them secure, the solution offered for their security is to stay at home. The irony with this is that the home many times is not a safe place for women. Neither the home nor society gets safer with women's freedom of movement limited. Another sad part of the international communities provision of security in conflict areas is the extra insecurity for women with gender based violence such as trafficking, rape and abuse being carried out by civil and military international staff.

In this report we have focused on four different angles of obstacles and threats to women's security. To deal with these threats, data disaggregated by sex is of vital importance. We have also touched upon another, overarching, hindrance to women's security and full and equal participation – the right to own property, earn and inherit money.

Women in conflict areas where the international community is present need to have access to valid information from the international community in order to make themselves as secure as possible. The inequalities in women's access to information compared with men's can and has to be addressed with knowledge on how to reach women.

It shall never be possible to compromise respect for human rights. This means that there is never a viable excuse for gender-based violence or for excluding women from decision-making processes to be found in "respecting" a culture, religion or tradition. Ask women themselves whether they want to participate and give information or not. Women's human rights has to, in all international missions and work, carry the same weight as men's. They shall never be forgotten or bargained with.

Many times the existence of arms, especially small arms, in a society creates more threats to life and limb than providing security. This is especially true for women. When a conflict is over, small arms in the community are still in use against women in their own homes. Disarmament has to be paired with measures addressing gender-based violence like domestic violence and long-term development addressing the victims of gender-based violence.

The right to your own body is the core condition for each and every woman to be able to take an active part in her society. But having this right respected also safeguards the life of each woman. Women will never be equal to men when deprived of their sexual and reproductive rights.

Women are exposed to threats and violence in conflicts and war that men are not. This has to do with that mentioned above regarding for instance the right to access information and to be free from gender-based violence. The facts are there regarding gender-based violence in conflicts, stating that this is not an individual problem for single women and that it has an impact on society as a whole. It is still not regarded as a security issue and thus not a big enough threat to take measures against. These security threats targeted at women, manifesting in times of war and conflict, can and have to be addressed. Women should be as secure as men. When the conflict ends it has to end for women as well as for men.

For women's rights to be respected and promoted, and for women's security to be safeguarded, women's activists and organisations need to be able to work. Sadly this is not always the case because women activists are often neglected by the international community. The invisibility of women activists springs from the perception of women as passive victims in armed conflicts.

A good start for the international community to be able to see and take into account the threats towards women's security is to start perceiving women as actors. In the mandates for peacekeeping missions, in peace accords etc., women have to be mentioned as actors. A description of women's situation as victims in the conflict is not enough. This hides all the work that women do and can do to address the conflict and build democracy. Many times, women have the solutions to their own security and solutions on security for the rest of the society as well. They have to have the possibility to express them. When women are perceived solely as victims they are looked upon as objects, passive waiting to be provided for instead of acting themselves. It is important that in recognising all the security threats to women their power to act for themselves is not taken away. Post conflict periods can be a momentum for change regarding women's rights in a society. When new laws and justice systems are built, the international community can be there to support the women's activists in upgrading and upholding women's rights.

Requirements
for women's security

FOR UN SECURITY Council resolution 1325 to bear meaning and have the possibility of being implemented and removing security threats and obstacles against women, the International Community must begin to see womeen as actors and women activists as important participants in all parts of the peace process.

To make women visible actors
the international community must:

- ensure freedom of movement for women and girls
- ensure women's access to property and inheritance rights
- ensure access to information [regarding security] to women
- ensure women and women's groups have the possibility of providing international and national actors with information
- see women as actors and acknowledge the work and knowledge of women's activists
- invite women's activists to meetings and negotiations with a decision-making mandate
- start using the capacity and knowledge of women and women's activists
- ensure sexual and reproductive health care and sexual and reproductive rights
- punish gender-based crimes, crimes committed by both combatants and international actors such as peacekeepers. If these crimes are not investigated and put to justice gender-based violence risks being accepted in peacetime as well.
- ensure psychosocial support to diminish hate and make ground for reconciliation
- stop the culture of silence, support victims of sexualised violence in being accepted by their communities and by society at large, these crimes need to be talked about and condemned

Check list for the International Community. Remember:

- to include a gender perspective in all issues regarding security
- to include a gender perspective in all assessments, fact finding and evaluations
- to always collect and use data disaggregated by sex
- to never bargain with the human rights of women and girls
- to never limit the freedom of movement of women and girls in the name of security
- that when accepting gender-biased circumstances as facts that cannot be changed this contributes to the isolation of women in these cultures and creates two levels of repression: from the culture itself and from the international community. The isolation can become a security threat to women, especially women activists
- use a gender perspective in the recruitment processes of international actors to ensure the ability to interact with the local population in a respectful manner
- many times women have the solution to their own security and solutions regarding security for the rest of their society as well
- to state the importance of women's equal participation. There should be a firm demand for women's participation in peace negotiations and decision-making, as stated in United Nations Security Council *Resolution 1325*

Bibliography

Albons, Birgitta. *Att leva är meningen med livet. Om samtalsgruppens läkande kraft – kvinnor på Västbanken berättar.* Stockholm: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2004.

Ahman, Elisabeth and Shah, Iqbal. *Unsafe Abortion. Global and regional estimates of the incidence of unsafe abortion and associated mortality in 2000.* Fourth edition. Geneva: WHO, 2000.

Ananya Mukherjee, Reed. *Human Security & Human Development: Viewing the Paradigms "from below".* Department of Political Science, York University, 2002.

Basham, Patrick. *Can Iraq Be Democratic?* Policy Analysis no. 505. Washington: Cato Institute, 2004.

Barry, Jane. *Rising up in Response. Women's rights activism in Conflict.* Canada : Urgent Action Fund, 2005.

Bouta, Tsjeard. *Gender and Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration, Building Blocks for Dutch Policy.* Conflict Research Unit, Netherlands Institute of International relations "Clingendael", 2005.

Colombia: Scarred bodies, hidden crimes, sexual violence against women in the armed conflict. AMR 23/040/2004, 13/10 2004. Amnesty International, 2004.

Eduards, Maud. *Våld utan gränser – om krig och hotad manlighet.* Svanström, Yvonne, Östberg, Kjell (ed), Än män då? Kön och feminism i Sverige under 150 år. Smedjebacken: Atlas, 2004.

Ertürk, Yakin. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences.* United Nations, 2003.

Galtung, Johan. *Violence, Peace and Peace Research.* Journal of Peace Research 6. London: Sage Publications, 1969.

Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery, from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.* London: Harper Collins Publisher, 1992.

Inclusive Security Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action, Conflict Prevention. Chapter 3. London: International Alert and Women Waging Peace, 2004.

Jacobson, Agnetha Söderberg. *Rethink! A handbook for sustainable peace.* Stockholm: the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2004.

Johnsson-Latham, Gerd. *Power and Privileges: Gender Discrimination and Poverty.* Stockholm: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden, 2004.

Lyth, Anette. *Getting it Right.* Stockholm: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2001.

Mahnaz, Afkhami. *Gender Apartheid, Cultural Relativism and Women's Human Rights in Muslim Societies.* Women Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2003.

Making violence against women count: Facts and figures. Amnesty International News Service No: 051, 5 March 2004.

Muthein, Bernedette. *Human security through a gendered lens.* New Routes, A Journal of Peace Research and Action, volume 6, number 3, special issue Targeting Women, Life & Peace Institute, 2001.

Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women – A framework of model provision. Report of the Expert Group Meeting Ottawa, Canada, 10–13 November 2003.

Peace needs Women and Women need justice. Report of the conference on Gender Justice in Post Conflict situations, organised by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC), 15–17 September 2004, New York City.

Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4–15 September 1995, United Nations 1996.

Renton, Daniel. *Child Trafficking in Albania.* United Kingdom: Save the Children UK, 2001.

Report on Violence and Health. The World Health Organization, 2002.

Security With a Human Face, A proposal to create a Human Security Report. Harvard University Programme on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research.

Security with a human face. National Human Development Report. United Nations Development Programme, 2004.

The Crushing Burden of Rape – Sexual Violence in Darfur. A briefing paper by Médecins Sans Frontières, International Women's day 2005.

The impact of guns on women's lives. Oxford: Amnesty International, 2005.

The World Health Report 2005 – Make every mother and child count. The World Health Organisation, 2005.

Zeitlin, June and Mpoumou, Doris, Women's Environment & Development Organization,WEDO. *No human security without gender equality.* Social Watch, The Big Issues: Edition 2004.

Wareham, Rachel. *No Safe Place: An assessment on Violence against Women in Kosovo.* United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2000.

Women Peace and Security. S/2004/814. Report of the Secretary General Kofi Annan, United Nations, October 2004.

Öhman, Linda. *Voices from the Field.* Stockholm: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2003.

Notes

1. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Sipri, Yearbook, world military spending was 693 billion dollars in 1998, and had increased to 879 billion dollars by 2003.

2. www.hdr.undp.org/reports/global/ 1994

3. Muthein, Bernedette. *New Routes, A Journal of Peace Research and Action*, volume 6, number 3/2001, special issue Targeting Women, Human security through a gendered lens, Life & Peace Institute, 2001.

4. *Security With a Human Face, A proposal to create a Human Security Report*, Harvard University Programme on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research.

5. Ertürk, Yakin. *Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences*, United Nations, 2003.

6. Manaz,Afkhami. Former Minister of Women's Affairs in the Iranian government, president Sisterhood is Global Institute New York. Speech at the seminar Culture in Sustainable Development: Investing in Cultural and Natural Endowments, World Bank Group, September 1998.

7. Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4–15 September 1995, United Nations, 1996.

8. Ananya Mukherjee, Reed. *Human Security & Human Development: Viewing the Paradigms "from below"*, Department of Political Science, York University, 2002.

9. *Making violence against women count: Facts and figures.* Amnesty International News Service No: 051, 5th March 2004.

10. Zeitlin, June and Mpoumou, Doris, Women's Environment & Development Organization,WEDO. *No human security without gender equality*. Social Watch, The Big Issues: Edition 2004, p. 31.

11. Wareham, Rachel. *No Safe Place: An assessment on Violence against Women in Kosovo*. UNIFEM, 2000, p. 37.

12. *Inclusive Security Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action.* Chapter 3. London: International Alert and Women Waging Peace, 2004, p.7.

13. Ivarsson, Sophia, PhD, Swedish National Defence College. Interview, February 2005.

14. Basham, Patrick. *Can Iraq Be Democratic?* Policy Analysis no. 505. Washington: Cato Institute, 2004.

15. Galtung, Johan. *Violence, Peace and Peace Research*. Journal of Peace Research 6. London: Sage Publications, 1969.

16. Johnsson-Latham, Gerd. *Power and Privileges: Gender Discrimination and Poverty*. Stockholm: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden, 2004, p. 26.

17. Ibid., p. 22.

18. *Gender and food security.* Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. http://www.fao.org/gender/ en/agri-e.htm

19. *Algeria:Women left unprotected from violence and discrimination.* Amnesty International, 10 januari 2005. http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ ENGMDE280012005

20. *Peace needs Women and Women need justice*. Report of the conference on Gender Justice in Post Conflict situations, organised by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC), New York City, 15–17 September 2004.

21. Appelbaum, Novella Jafarova. Baku, Azerbaijan, February 2005.

22. Robinson, Mary, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Presentation at Memorial Seminar for Anna Lindh, Stockholm, 11 September 2004.

23. Barry, Jane. *Rising up in Response. Women's rights activism in Conflict*. Canada : Urgent Action Fund, 2005, p. 6.

24. Kovacevic, Dubravka at the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation seminar, 14 October 2004.

25. *Women Peace and Security*. S/2004/814. Report of the Secretary General Kofi Annan, United Nations, October 2004.

26. *Reaction and revolt against trafficking in women and girls*. Stockholm: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2002.

27. Ibid.

28. Renton, Daniel. *Child Trafficking in Albania*. United Kingdom: Save the Children UK, 2001.

29. *The Crushing Burden of Rape – Sexual Violence in Darfur*. Médecins Sans Frontières, A briefing paper on International Women's day 2005. See also Persecution, Intimidation and Failure of Assistance in Darfur. www.msf.org

30. Barry, Jane. p.75.

31. *Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women – A framework of model provision*. Report of the Expert Group Meeting in Ottawa, Canada 10–13 November 2003, p. 2. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw

32. Gamakharia, Alla at The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation seminar, 14 October 2004.

33. *Security with a human face*. National Human Development Report. United Nations Development Programme, 2004.

34. Johnsson-Latham, Gerd.

35. Lyth, Anette. *Getting it Right*. Stockholm: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2001, p.11, and Austrian Journal of Development, 2004.

36. Ibid.

37. Rogova, Igballe. *How the Experience of Kosova Women can be implemented in other Crisis Regions around the World*. Speech at conference organised by Women Without Borders, 13 November, 2003.

38. Mahnaz, Afkhami. Speech at the seminar Culture in Sustainable Development: Investing in Cultural and Natural Endowments, World Bank Group, September 1998.

39. Mahnaz, Afkhami. *Gender Apartheid, Cultural Relativism and Women's Human Rights in Muslim Societies*. Women Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2003.

40. Platform for Action, paragraph 9.

41. Malekar, Molly, Director of the Israeli women's organisation Bat Shalom, at the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation seminar, 14 October 2004.

42. Bouta, Tsjeard. *Gender and Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration, Building Blocks for Dutch Policy*. Conflict Research Unit, Netherlands Institute of International relations "Clingendael", 2005, p. 5.

43. International Alert and Women Waging Peace, chapter 3, p.3.

44. http://www.warwomenpeace.org/issues/ddr/ddr.htm

45. Hazely, Florella. Interview, March 2005.

46. Ibid.

47. *The impact of guns on women's lives*. Oxford: Amnesty International, 2005, p.39.

48. Öhman, Linda (ed). *Voices from the Field*. Stockholm: the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2004, p. 17.

49. Bruthus, Lois Chee Chee, Director of the Liberian organisation OCAM, at the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation seminar, 14 October 2004.

50. International Alert and Women Waging Peace, chapter 3, p. 5.

51. *Report on Violence and Health*. The World Health Organization, 2002.

52. Amneus, Diana. Speech at Forum for Human Rights, Stockholm, 15–16 November 2004.

53. International Alert and Women Waging Peace, chapter 3, p. 11.

54. Ibid., p.14.

55. Myrtenbaum, Dana, Isha L'Isha Haifa Feminist Centre. Speech at the Beijing +10 Review in New York, 28 February – 11 March 2005.

56. Ibid.

57. International Alert and Women Waging Peace, chapter 3, p.6.

58. Ibid., p. 20.

59. Ertürk, Yakin. Speech at the OSCE the seminar Violence against women in the 21st Century, Paris, April 2005.

60. Ahman, Elisabeth and Shah, Iqbal. *Unsafe Abortion. Global and regional estimates of the incidence of unsafe abortion and associated mortality in 2000*. Geneva : World Health Organisation, fourth edition, 2000. http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/unsafe_abortion_estimates_04/estimates.pdf

61. *The World Health Report 2005 – Make every mother and child count*. World Health Organisation, 2005.

62. *Colombia: Scarred bodies, hidden crimes, sexual violence against women in the armed conflict*. AMR 23/040/2004, 13/10 2004. Amnesty International, 2004.

63. *Democratic Republic of the Congo: Mass Rape – Time for Remedies*. AFR 62/018/2004, 26/10 2004. Amnesty International, 2004.

64. Swedish Committee for Afghanistan website: www.sak.se/arkiv/artiklar/press/2005/pressmed8mars05

65. Johnson-Latham, Gerd. p. 47.

66. Ibid.

67. Centre for reproductive rights http://www.crlp.org/pub_fac_ggrbush.html

68. UN Security Council Resolution 1308, United Nations, 17 July 2000.

69. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, cited on www.unaids.org

70. http://www.unaids.org/Unaids/EN/In+focus/HIV_AIDS_security+and+humanitarian+response/HIV_AIDS+and+security.asp

71. The prosecutor versus Jean-Paul Akayesu, case no ICTR-96-4-T. paragraph 597.

72. Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery, from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. London: Harper Collins Publisher, 1992.

73. Makhashvili, Nino. Georgian centre for psycho-social and medical rehabilitation of torture victims, Tbilisi, Georgia. Öhman, Linda. *Voices From the Field*. Stockholm: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2004, p. 26.

74. Albons, Birgitta. *Att leva är meningen med livet. Om samtalsgruppens läkande kraft – kvinnor på Västbanken berättar*. Stockholm: the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2004. p. 42.

75. Scott, Joan. *Feminist Reverberations*, Differences no.3, 2002. Quoted from: Eduards, Maud. *Våld utan gränser – om krig och hotad manlighet*. Svanström, Yvonne, Östberg, Kjell (ed). Än män då? Kön och feminism i Sverige under 150 år. Smedjebacken: Atlas, 2004.

76. Eduards, Maud. *Våld utan gränser – om krig och hotad manlighet*. Svanström, Yvonne, Östberg, Kjell (ed). Än män då? Kön och feminism i Sverige under 150 år. Smedjebacken: Atlas, 2004. p. 263.

Appendix

Dear Ambassador,

In the spring of 2004 the Swedish Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation published Re-think! – a handbook for sustainable peace. This handbook is our answer to all the questions we receive on how the international community should work to give women access to peace negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding processes. This handbook was launched at the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in the UN in March 2004, and is available on our website: http://www.iktk.se/english/publications/thematic_reports/thematic_reports.html.

In order to generate concrete recommendations for implementing the women, peace and security agenda, on 14 October 2004 the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation held a seminar on women's role in peace building and rebuilding of conflict struck countries. Speakers at the seminar were experts from five different conflict areas: Georgia, Liberia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Israel/Palestine as well as from the UN system and the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation. Participants were practitioners and scholars from NGOs, universities, government institutions and authorities.

Implementing resolution 1325 will require further leadership and concrete directives from the Security Council, and the recommendations generated at our conference are submitted as a contribution towards your thinking and action.

In his 2004 report, the Secretary-General recommended that the Council consider Women, Peace and Security on an annual basis, which in your usual practice will require another resolution containing a date for reports to be submitted by the Secretary-General. To advance the agenda sparked by the Council on Children and Armed Conflict, no less than five resolutions have been passed, with each of these serving to demonstrate the Council's commitment in deepening and broadening the Council's range of activities, prompting action from other parts of the UN system, including the International Financial Institutions. The NGO community, along with governments and academic institutions that have enthusiastically amplified and praised the first step the Council took 4 years ago expect no less commitment and action on moving resolution 1325 to the next stage.

Sincerely

Kerstin Grebäck
President, Kvinna till Kvinna

Recommendations on the Implementation of resolution 1325

1. **Mechanisms with sufficient seniority and authority are needed to monitor and coordinate implementation of resolution 1325.** As has been the case with other thematic issues, the Security Council should establish an expert level working group on Women, Peace and Security, comprised of all Council members and led by a Member State designated as coordinator and focal point on Women, Peace and Security, with a mandate to explore ways and means of routinely operationalizing resolution 1325, and subsequent resolutions, in the work of the Security Council. This expert level working group should ensure gender issues are contained in the mandates and reports of all peace operations, and receive regular reports from the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, the senior management group on peace and security issues within the UN, which should be designated as the appropriate authority within the UN system to oversee a coordinated system-wide implementation plan, which should be requested by the Council. Rather than a decision-making body, the working level Task Force on Women, Peace and Security is a coordination and communications mechanism, which should be mandated by the ECPS to undertake specific tasks, in particular to coordinate reporting to the ECPS from the UN's Funds, Agencies and Departments on progress made on ways and means, obstacles and achievements in implementation.

2. **It is necessary to repeat the request in resolution 1325 that Member States nominate women candidates for senior international positions.** The Security Council should express dissatisfaction in the lack of progress made on the request for more women to be nominated and appointed as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) by the Secretary-General. The Security Council should again call strongly on Member States to nominate women so that the UN not only sets standards for gender equality but is also a role model for their realization.

3. **Special Representatives of the Secretary-General require explicit guidance and training in order to play their role in implementing resolution 1325.** All SRSGs require explicit instructions from the Security Council and training modules and standards from the UN to better incorporate 1325 and gender equality into their work of brokering and implementing peace negotiations and processes, including those

processes related to writing of constitutions and legislation which are often part of the peace process. SRSGs should be mandated by the Security Council to demand that all peace and reconciliation process and provisions include women and gender issues. SRSGs should be required to meet regularly with representatives of civil society, including women's organisations to become better informed of local conditions, and to provide an ongoing mechanism for civil society support in distributing and multiplying information about the Peace Operations goals, mandate and achievements.

4. **Regular quality information on Women, Peace and Security is needed for the Security Council to implement resolution 1325.** The Security Council's "willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peace-keeping operations" has been proven through inclusion of 1325 in some mandates and assessment missions since 2000, which should be applauded and become regular future practice. The Council should request more routine inclusion of information on women, peace and security in reports of the Secretary-General, which to date have been deficient in this regard. Such reporting should include: information on the impact of the conflict and peace operation on women, including women outside main centres; the number and ranking of women personnel in each peace mission; and the programmes undertaken by the mission to address gender issues. Such information gathering will require specialized expertise and the Security Council should include provisions for this in peace mission concept of operations, and request that the General Assembly Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) provide additional information officers for the Department for Political Affairs to improve the quality and quantity of gender disaggregated information required by the Council for timely and targeted action.

5. **Repeated emphasis is needed from the Security Council on strict adherence to the Code of Conduct, which will encourage efforts by Member States to adequately train their personnel.** The Security Council should call for all personnel of Peace Operations – military and civilian – to be fully informed and trained on the Code of Conduct. While disciplinary and enforcement action is not in the purview of the UN, but rather of Member States, nonetheless a clear chain of reporting and follow-up of violations of the UN Code of Conduct should be established and maintained by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

6. **Efforts to realize the Security Council's recommendation in 1325 on DDR will require that the traditional definition of a "combatant" be abandoned.** Mandates for DDR, and the work of planners and implementers should recognize the essential roles played also by women and children in contemporary armed groups. Even those associated with armed forces — in both voluntary and forced capacities — such as cooks, porters, sexual slaves and spies, need to be taken into the programmes not only because they have a right and a need, but also because, like their traditional "combatant" counterparts, they have acquired military skills and practices that endanger ongoing peace. DDR planners should always consult local NGOs in the planning of DDR programmes from the outset to avoid mistakes such as miscalculation of the number of combatants, or training former fighters in skills that have no local application or market.

7. **It has been proven through numerous failed DDR programmes that cash in exchange for weapons does not work.** To avoid the misuse of funds or the creation of a new incentive to acquire and profit from arms, and to encourage long-term investment in the health and wellbeing of the former fighters and the communities into which they will reintegrate, the Security Council should encourage the exchange weapons for development, education or training extended over a longer period of time, and should instruct much closer collaboration between DDR efforts and ongoing development programmes which are too often disconnected, and threaten to undo the DD achievements at the R stage.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation addresses the needs of women

in areas affected by war and armed conflict. The Kvinna till Kvinna

Foundation cooperates with women's organisations in the Middle East,

South Caucasus and the Western Balkans.