

**Promoting Women's  
Participation in Conflict  
and  
Post-Conflict Societies**

**How Women Worldwide are Making and  
Building Peace**

**Kavitha Suthanthiraraj and Cristina Ayo**

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**Global Action to Prevent War  
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ANV</b>	Active non-violence
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AWAW</b>	Association of War Affected Women
<b>BWA</b>	Baghdad Women's Association
<b>CAFI</b>	Control Arms Foundation of India
<b>CCP</b>	Concerned Citizens for Peace
<b>CDA</b>	Community Development Association
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CLJ</b>	Constitutional Loya Jirga
<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Sudan)
<b>CVICT</b>	Center for Victims of Torture
<b>DCAF</b>	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
<b>DDR</b>	Demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration
<b>DPA</b>	Darfur Peace Agreement
<b>DPA</b>	Department of Political Affairs (UN)
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>EDRP</b>	Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project
<b>FPU</b>	Formed Police Unit
<b>FRSC</b>	Forum Regional Security Committee
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GEST</b>	Gender Expert Support Team
<b>GoSS</b>	Government of South Sudan
<b>GRP</b>	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
<b>HD Centre</b>	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

<b>IANSA</b>	International Action Network on Small Arms
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>ICTR</b>	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
<b>ICTY</b>	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
<b>IDDRS</b>	United Nations International Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>IID</b>	Initiatives for International Dialogue
<b>INGO</b>	International Non Governmental Organization
<b>IRDSO</b>	Integrated Rural Development Service Organization
<b>KP</b>	Kosovo Police
<b>KPTJ</b>	Kenyan for Peace Truth Justice
<b>LEAP</b>	Learning for Equality, Access and Peace
<b>LPC's</b>	Local Peace Committees
<b>LTTE</b>	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
<b>MCW</b>	Mindanao Commission on Women
<b>MDRP</b>	Multi-national Demobilization and Reintegration Program
<b>M4P</b>	Mothers for Peace
<b>MILF</b>	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
<b>MOWA</b>	Ministry of Women's Affairs
<b>MWGSN</b>	Manipuri Women Gun Survivors' Network
<b>NCSC</b>	National Civil Society Congress
<b>NDI</b>	National Democratic Institute

<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NGOWG</b>	NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
<b>NEN</b>	North East Network
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>PC</b>	Provincial Council
<b>PIFS</b>	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
<b>PLA</b>	People's Liberation Army (Nepal)
<b>PNDDR</b>	Programme National de Desarmement, Demobilization et Reintegration
<b>PPC</b>	Pearson Peacekeeping Centre
<b>PRIO</b>	Peace Research Institute Oslo
<b>PROSECs &amp; DISECs</b>	Provisional and District Security Committees
<b>QPI</b>	Queens for Peace Initiative
<b>RSLAF</b>	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
<b>RWLSEE</b>	Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe
<b>SADC</b>	The Southern African Development Community
<b>SALW</b>	Small arms and light weapons
<b>SC</b>	Security Council
<b>SCR 1325</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SGI</b>	Subcommittee on Gender Issues
<b>SG</b>	Secretary-general
<b>SSPS</b>	South Sudan Police Service
<b>SSR</b>	Security sector reform
<b>SuWEP</b>	Sudanese Empowerment in Peace

<b>TPO</b>	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
<b>UCOBAC</b>	Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	The United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UN SCR 1325</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
<b>WAA Cameroon</b>	Women in Alternative Action
<b>WAFDI</b>	Women's Alliance for Democratic Iraq
<b>WANEP</b>	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
<b>WAPPDCA</b>	Women's Alliance for Peace, Power, Democracy and Constituent Assembly
<b>WLB</b>	Women's League Burma
<b>WIPNET</b>	The Women in Peacebuilding Program
<b>WIPSEN-Africa</b>	Women Peace and Security Network Africa
<b>WPS CC</b>	Women, Peace and Security Fiji Coordinating Committee on 1325
<b>WPS Fiji</b>	Women, Peace and Security Fiji



## Definitions of Key Terms

**Women's Participation:** As defined by Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) this refers to the “role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and...their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.”

**Gender Mainstreaming:** As defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) this refers to “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.”

**Peace Processes:** As defined in Security Council Resolution 1889 and the Women, Peace and Security study submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), peace processes include “...preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace-building... activities include, inter alia, conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconciliation, reconstruction of infrastructure and the provision of humanitarian aid.”

**Peacemaking:** As defined in the UN Peacekeeping Capstone Doctrine (2008) peacemaking “includes measures to address conflicts in progress and usually involves diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement. Peacemakers may be envoys, governments, groups of states, regional organizations or the United Nations. Peacemaking efforts may be undertaken by unofficial and non-governmental groups, or by a prominent personality working independently.”

**Peacebuilding:** As defined in the UN Peacekeeping Capstone Doctrine (2008) peacebuilding “involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels of conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.” This report narrows the lens to early post conflict peacebuilding which is defined in the Secretary-General’s report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict (2009) as: “seizing the window of opportunity in the immediate aftermath of conflict [including]...support to basic safety and security, including mine action, protection of civilians, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, strengthening the rule of law and initiation of security sector reform. [And] support to political processes, including electoral processes, promoting inclusive dialogue and reconciliation, and developing conflict-management capacity at national and subnational levels.”

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## Foreword

This volume, the second in a projected three-part series, represents a large and growing global community's determination and passion for promoting women's full involvement in peace policies and processes. The three organizations that produced this volume – the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Global Action to Prevent War – join with other members of the Working Group and trailblazers worldwide to demand that women must be fully represented in all relevant policy decisions and practices across the peace process. With generous support from Open Society Institute, this volume attests to the fact that while peace remains a daunting challenge for the international community, it is a challenge that we will never address successfully as long as we continue to marginalize the talents, insights and passions of women working to keep or rebuild the peace in diverse communities across the globe.

The process of preparing this report for UN-based advocacy as the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 approaches has helped generate enthusiasm for creating numerous related events, including at the United Nations University in Tokyo and in New York through the NGO Working Group and other women's organizations. We are pleased that the preparation and launch of this report is doing its part to bring together women from diverse global regions who have devoted their lives to making more meaningful (and measurable) space for women at the peace policy and negotiating tables.

This report highlights compelling case studies depicting stories of courage and frustration, of skill and conviction. Stories that do

not have nearly the prominence they deserve as peace and security policies are being negotiated. Stories with life-changing implications that have yet to reach their proper level of policy impact on the practice of peace in diverse global regions.

As pleased as we are with the report, we know that we have barely scratched the surface of all the breakthroughs in women's participation, all the acts of courage and resolve, all the creative and successful efforts to keep the peace and rebuild communities. We hope that this volume will inspire new attention to the promotion of women's participation in all aspects of the peace process. At the same time, we hope that the narrative and analysis that follow will bring policymakers at the UN and other international organizations to acknowledge fully what some of us have known for some time: the participation of women is absolutely essential to maintaining peaceful communities and restoring communities to health once the peace fails.

*Dr Robert Zuber, Global Action to Prevent War*

## Executive Summary

It is widely recognized that women bear a heavy burden in conflict and post conflict societies, both directly through violence perpetrated against themselves and their families and as survivors attempting to reconstruct destroyed communities. There is also growing recognition of women as ‘agents of change’ skillfully reshaping and rebuilding communities affected by conflict. As this report attests, women worldwide – as government representatives, activists, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women’s networks and other concerned citizens -- have persevered through threats and conditions of violence to initiate transformative processes within conflict and post conflict societies. Undeterred by rebel groups, authoritarian regimes, cultural restrictions or resource limitations, and often at great personal risk, women continue the work of promoting peace and security in their communities.

The objective of this report is to explore community-based initiatives undertaken by women’s organizations and civil society seeking to promote women’s participation in peace processes. By communicating directly with women and organizations in the field, we have been able to highlight experiences and insights through the perspectives of the women participants themselves. The resulting narrative can assist in closing policy gaps in part by identifying, documenting and sharing organizational activity directed at implementing Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325.

The report focuses on women’s participation in two key components of the peace process: peacemaking and early post-conflict peacebuilding. Transition periods, especially post- conflict, can provide “windows of opportunity” not only to utilize the abundant



skills of women in peacemaking but also to promote gender equality and advance women's position in society.<sup>i</sup> This is illustrated through the report's case studies focused on the important programmatic work undertaken by diverse women's organizations worldwide.

This report makes clear that women continue to face significant barriers to full participation: a lack of inclusive leadership, gaps between government policy and action, a fragmentation of networks and messaging, a lack of resources and educational opportunities, and consuming familial obligations. However, from 'spitting sessions' to 'local to local' dialogues, women are formulating and sharing creative initiatives that can be used by other women worldwide seeking to overcome barriers to participation.

Many of the successful projects described here (and thousands of others that we could not include) are both small-scale and resource poor, requiring more systematic support from national and international agencies. Large-scale implementation of SCR 1325's participation obligations requires translating national and international frameworks into real resources and actionable policies at multiple levels of society. This will ensure 'real change' for women seeking more opportunities for leadership in conflict and post conflict societies.

At the end of this report is a detailed set of recommendations that we believe will enhance prospects for women's participation in all aspects of peace processes. Key recommendations include:

- Establish clear mandates within peace negotiations to include consultations with women's rights organizations and women leaders
- Provide technical and content related training and support for civil society groups on how to effectively engage within peace

processes and enhance technical and content- related expertise

- Establish networks, forums and summits enabling women to formulate a common agenda and overcome ethnic, political and social divisions
- Mandate increased women's representation in leadership and decision-making positions
- Improve educational opportunities for women and provide training in capacity building to increase the pool of women available to participate in the political sphere
- Increase financial and technical assistance to women's organizations at the local level to promote greater organizational participation in security areas such as security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), peacekeeping, and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control and disarmament
- Support the documentation and prosecution of women's rights violations, especially gender based violence.

These and other practical actions can significantly improve prospects for women to take their rightful place at the negotiating table and in all peace policies and processes. But it remains for the international system to provide the resources, encouragement, research and networks needed to help women claim strong and permanent roles at the policy and negotiating tables. We anticipate that this report will be one important tool to help the UN leverage new enthusiasm and commitments for women's participation in SCR 1325's 10th anniversary year and beyond.

## Introduction

*“Women’s participation in peace processes is not optional: it is a requirement”- Asha Hagi Elmi Amin on behalf of NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security, 2009*

Over the past decade, the importance of women’s engagement in peace processes has been recognized through numerous international institutions, resolutions and Member State commitments. In October 2000, the UN Security Council through SCR 1325 formally recognized the relationship between women, peace and security and the critical importance of women’s participation as reflected in leadership, empowerment and decision-making. The recognition of the “use of sexual violence... as a tactic of war”<sup>ii</sup> led the Council to adopt two other women, peace and security resolutions -- 1820 and 1888 -- which focus on gender based violence and emphasize the need for women’s participation in combating this violence. The Security Council further continued the participation theme in October 2009 with Resolution 1889, urging the international community:

*“to take further measures to improve women’s participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post conflict planning and peacebuilding, including by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at early stages of the recovery process, through promoting women’s leadership and capacity...supporting women’s organizations and countering negative societal attitudes about women’s capacity to participate equally.”<sup>iii</sup>*

Within these resolutions and continued dialogue, there is growing recognition that women in conflict situations must not be viewed

only as victims, but as powerful agents for peace and security in their communities. However, the lack of accountability structures for implementation of these international commitments continues to leave women with minimal support structures for their many important activities. Without women's meaningful participation in all aspects of the peace process, we will continue to see startlingly low numbers of women in leadership roles; women's rights will continue to be violated in conflict and post conflict situations; and impunity will continue to be the response to crimes of sexual violence.<sup>iv</sup>

It is important to analyze women's participation through the lens of peace processes. Women's exclusion and marginalization in peacemaking often equate to continued exclusion from peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts. As a result, not only do women's needs remain unmet, but the chances of successful and sustainable peacebuilding are vastly reduced. As highlighted in the UN Development Fund for Women's (UNIFEM, now part of UN Women) recent research: "The apparent failure to give due priority to women's recovery needs is compounded by the continuing marginalization of women from the peace table. [As] key decisions for post-conflict planning are taken during peace negotiations... it becomes more difficult to engage women in post-conflict planning if they have been excluded from peace talks that make crucial decisions about power-sharing, wealth-sharing, socioeconomic recovery and development."<sup>v</sup>

While there have been discussions at all policy levels on women, peace and security, there has been less policy recognition of women as agents of change at the national and community level. As this report makes clear, many organizations are engaged in community-

based initiatives relevant to SCR 1325. Women are taking leadership within these organizations, and are undertaking innovative campaigns and solutions to promote women's leadership and participation within their local communities. It is critical to note that many men also play a key role in integrating women's rights and interests into the peace process.<sup>vi</sup>

This report is based on interviews with women's organizations across the globe combined with desk-based research. By communicating directly with women and advocates in the field, our objective is to share experiences and insights through the perspectives of the women participants themselves. This report seeks to highlight the experiences, both fruitful and frustrated, of community-based initiatives promoting women's participation in peace processes. It reflects the challenges faced by these women; the work they have done to overcome barriers; and the consequences of women's inclusion and exclusion from peace processes. The report also looks to enrich regional and international policy discussions by showing options for innovative community-based action, and possible replicable strategies to promote greater participation by women. This report recognizes that women are in fact already engaging in community-level and national activities, and that this engagement needs to be better understood so that their work can be supported more effectively.

The report is divided into four key sections. Section one provides an overview of women's participation: key international policies, current realities and the role of civil society. Section two consolidates extensive interviews and desk-based research by thematic area: peacemaking, political participation, security and justice. Case studies are analyzed through the programmatic work developed by

organizations, including key obstacles and impacts (where data is available). Sections three and four extract the case study data to identify obstacles faced by organizations and local responses devised to overcome these barriers. These are incorporated into category specific and general recommendations targeting a wide range of actors.

## I. Women's Participation

*“Members of the Security Council ... affirm that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.” - Security Council President Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh), 8 March 2000*

Women's participation is not solely a matter of counting 'how many women' or merely filling quotas. It is about how substantively women are able to participate, how much they are able to access power structures and what difference such participation makes.<sup>vii</sup> It is also about which women are able to participate as “not every woman in politics develops gender consciousness.”<sup>viii</sup> Finally, it is about the spectrum of women involved. Participation is not only for the elite - it is also for the women directly affected by conflict, such as refugees, internally displaced persons and survivors of violence. Effective participation must ensure that these women's voices are integrated into all relevant decision-making processes.

While there has been increased dialogue and more inclusive policies on women's human rights and participation, and at times progress can be noted across a broad range of issues, there is still a vast gap between words and action. Meaningful engagement will not happen if governments and the international community only talk about the importance of women's empowerment. Rather, there must be a focus on creating an enabling environment for implementation to become a reality. This requires the UN, Member States and civil society to continue asking critical questions posed by Sarah Taylor (NGOWG) and others: Where are the women? Why are they not part of these processes? What can I do to change this?<sup>ix</sup>

## Why Involve Women?

It would seem the mere fact of being citizens of a particular society and the near universally accepted right to ‘equal participation and gender equality’ should be enough of an answer to this question. Furthermore, in the context of armed conflict and the resulting societal breakdown, women often suffer the direct and indirect consequences of violence. “Women often shoulder an additional burden due to traditional gender roles: their labour, strength and determination maintain their families and communities during war and throughout the long, slow process of rebuilding the peace.”<sup>x</sup> This disproportionate impact on the skills demanded of women in diverse communities should provide yet another compelling motivation for inclusion. As noted by Anderlini, given that women are “50% or more of the population, they are an important resource. Overlooking their capacities and commitment to peacebuilding is an indication of bad planning.”<sup>xi</sup>

Through numerous case studies this report seeks to explore why women’s participation is important and how civil society (predominantly at the local level) has been especially active in addressing the ‘participation gap’. Worldwide, women are highlighting the benefits of participation and also posing the question, ‘what are the consequences of not involving women?’

## International Policies for Participation

SCR 1325 continues to be a landmark resolution, providing the first legal and political international framework recognizing the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and the role of women in peacebuilding. The resolution provides both a broad ‘blueprint’ and concrete suggestions to help the international



community incorporate gender perspectives into the peace and security agenda.

First, the resolution characterizes women's roles beyond 'victims' to equal participants and decision-makers across peacemaking and peacebuilding issues. Second, through its 18 provisions, SCR 1325 provides a framework for participation in activities such as: negotiating peace agreements, planning humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and rebuilding war-torn communities. Third, the resolution places firm obligations and accountability upon all Member States, the Security Council, the Secretary General (SG) and non-state actors to protect women's human rights as well as to ensure a gender lens across all peace and security initiatives. Its home in the Security Council reinforces the historic nature of the resolution: mandating a gender perspective in all Security Council resolutions, mission mandates and SG reports.<sup>xii</sup> Finally, the resolution acknowledges and endorses the role of civil society in all aspects of the peace process, providing women's organization and other NGOs formal recognition for their efforts.

The resolution was reinforced in October 2009 with Security Council Resolution 1889. This resolution affirms measures within SCR 1325 and calls for improved women's participation and empowerment across all stages of the peace process.<sup>xiii</sup> SCR 1889 also incorporates more concrete measures for funding and access to resources, renewed efforts to involve women in the peacebuilding process, and stronger provisions on monitoring and reporting. Critical to monitoring and accountability is the request to the Secretary-General for the development of a set of global indicators to track implementation of SCR 1325.<sup>xiv</sup> A set of proposed indicators requested in SCR 1889 on prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery

was presented to the Security Council in April 2010 and is awaiting final Council approval.<sup>xv</sup> Finally, SCR 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009), which focus on responses to gender-based violence also incorporate strong participatory language.

All four resolutions are the result of decades of advocacy by civil society and are based upon a series of important international instruments and treaties.<sup>xvi</sup> The most relevant of these are: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979), Windhoek Declaration (2000) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). CEDAW was adopted in 1979 and is often called the ‘international bill of rights for women’.<sup>xvii</sup> Currently, 186 countries are parties to CEDAW, and are legally bound to take appropriate measures to promote women’s participation in decision-making and leadership positions.<sup>xviii</sup> CEDAW is also unique through its recognition of “culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations.”<sup>xix</sup> Sharing some similarities (yet non-binding) is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This document is a hallmark for women’s human rights and emphasizes the importance of women’s full participation in political structures through the inclusion of quotas for women in local and national governments.<sup>xx</sup>

Building on this international framework, regional organizations have made a range of commitments that support SCR 1325 and at times have propelled action within their regions. The African Union (AU) has adopted a gender policy which mandates the “mobilization of women leaders in all levels of peace mediation and related processes.”<sup>xxi</sup> Additionally, the European Union (EU) has specified that women’s participation is key to the advancement of human rights, and necessary to fully address “specific needs and concerns

of women.”<sup>xxii</sup> Finally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC)’s Protocol on Gender and Development mandates women’s equal representation and participation in key decision-making positions by 2015.<sup>xxiii</sup>

## **From Policy to Reality**

Nearly a decade after the adoption of SCR 1325 and fifteen years after the Beijing Declaration, progress towards women’s full participation and empowerment has been both disproportionate and turbulent. There have been some victories of note with an increased awareness and inclusion of women’s rights into diverse policy discussions. As noted in the 2010 Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) report: “gender in development and peacebuilding have become a high priority within the international donor community, with gender mainstreaming coming increasingly to the forefront in the engagements of the UN and other international actors in peace and reconciliation processes.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

The UN has recognized the importance of women’s participation in all stages of conflict and in post conflict development, with the UN Secretary-General stating that “bringing women to the peace table improves the quality of agreements reached, and increases the chances of successful implementation.”<sup>xxv</sup> His sentiments were reiterated by Ines Alberdi of UNIFEM: “A major priority is to increase women’s participation in formal and informal institutions involved in peace building. We need to invest in strengthening the capacity of women’s groups even before conflict ends.”<sup>xxvi</sup> Some member states appear equally committed: In 2009, 20 member states<sup>xxvii</sup> called for greater participation in their statements at the Open Debate on Women Peace and Security. Finally in the translation

of SCR 1325 at the country level, 19 national action plans had been launched as of July 2010.<sup>xxviii</sup>

While the above mentioned progress should be applauded, the realities of women's experiences within conflict and post conflict environments reveal continued exclusion, marginalization and limited decision making power. In the upcoming sections the report provides a detailed analysis of policies and realities by thematic area: peacemaking, political participation, security -- including security sector reform (SSR), peacekeeping, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) -- and judicial reform.

## **The Role of Civil Society**

While the virtual absence of women from the peace table is disturbing, women as individuals or part of a women's movement have played critical roles in promoting inter ethnic dialogue, providing innovative local solutions and ensuring that there are voices of reason and even protest when heightened pressure has been necessary. From "Sierra Leone, Colombia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Serbia, Northern Ireland, Uganda, Somalia, Cyprus ...women have made contributions that were significant and valuable in those contexts that began the transition from war to peace."<sup>xxix</sup>

In the peacebuilding arena women are often more active through informal community structures aiming to ensure that women's rights and gender perspectives are incorporated into local programs. Minimal representation of women within political structures or in leadership positions (at local and national levels) have led women's organizations to rely on extensive networks, strong advocacy skills and resourceful means of achieving their objectives. Women are often confronted with challenges including cultural barriers,

traditional patriarchal structures, minimal legislative support and lack of resources. These are critical obstacles inhibiting the transfer of their learned knowledge and first hand experiences into a recognized and formal peacemaking and peacebuilding environment.

The architects of SCR 1325 sought to address some of these limitations by “endorsing the inclusion of civil society groups in peace processes” and by “[calling] on all actors involved in such processes to adopt mechanisms supporting local peace initiatives.”<sup>xxx</sup> The UN and member states have also repeatedly called for civil society engagement through, for example, Security Council Resolution 1366 (2001), the formation of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations,<sup>xxxi</sup> and convenings such as the Commission on the Status of Women.

## II. Themes and Case Studies

### A. Peace Making: Peace Negotiations, Mediation and Local Peace Initiatives

*“Peace processes...need to ensure not only adequate representation of women as participants and observers but also gender expertise in agenda-setting, substantive talks and implementation, in order to redress past inequalities, so that new institutions can be built to provide greater social justice for all.”<sup>xxxii</sup> — Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Report on Mediation, 2009.*

Involving women in peace processes starts with providing women access to formal peace structures. This means getting women to the peace table as meaningful participants in peace negotiations and agreements, providing women with key roles as mediators and signatories, bringing gender perspectives into peace agreements and tapping into the expertise of over 50% of the population on issues ranging from security and the rule of law to the building of infrastructure.

To date, the United Nations has never appointed a woman as lead mediator.<sup>xxxiii</sup> In 60 years, only eight women have ever been appointed as UN special envoys. Only 2.4% of all signatories to 21 major peace agreements that have been established in the past 20 years were women.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Women are more likely to participate as witnesses and observers than as members of negotiating teams and as signatories or mediators.<sup>xxxv</sup> The vast majority of peace agreements simply do not adequately reflect women’s rights and concerns.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Despite these odds, women have persevered in seeking to be present at the peace table or influence peace negotiations in places such

as Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Liberia, Burundi and El Salvador.<sup>xxxvii</sup> When women have been involved in formal negotiations they have done much to ensure that voices of victims, the excluded and other civilians are consistently heard, as highlighted in the 2008 Kenyan crisis and the prominent role of Graça Machel as one of the three negotiators.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Furthermore, women have pursued gender sensitive inclusions into peace agreements, and initiated both unofficial talks and informal dialogue. For example, in Sudan women advisors pushed for the inclusion of humanitarian, social, and economic considerations in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement<sup>xxxix</sup> In unofficial talks such as in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, women peacebuilders have traversed political lines and brought together members from opposing factions. At the informal level women have been instrumental in “building bridges of dialogue and empathy in polarized societies”<sup>xi</sup>, forming cross community alliances to address core social concerns and initiating movement beyond ethnic, religious and political stalemates.

While it is important to focus on getting women to the peace table it is also critical to document and highlight the role of women and civil society in informal or Track II conflict resolution discussions. Due to the variety of obstacles restricting their participation, women have utilized creative solutions to provide invaluable contributions to peace processes. These entry points are developed in part through informal dialogue, local peace initiatives, community based activism and parallel consultations. The following case studies will focus on the work of organizations across the peace making spectrum from accessing the peace table and Track II diplomacy to local peace initiatives.

## **Mindanao, Philippines (Initiatives for International Dialogue and Mindanao Commission on Women): Promoting Women’s Voice in Peace Negotiations**

*“The women of Mindanao continue to be excluded from the peace processes, despite the fact that they play a key role in negotiating an end to community-level violence, and often confront the risks and dangers associated with inter- and intra-clan violence (rido)” - Francisco Lara Jr, International Alert, 2009*

Women in Mindanao are plagued by two components of violence: First, rebellion- related violence continues between the government, Moro Islamic Liberation Front and other armed groups. The other type of violence is inter- or intra-clan or group violence known as ‘Rido’, which is often based on community-level land rights issues.<sup>xli</sup> The prominence of women in Philippine society (with two women having held the highest office of president), and the strength of the Philippine women’s movement -- both tempered by ongoing armed conflict -- have contributed to experiences of ‘highs and lows’ in Mindanao. A recent high was the appointment of Dr. Grace Jimeno-Rebollos to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) Peace Panel negotiating with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF),<sup>xlii</sup> while a low was the relegation of women and indigenous issues to a “footnote” in previous peace consultations.<sup>xliii</sup>

To ensure that women’s voices are being consulted within the constant cycle of violence and peace negotiations, Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID - a local Mindanao based non-profit) has organized diverse campaigns focused on women. In 2007 following the escalation of violence between the military and rebel groups and the mass displacement of communities, IID organized a solidarity mission composed of 30 women from the Philippines



and other countries to assess the situation and engage with the local armed groups. Memen Lauzon from IID noted that the highly male dominated local groups saw the “strength and commitment of the women” enabling these women to discuss their concerns with the local government and the military establishment. This was the first time that an all-female delegation was able to set foot in the area and successfully engage with local armed groups.<sup>xliv</sup>

Another organization undertaking unique work in Mindanao is the Mindanao Commission on Women (MCW). In collaboration with other NGOs the organization launched the Mothers for Peace (M4P) campaign to demand a ceasefire between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the MILF. The campaign used mass media and face-to-face encounters to draw attention to the situation of women in Mindanao. Women convinced the Advertising Foundation of the Philippines to adopt the campaign, thereby mobilizing radio, TV networks and national newspapers. Three months later, the government and MILF declared a ceasefire. The popularity of the campaign turned the project into a movement.<sup>xlv</sup>

Since then, MCW has held yearly conferences and meetings to discuss women’s roles in peace processes. “If Women Negotiated the Peace Agreement ...” was such a meeting designed to educate and train women to participate in the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and MILF. The summit included over 325 women with delegates from the government, civil society and rebel groups. The summit outcome included the presentation of a position paper to the Philippine Government and the MILF Negotiating Panels.<sup>xlvi</sup> The recent success of MCW also includes direct engagement with the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process including requests to designate a female representative at newly resumed peace talks. In

2010 such an appointment to the government's negotiating team was finally made.

In understanding the 'highs and lows' of women's experience in the Philippines, Ms. Lauzon pointed to the gaps between the "pronouncements by the government of the importance of women in peace processes and the ultimate enforcement and implementation of such claims." Some important action has been taken such as the 'Magna Carta of Women' legislation and the 1325 National Action Plan. However, gaps remain in gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming in government and even in sections of civil society. Ms. Lauzon also noted that while there is increased access to local leadership, getting those leaders to recognize the unique needs, skills and assets of women has been an ongoing battle, often dependent on relationships and personalities of the local 'chiefs'.<sup>xlvi</sup>

## **Kenya (Center for Humanitarian Dialogue): Women at the Peace Table**

In response to the growing post election violence of December 2007, the African Union (AU) deployed a Panel of Eminent African Personalities to assist with the Kenyan mediation process. This panel included a female, Graça Machel, as one of the three lead negotiators. The Kenyan peace process has been referred to as "one of the most statistically representative peace processes, with 25% representation of women in the negotiation teams."<sup>xlvi</sup> Two women, the Hon. Martha Karua and the Hon. Sally Kosgey, were asked to join the mediation table as appointees by their political parties.

To assist in the mediation process the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre) seconded two staff members on a full time basis to provide technical assistance and advice in the formulation

of agreements.<sup>xlix</sup> In March 2010, the HD Center convened a roundtable of 35 women from diverse backgrounds to reflect on the Kenyan mediation process, to assess the role of women and civil society in that process, and to draw upon lessons learned. This case study draws much of its analysis from the outcome of this roundtable.<sup>l</sup>

Critical to the 42 days of mediation was the influential role of Ms. Machel in utilizing her existing Kenyan networks to draw in women's constituents. While Ms. Machel lamented the lack of a formal place at the peace table for civil society, including women's groups, "the mediation team informally ensured that the negotiators brought women to the table and made time to meet with civil society actors outside their mandate."<sup>li</sup>

With the aid of Ms. Machel and through established coalitions and networks, women's and other civil society organizations collaborated to influence the peace process at both formal and informal levels. Forums were developed by civil society groups to engage the mediation team including: the National Civil Society Congress (NCSC), Kenyans for Peace Truth and Justice (KPTJ), Concerned Citizens for Peace (CCP) and the Women's Consortium.

Pre-existing ethnic divisions and polarization, which were a central factor in the Kenyan violence, were mirrored in some meetings of the Women's Caucus. High levels of tension were in evidence with a resulting difficulty in building an actionable consensus. To address this tension, some women organized a "spitting session" to air grievances and differences. This enabled the development of a common platform and galvanized women's involvement under a central agenda. After the session the Caucus was able to create a twelve-person committee to develop a memorandum and a set of

recommendations focusing on the implementation of SCR 1325. The group also agreed on the appointment of a gender advisor and strategies for more directly addressing gender justice issues.

At an informal level the Caucus also sought to engage and influence members of the negotiation team through meetings with the AU and other International NGOs, working with women leaders in the political parties, lobbying the wives of the party leaders, and holding early morning sessions with the mediation teams. It was noted at the roundtable that “when women leaders failed to get access to the mediation team, they sometimes intercepted them at the hotel lobby where the talks were being held.”<sup>iii</sup>

Women played a powerful and often persistent role in ensuring that issues of women’s rights and gender perspectives on conflict were discussed in mediation-related meetings. However, it became clear that having women representatives at the peace table does not necessarily mean that women’s positions are being advanced. The two women present at these negotiations were appointed by their political parties primarily for their ability to negotiate and put their parties’ interests first, creating tension between the women’s movement and the women at the table. The tendency to appoint women from political parties and intergovernmental processes rather than from civil society makes addressing women’s issues more challenging. Ms. Machel hoped “that future mediation processes would create spaces specifically for women to sit at the table representing women’s interests.” She regretted that in the Kenyan process women from civil society were relegated to “shouting from the windows because they were not allowed through the doors.”

The experience in Kenya highlighted a range of barriers and challenges facing women in gaining access to the peace table. The

complexity of women's identity as peacemaker based on ethnicity and party affiliations makes it more difficult to claim a single voice and platform (though the spitting sessions helped with this issue). Additionally, time constraints during negotiations make it difficult to accommodate informal conversations and participation. Moreover, the lack of a clear mandate on formally engaging women meant that the commitment of supportive negotiators like Kofi Annan and Graca Machel took on a critical role. Finally those women who did access the mediation teams at times lacked the training and capacity to engage in the technical components of the talks and focused instead on issues such as the presence of women and high level implementation of women's resolutions.<sup>liii</sup>

Kenyan women faced a number of challenges, which resulted in many lessons learned. As Meredith Preston of the HD center who was present during the negotiation process noted, "Kenyan women played a critical role in shaping Agenda item 4, which calls for reforms to address the root causes of the violence. We hope these women, with first-hand experience of conflict and peacemaking, will be able to draw on lessons that can inform practitioners, emphasize the importance of their contributions and suggest ways of including women more effectively in peace negotiations."

### **Cameroon (Women in Alternative Action): Women's Local Peace Initiative**

*"Even if people know that violence is wrong, there is nowhere to complain. Women end up just swallowing a bitter pill." Chongsi Ayeah Joseph, Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, 2006*

While Cameroon is not currently in a formal state of conflict the country faces a rising tide of violence, often directed at women.

Cameroon women face not only “domestic violence and sexual abuse but also harmful traditional practices. These include female genital mutilation and widowhood rites that cause physical and psychological suffering.”<sup>liv</sup>

This problem is further exacerbated in rural communities where women are often restricted by cultural barriers from accessing information or voicing their concerns. To address this growing problem women’s organizations are developing gender-based local peace initiatives within these rural communities.

Women in Alternative Action (WAA Cameroon) recently initiated (2009) a “Queens for Peace Initiative” (QPI) with the objective of bringing together wives of traditional leaders to make their voices heard especially regarding how issues of conflict resolution and peace-building are handled in rural communities. In rural villages within North West Cameroon, ‘Fons’ (Male Traditional Authorities) assume full control of conflict resolution and the peaceful administration of their Fondoms. The wives of the Fons or the ‘Queens’ have often been neglected from these processes and the value of their position within the community and among rural women is not fully recognized or utilized. This is true despite the contention of Justine Kwachu Kumche (Executive Director of WAA Cameroon) that the Queens “are endowed with special privileges among women in traditional settings and are the guarantors of cultures and customary practices which are buried in the psyche of the women they represent.”<sup>lv</sup>

Through the QPI program the organization is seeking to expand the voice of the Queens and by extension other women in the community. WAA has conducted several workshops to build their capacities and train them with mediation and conflict resolution

skills, gender and human rights as well as legislative knowledge.

*“We are aiming to break the silence on discriminatory traditional practices that hamper the progress of women, enhance the integration and inclusion of rural women in the community peace processes and building the capacity of these women” Justine Kwachu Kumche, WAA Cameroon, 2010*

To address and even overcome cultural barriers and traditional gender roles WAA undertakes creative strategies to gain access to local women. Often WAA first needed to convince the husbands (the Fons) and extend the invitation to participate through them. With assistance from the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Family and through additional dialogue with the Fons, the organization was able to make rapid headway and received a large response from the Queens, signaling a positive start to the program.<sup>lvi</sup>

## **Darfur, Sudan (Community Development Association): Track II Dialogue**

*“Women are not just victims...they must have a voice at all levels. We need to include women to reach a sustainable peace.” – Safaa Elagib Adam, Community Development Association, 2010*

The 2004 Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur noted a gradual increase in women’s presence and influence. Initially few women were incorporated into the process but by November 2005, women were included in both official negotiating and preparatory workshops. Central to the process was the formation of the Gender Expert Support Team (GEST), a nonpartisan cross section of Darfuri women with semi official status that provided advice to the mediation teams.<sup>lvii</sup>

Women’s organizations like Community Development Association

(CDA) with support from UNIFEM played a large role in forming GEST and encouraging civil society members to take part in the peace talks. GEST along with women delegates formed a document called the, “Women’s Priorities for Peace and Reconstruction in Darfur”. The document demonstrated the importance of women’s participation in peace negotiations in addition to women’s participation in DDR, the need for affirmative action, and ways to guarantee physical security.<sup>lviii</sup> Many of the document’s proposals were incorporated into the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). Although the agreement did not hold, women continue to participate through a Consultative Forum in Khartoum. This forum involving Darfur women’s organizations and parliamentarians looks to assist in strategic planning on women’s participation in the continuing Darfur Peace Process.<sup>lix</sup>

Even moderately gendered processes with high levels of international support face barriers, often from within the society itself. Organizations such as CDA seek to talk to women in the community to encourage their involvement. However, women often refused to take part, deeming the negotiations and agreements to be little more than male-dominated politics. “Women themselves can be barriers; people do not differentiate between the meaning of peace they only look at the peace process as conflicting parties fighting over power, political issues... women say ‘no this is a political movement’ I reply, this is for peace, and that is for everyone.”<sup>lx</sup> An additional barrier is the complexity of political or party affiliations. Safaa Elagib Adam, Secretary General of CDA, remarked that although her organization tried to remain focused on gender issues not political issues, it was difficult to remain non-partisan when talking to the community.<sup>lxi</sup>

The positive impact of women’s organizations are noteworthy,



including greater number of women in the negotiating process, DPA's gender lens, and more women starting to realize the significance of their own participation. According to Ms. Elagib Adam, "other women from Sudan have started to learn from [our] experience...we have made a breakthrough and we need to keep the movement accountable. There is an opportunity and it should be used for greater inclusion of women and civil society groups."<sup>18iii</sup>

### **West Africa (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding): Early Warning Systems and Peace Initiatives**

*"In West Africa, we elected the first female president in Africa, when we feel we climb one mountain, we tend to relax because we feel we have changed the world, when something goes wrong, we have to start over : we need to capitalize on our gains" –Thelma Ekiyor, Co-Founder of the Women, Peace and Security Network (WIPSEN-AFRICA), and First Regional Coordinator of WIPNET, 2010*

West African women have endured conflict and violence but have used their shared experience and strength to demand greater participation. The West African region has dynamic grass-roots organizations that work for women's rights. As Thelma Ekiyor describes, "West African women have been organizing for centuries, when something is going wrong they feel the need to get organized."

Organizations such as West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and their 'Women in Peacebuilding' (WIPNET) network have encouraged women's participation through local peace campaigns aimed at providing early warning and documentation. WIPNET established the Women's Peacebuilding program that is

spread across nine countries: Nigeria, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Benin, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Ghana.<sup>lxiii</sup> The objectives of this comprehensive program include: strengthening the capacity of women in peacebuilding, translating training methods into indigenous West African languages, and providing a forum for dialogue on women, peace and security through their "Voices of Women" radio program.<sup>lxiv</sup> In 2003, WIPNET launched this innovative radio program to create open broadcast space for both women and men to discuss issues concerning gender equality, security and peacebuilding.<sup>lxv</sup>

WIPNET in Nigeria, another branch of the Women in Peacebuilding program, developed a Gender-Sensitive Community Early Warning System for conflict prevention. The system identifies gender-specific abuses through continuous observation, recording and reporting.<sup>lxvi</sup> Reports record gender-specific abuses which are then transmitted to a central unit or response channel. Bridget Osakwe from WANEP-Nigeria describes the value of the early warning system, "The weekly reports from the field monitor necessary interventions. The system also validates the role of women in utilizing their capacities for dispute resolution and decision-making. And it creates an entry point to facilitate public acceptance of women's role in decision making as well as opportunities to advocate and transform political and socio-cultural violence that inhibit these roles."<sup>lxvii</sup>

In describing this successful campaign the organizers pointed to their approach to funding and resources. WIPNET noted that while funding has generally increased for women's initiatives, additional collaboration with other women's networks to expand funding and resource opportunities was important. However, while some women are vigorously assisting in the expansion of women's programs and

resources, women can also be obstacles to progress. In terms of trust, organizations sometimes felt betrayed from “the inside”. It is important to remember that women in and out of organizations do not always share the same values and thoughts of “sister-hood.” The presence of women does not always translate into tangible resources to support women, peace and security objectives.

### **Netherlands (IFOR Women Peacemakers Program): Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence Training - Exploring Masculinities, Violence and Peace Building**

Gender roles including masculinity issues are important to address when analyzing barriers and methods of improving women’s participation in peacemaking. Many men often view women’s empowerment as a “zero-sum game,” feeling some ambiguity about how the advancement of women will either affect or assist them.<sup>lxviii</sup> Hence it is important to highlight the benefits to society as a whole, and for men specifically, of gender equality.

Organizations that support local peace initiatives, such as the IFOR Women Peacemakers Program, have been able to develop initiatives that increase male support for women’s peace work. One of their pilots, “Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence Training: Exploring Masculinities, Violence and Peace Building”, has targeted men as the primary participants for training. The organization structured this program to tackle a common barrier: the lack of ‘supportive men’ in the struggle for women’s full participation. This barrier was highlighted by women peace activists who continued to be frustrated by men not supporting their work to create gender-sensitive peacebuilding policies and strategies.

IFOR/WPP Program Manager Isabelle Geuskens remarked that, “there is still little ‘buy-in’ from men – some are shifting but it seems to be mostly verbal rather than practical. Also at times discussions focus on a ‘protector’ role for women ‘victims’ rather than an empowerment perspective for women.”<sup>lxix</sup> The pilot program, which is running during 2009 and 2010, consists of 19 men from 17 countries. It aims to address male trainers on gender-sensitive, active nonviolence (ANV), analyze concepts of masculinity as they relate to violence and peace, and support the creation of a pool of male “allies” for gender-sensitive peacebuilding.<sup>lxx</sup> The program purposely targets men that are involved directly with peace building. The first part of the training cycle (2009) revealed that many men understood gender issues at a theoretical level but found it hard to bridge the gap between theory and practice, specifically in terms of how to work with or relate to women’s groups.”<sup>lxxi</sup>

An important factor in the IFOR/WPP Training of Trainers programs is the manner in which women organizations engage with other groups and actors, including male activist groups. The training programs also work to facilitate engagement with local and national governments.

One barrier discovered by the IFOR Women Peacemakers Program is the lack of unity and partnership building among women’s organizations in the various regions. A second barrier mentioned is the large capacity gap between grassroots movements that support women and UN-level agencies. A third barrier relates to feelings of resignation among some of the women themselves, women activists who have struggled a long time for recognition of women’s contributions to peacebuilding and now seem willing to accept less than full participation in return for their struggles. At times this

has resulting in some activists being less critical and “accepting whatever they can get.”<sup>lxxiii</sup> Lack of government knowledge and understanding of gender issues was also an obstacle, for instance acknowledgment of government responsibility on SCR 1325.

And yet, the impact of the trainings can be seen through changes noted by some of the participants. Mr. Darpolor, who was trained during the program, recalled gender dynamics in his country as involving, “exercising power over women in every way; if I didn’t do that, I was considered to be a ‘weakling’.”<sup>lxxiii</sup>

His opinions changed through participation in the program and his concluding thoughts were revealing: “There is an alternative to the negative, dominant masculinity box engulfing every man. Every man has to accept that he is socialized with this negative masculinity in him, that he is also a victim of this, but that he can and should decide to ‘resist’ the negative masculinity and deal with issues in a more positive way.”<sup>lxxiv</sup>

## **Northern Caucasus, Russian Federation (Open Continent and League for the Protection of Mother and Child): Crossing Ethnic Lines**

Violence in Chechnya began in 1994 with a turbulent civil war between Chechen separatists and the Russian military. In 1996 the region experienced a pseudo-peace until 1999, following which armed conflict re-ignited resulting in over 100,000 casualties and even more displaced.<sup>lxxv</sup> Chechnya’s neighbors, the Republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan, experienced a massive influx of displaced people, thereby heightening ethnic tensions.

A highly conservative culture combined with socio-economic

vulnerability and traditional legal customs have often impeded women's participation in the Northern Caucasus. Women are also targeted by informal, hidden and often dangerous threats by governments and security agencies. Those working on peace initiatives or even basic social needs are at times harassed (or worse), making public participation a risky venture.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> However, determined women from local organizations in the Northern Caucasus have been able to do extensive work to help the situation for women in these areas. Open Continent, an organization in the Republic of Ingushetia has developed projects (funded by UN agencies) to help displaced women from all sides of the conflict and reintegrate them back into society by providing diverse educational opportunities including English classes. The organization will soon launch a legal center where women can receive compensation for lost property and find other means of legal consultation.

Another organization in Dagestan, the League for the Protection of Mother and Child (LPMC), has created campaigns to help women become more involved in the peace processes in Georgia and South Ossetia. LPMC participated in an international conference for peace making where they were able to report on the situation of women in Georgia and South Ossetia. The organization also created a network for women in conflict, "The League of the Women in the Caucasus Organization". This League's main aim is to increase the participation of women in peace processes by networking men and women from different sectors including professors, local officials, and parliamentarians. During these meetings women representatives from Russia and Chechnya were involved in dialogue and the organization reported no real animosity between the women. These women sympathized with each other based on their mutual losses and experiences. "Many women experienced 'instinctual motherhood',

as women from both sides had to walk through the mine fields looking for their soldier sons lost during the conflict.”<sup>lxxvii</sup> Bringing women together from diverse perspectives who have all suffered losses of children and other relatives as well as the break down of their families provided the basis for mutual understanding and a sustainable platform for peace-building.

In addition to economic and other external influences, there is a lack of strategic networking among the women of the North Caucasus as well as the constraints of minimal funding. Governments within the regions are also reluctant to create structures that would assist women. However, there has been some encouragement in Ingushetia, where the government is directly engaging with women’s rights advocates. A staff member from Open Continent remarked that although there is no true ‘women’s movement’ in Ingushetia, there is some support from higher officials, particularly as compared to its neighboring republics.

Nevertheless, women’s participation remains very limited in the region. Libhan Bazaeva from the Women’s Dignity NGO in Chechnya remarked on the regressive conditions for women in her region: “There is a lack of women in government. Within the parliament we used to have two women representatives but now only one woman is a parliament member. We do not have women making economic or political decisions nor do women have a place in the economy.”<sup>lxxviii</sup>

## **Ghana (Mothers for Active Non-Violence): Local Peace Councils and Gender Training**

*“Growing up in a violent community, I found a way to fight back without ‘throwing a punch’. It was possible for me to acquire skills to handle conflict.”*

Ghana is not perceived as a county in conflict. However, inter- and intra-clan violence continues to flare up over issues of succession, property and political interference.<sup>lxxxix</sup> The National Peace Council that was established as part of the National Architecture for Peace is responsible for promoting peace and stability in the country. The Council is comprised of Regional and District Peace Advisory Councils (DPACs) which as unfortunately reflected in a Ministry of Interior Policy document “do not give due regard to gender.”<sup>lxxx</sup>

The DPACs currently have minimal female participation with the Northern Regional Peace Council comprised of 25 men and 3 women.<sup>lxxxi</sup> With the help of UNDP, Mothers for Active Non-Violence was able to train members of Peace Councils on SCR 1325 in 7 regions and advocate for the importance of more female representation on the Councils. Another campaign led by Mothers for Active Non-Violence provides ‘training for trainers’ programs at the local level. They recruit women from existing networks in the community -- from religious sectors to micro-finance -- and provide training on conflict awareness and gender sensitivity. The program also seeks to reconnect communities with ‘traditional’ gender roles in conflict resolution such as consultations with women elders as a prerequisite for decision making within communities.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Efforts to address women’s participation within local peacemaking are often riddled with challenges. Becky Adda-Dontoh, founder of Mothers for Active Non-Violence, remarked on the significant lack of awareness of gender concerns among different groups: “Even program officers in UNDP are not aware of SCR 1325. This is so disheartening. It’s terrible when you do not even get the support from the places you expect it.”<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Ms. Adda- Dontoh also remarked



on the gaps separating UN agencies and government ministries from grassroots women's organizations: "They never remember to invite women. They put 9 men on a plane to resolve the conflict - words are not translated into action."<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

## **B. Political Participation**

Support for women's leadership in governance and political participation has increased in recent years with civil society and donor governments helping to capitalize on the "window of opportunity"<sup>lxxxv</sup> provided to women during transitional periods in post conflict countries. Through voter education, quota systems, constitutional revisions and leadership training, women are gaining greater access to political structures previously reserved for men. In 2010, Rwanda (with nearly 56%), South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Nepal, Uganda, Burundi and Timor Leste were all post-conflict countries that ranked in the top 30 countries worldwide with more than 30% women parliamentarians.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

A recent study by the Institute for Inclusive Security indicated that through increasing women's decision-making power in post-conflict governments, "they can increase the legitimacy of nascent institutions, decrease government corruption, broaden the political agenda, promote consultative policymaking and collaborate across ideological lines and social sectors." The report noted that the presence of female politicians also broadens the political debate to address a wider range of constituent interests, social concerns, and local issues.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

Global progress has been significant with the proportion of seats held by women in parliament at 18.8% in 2009, up from 11.3% in 1995.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Yet, women are still under represented at the ministerial

and committee levels and are often relegated to portfolios determined to be ‘gender-specific’ such as social affairs, family and children’s affairs and women’s affairs.<sup>lxxxix</sup> As noted by a female politician in Brazil: “What has happened inside political parties is similar to what happens inside the home...We argue for equality, but we end up doing the practical tasks and men dictate the rules and make the decisions.”<sup>xc</sup>

Economic and individual security deficiencies are key factors influencing women’s participation in the public sphere. In many countries political instability combined with traditional gender role expectations have resulted in female candidates experiencing threats, targeted violence and in some circumstances torture and murder. This has been especially true of women campaigning on a platform of women’s rights and gender equality.<sup>xcii</sup> Economic insecurity – the combination of poverty, a lack of resources or access to capital together with high illiteracy -- is a clear impediment for women wishing to engage in the costly world of politics. In many societies women have become primary caretakers in the informal sector. Needing to care for families, overcoming repressive cultural norms, and obtaining training and securing sufficient campaign funds is a long and difficult road for many women.

## **Elections and Quotas**

Quotas that reserve seats for women have been utilized extensively in post conflict settings to overcome traditional and cultural barriers and promote women’s participation in government (at local through national levels). The importance of quotas was introduced in the Beijing Platform for Action, which calls for a 30% minimum representation of women in decision-making bodies.<sup>xciii</sup> As of 2008,

most (18 out of 22) of the countries that had achieved at least 30% women's participation in national assemblies had applied quotas (with an average of 15.3% participation in other countries).<sup>xciii</sup>

While quotas cannot guarantee either a gender perspective in the political process or women in the most important decision making roles, they can assist in building a critical mass of women in governance. This is imperative for removing traditional barriers, breaking stereotypes and enhancing women's leadership. Women's political participation also involves addressing voter participation, such as the number of women registered to vote, education about their voting rights, and affirming their ability to make individual (rather than familial) voting choices.

## **Leadership and Training**

The strategy of training women as political candidates is becoming more common and is partly in response to excuses offered by some officials that women are 'just not prepared' for leadership positions. This accusation may be partially true in some countries like Afghanistan where severe discrimination of women has long been entrenched in society. In 2004 in the southern province, for instance, there was not one female civil servant who was deemed able to run the women's affairs department.<sup>xciv</sup>

But this is the exception more than the rule. In many other countries, training through innovative country exchange programs focused on political campaigning has been utilized to improve women's understanding of the legislative process, hone their networking and fundraising skills, and improve their knowledge of democratic and effective governance procedures. Women's organizations in the following case studies have utilized a combination of effective

mechanisms and strategies to advocate for more women in politics, help women reshape post conflict societies and ensure greater overall participation.

## **Nepal (Women’s Alliance for Peace, Power, Democracy and Constituent Assembly (WAPPDCA) and SAATHI): Women in Politics**

*“Nepal is still a male dominated society. There’s a tendency of leaders to think that women aren’t as capable as men...parties in principle are inclusive of women, but they haven’t been practicing what they talk about” Nepali Female Politician, 2009*

The conflict that pitched the Nepali government against the armed wing of the Maoist party -- the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) -- ended in 2006 after 10 years of violence. Evidence indicates a substantial impact on Nepali women with high rates of gender based violence and a large number of women combatants facing danger in the Maoist ranks (approx. 20% of the combatants<sup>xcv</sup>). Moreover, 87% of the country’s female population resided in rural areas where much of the conflict occurred.<sup>xcvi</sup> Finally women and women’s issues were systematically excluded from peace negotiations with the 2006 peace agreement containing only one paragraph specifically focused on women.<sup>xcvii</sup> The tide changed slowly in 2007 with women’s quotas being included as part of the interim constitution. In 2010, 33.2% of the parliament was comprised of women parliamentarians.<sup>xcviii</sup> Women are also represented in key committees set up to draw the new constitution.

Women’s organizations such as SAATHI and Women’s Alliance for Peace, Power, Democracy and Constituent Assembly (WAPPDCA) have undertaken a variety of campaigns to promote

women's political participation. In 2006, WAPPDCA published a book entitled "Who is Who of Nepali Women", with a list of over 3,000 qualified Nepali women who could participate in political and peace processes. This book was provided to all political leaders to counteract the claim that there 'aren't enough qualified women.' In 2009, the organization initiated a 'Mission 50-50' to ensure equal participation by and meaningful leadership positions for women. In the lead up to the last elections WAPPDCA also undertook voter education as well computer and English training for women in the Constituent Assembly.<sup>xcix</sup>

While focusing its attention on a 1325 National Action Plan, SAATHI has also been involved with monitoring 'Local Peace Committees' (LPCs). In 2007 the Cabinet set up LPCs requiring 33% women's participation on these committees.<sup>c</sup> Local women's organizations like SAATHI continue to monitor these committees to ensure that the 33% quota is being implemented, thus helping to bring more women into the local political process. However as noted by Bandana Rana, director of SAATHI, this has been a slow process and women are still not selected for higher decision-making positions.<sup>ci</sup>

Interestingly, what was noted as the key success of the women's movement during the conflict -- the creation of alliances and the development of a common platform between organizations -- began to fracture with the emergence of peace. Women's organizations were no longer projecting a unified voice and call to action, making implementation at the local level even more difficult. As stated by Ms. Rana, "women are trying to create their own space, focusing on what makes us different not the same." This was reinforced by a recent PRIO report, which stated, "when women's organizations

have lobbied for a joint cause, it has been largely successful. But afterwards they [become] fragmented again, and the lack of concerted efforts [thus weakens] their political influence.”<sup>cii</sup>

SAATHI has recently been involved in consultations on developing a Nepali 1325 National Action Plan. Meetings to this end began in late 2009 with a small core committee made up of civil society members, government officials, and staff from UNIFEM and UNFPA. The meetings reinforced the findings from the PRIO report, stating that women’s groups must develop a unified message and engage with rural communities to ensure that the process moves “beyond the capital” and can cultivate local ownership. “For this, a strong unfractured women’s coalition is needed.”

### **Sri Lanka (Association of War Affected Women): Leadership and Election Training**

The women’s movement in Sri Lanka has been at the forefront of peace work and peace building activities, often motivated by the underlying experience that violence exists “along a continuum with women often experiencing the domestic and political violence that stretched from the home, to the street to the battlefield.”<sup>ciii</sup> This combined with general exclusion from the political process, the high levels of women in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and the high percentage of women combatants within the rebel movement all culminated in the establishment of the all-female Subcommittee on Gender Issues (SGI) that was to focus attention on gender concerns during the 2002 peace talks.

The subcommittee created a structure of five women from each side of the conflict to participate in dialogue that would feed into the formal peace process. Advocacy from domestic women’s groups,

their coordinated fact finding missions, and reports to leaders on both sides of the table were seen as critical contributions of this unique committee.<sup>civ</sup>

*“A mother’s voice is very influential when she says ‘No more bloodshed.’”*  
*Visaka Dharmadasa, Association of War Affected Women, 2009*

The courage and tenacity of local women’s organizations is illustrated through the work of the Association of War Affected Women (AWAW), which in 2003 led a group of seven women from both ethnic groups involved in the conflict to meet the second-in-command of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This was the first time that a civil society group had a meeting with the LTTE elite, helping to pave the way for a ceasefire and peace talks.<sup>cv</sup> Although the peace talks were stalled in 2003, these actions and the formation of the subcommittee were seen as critical vehicles in opening the public sphere for women.

The violent end to the 26-year conflict in May 2009 culminating in the defeat of the LTTE has done little so far to establish lasting peace, reconciliation or justice. Many organizations have looked towards greater participation of women in the political process as one means of bolstering peace prospects. Although Sri Lanka elected the first female Prime Minister in the world in 1960, women’s current political representation is a mere 4% at the national level and 2% at the local level.<sup>cvi</sup>

Recognizing that Sri Lankan women were still poorly represented in government, AWAW initiated a campaign in 2008 to train women on local laws, human rights, public speaking, budgeting, and campaign strategy. The program aims to help women contest for local and provincial elections, with the ultimate goal of campaigning for and being elected to national-level leadership positions. As noted by

Visaka Dharmadasa, Chair of AWAW, “You can’t just say, ‘include women, include women.’ You have to strengthen the capacities of women.”

The initial stage of the program involved training 25 women leaders, and focused on strategies for enabling and encouraging additional women to run for political office. This group, called “Team 1325”, was composed of one woman from each of Sri Lanka’s 25 districts, and as follow-up to the training, each woman committed herself to train an additional 25 women in her district. To date, AWAW and Team 1325 have fully trained 600 women and have begun workshops involving 750 more women across Sri Lanka.<sup>cvi</sup>

The trainings have experienced early success with some women able to achieve observer- status at local government meetings, giving them access to the daily workings of government. In addition, one woman has been elected to office at the provincial level. Furthermore, through interaction with their local communities (often in rural settings) these women have become well positioned as role models to other women in their community and also to serve as moderators within their neighborhoods.<sup>cvi</sup>

Many challenges continue to face women in this area. A study conducted in 2008 of 17 women’s organizations in Sri Lanka identified the following barriers<sup>cix</sup>:

- While women have been keeping the dialogue alive on key issues like “peace, democracy, justice and militarization, these discussions had not been consolidated and effectively employed at strategic levels of intervention within the policy and political spheres.”
- There is disconnect between organizations focusing on advocacy and policy work (often Colombo-focused) and those providing



direct services to the community. This lack of cohesion between the field and capital seems to have widened during the last few years of the conflict.

- There is an overall lack of ‘effective’ women’s networks, as well as capacity within existing women’s networks to provide both strategic guidance and project level support.

Ms. Dharmadasa highlighted another important lesson for the movement which was the need to better reflect on past experiences and dissect how prior achievements and failures can aid in strengthening the future movement. This will help ensure that women can also become more central participants in any peace and security dialogue at a national level.

### **Manipur, India (Integrated Rural Development Service Organization): Women in Governance**

Manipur, in northeastern India has been in conflict for the past 50 years. The explosion of rebel groups, ethnic divisions and the introduction of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (grants Indian security forces extensive powers during counter-insurgency operations) have resulted in severe hardships for women. As noted by Binalakshmi Nepram, founder of Manipuri Women Gun Survivors’ Network (MWGSN), armed conflict has left “many Manipuri women widowed and many of their children thrown into the jaws of death prematurely.”<sup>ex</sup>

When speaking with Nonibala Yengkhom of Integrated Rural Development Service Organization (IRDSO) she expressed pride in the “great spirit of the women” as they continue to struggle within a conflict that receives minimal international attention. She

spoke of the Meira Paibis or ‘Torch Bearers’, a women’s security collective that seeks to confront the armed forces, gain justice for gender based violence, and open discussions with insurgents.<sup>cxii</sup> A report by North East Network (NEN) and UNIFEM indicated that the Meria Paibis were the “only section of people who have access to and to some extent moral authority over insurgents.”<sup>cxiii</sup>

Women’s networks such as MWGSN have also consulted with local women in policy formation regarding small arms and light weapons (SALW). The women whose lives are affected by guns can (and do) play an active role in improving the control of small arms in the region.<sup>cxiii</sup> Women have also been part of a People’s Consultation focused on an Arms Trade Treaty (a proposed international, legally binding framework to stem the illegal trade of arms featuring transparency, respect for human rights and the protection of women) in the city of Imphal organized by MWGSN, Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI) and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA).

Despite all these contributions and even the existence of matrilineal lines in some communities, women have not benefited from expanded roles within local government institutions and their decision making power remains minimal. Ms. Yengkhom remarked that we are “being used as tools for the peace process but they don’t want to share the power in governance and decision-making”. The NEN and UNIFEM report reinforces this factor: “Even when the state involves women it is really to be the go between, to play the role of the ‘healer’ or the ‘pacifier’. There has been no effort either on the side of the state or the non-state agencies to involve women in the actual negotiations.”<sup>cxiv</sup>

Observing this lack of integration of physical participation and

decision-making power, IRDSO created a network called ‘Women in Governance’, which works across 8 districts from the grassroots to the state level to improve women’s skills and promote them as decision-makers. The program provides governance and legislative training to women and their male counterparts. Four of the districts are located in a region that is relatively remote, thus making it logistically more challenging for women to participate. In these districts, the organization provides transportation for the women or sends mobile units to conduct trainings.

The organization also identified gaps in local legislation on women’s participation as compared to the federal level. Local governments -- often run by traditional village authorities or typically male clans -- have little incentive to bring women into the power circle. Furthermore, a lack of resources compounded by the lack of legal rights, particularly in the realm of inheritance and property ownership, makes it even more difficult for women to fund their entry into the political arena.

As they address these traditional structures, Ms. Yengkhom stated that the ‘secret weapon’ in their political participation program is the lobbying of village religious authorities including churches, mosques and traditional elders. These religious institutions have strong influence in the communities especially among their male members. IRDSO recently contacted religious leaders in Muslim communities and received positive feedback and encouragement towards the goal of getting women to attend the training sessions and support the reservation policy. Their hope now is that other religious leaders will follow.<sup>cxv</sup>

## Iraq (Women’s Alliance for a Democratic Iraq and Baghdad Women’s Association): Capacity Building and Political Participation

*“Unfortunately, women’s rights is not one of the main factors on the negotiation table between the main political parties, but that won’t stop Iraqi women from keep on fighting for their rights” - Basma Fakri, Women’s Alliance for Democratic Iraq, 2010*

Since the 2003 invasion by the United States, United Kingdom, and other allies, the situation for women in Iraq has deteriorated significantly. While women in the country’s now feeble state have experienced relative independence, they still suffer great violence, insecurity, dire infrastructure and political instability. While women’s rights, gender equity, and women’s empowerment were mentioned as focal points in Iraq’s new national agenda, in practice this has been overlooked or neglected.<sup>cxvi</sup>

Continuing the ‘battle cry’ of greater political participation for women are NGOs such as Women’s Alliance for Democratic Iraq (WAFDI) and the Baghdad Women’s Association (BWA). In 2003, as part of a campaign to increase the capacity of Iraqi women, WAFDI (alongside other organizations) sent 13 Iraqi women to Washington, DC in order to be educated on good governance. The women were able to shadow politicians and collect new ideas and knowledge. Three of the Iraqi women went on to become parliamentarians themselves. In 2008, BWA implemented “Training and Empowering Women to Obtain the Skills of Democratic Election Process in Local and Municipality Councils.” This program directly facilitated two female participants becoming members of the Baghdad Provincial Council.<sup>cxvii</sup>

A year after the first training campaign, WAFDI organized a

conference on human and women's rights at the Baghdad Central Criminal Court, where 40 professional women from military, parliament, businesses, and civil society were trained on human rights law and international human rights obligations. 90 Iraqi women attended a training program following the conference. 16 of these women went on to work as human rights monitors.<sup>cxviii</sup>

While WAFDI and BWA have received substantial support from civil society, not surprisingly, the struggle continues to find ways to motivate senior leaders within the Iraqi government to develop and promote policies that will ensure gender balance within the political system. The Ministry of Women's Affairs in itself is not very effective and lacks the necessary resources to leverage such motivation. And while the newly established quota for women's seats in parliament is a great triumph, this can be manipulated by the Iraqi government using "women as a puppet" simply to fill quotas.<sup>cxix</sup>

Barriers including political and economic insecurity and gender-oppressive familial responsibilities have also restricted women's presence in the political sphere. A 2008 'Women for Women' International study stated that 88.8% of female interviewees "expressed a great deal of concern that they or someone living in their households would become a victim of violence."<sup>cxx</sup> This lack of security has prevented many women from standing for elections. Women who choose to participate have at times been discouraged by death threats and forced to withdraw their electoral campaigns.

While there are always challenges to face, optimism for the enhancement of women's participation is still widespread specifically among NGOs working on the ground. Women's visibility in parliament represents a huge step towards achieving gender parity in government as well as towards the protection and promotion of

women's rights. Efforts from women parliamentarians have already resulted in the passing of a law allowing NGOs to form without the support of a political party (as well as partner with international NGOs more efficiently), a significant shift from past policies which had significantly marginalized the energies of civil society. As Liza Hido of BWA states, "High levels of women's participation have a positive impact in society; participation will increase women's awareness and confidence". A primary example of this participatory momentum was the "pressure exerted by women organizations, to approve a quota system in the Iraqi Constitution."<sup>cxix</sup>

### **Sudan (Sudanese Empowerment in Peace): Fostering Women Candidates**

In Sudan the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 signaled an end to the 21- year long civil war between the north and south and the formation of the Government of National Unity (GoNU). A 25% level of female representation was included as a constitutional provision within the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). Women have also taken the initiative to form a women's caucus within the Government of National Unity.<sup>cxix</sup> And yet while a growing number of women are becoming engaged in the political process, the number of women in decision-making roles across various ministries and at the local level is still minimal.<sup>cxix</sup>

Women's organizations such as Sudanese Empowerment in Peace (SuWEP) have undertaken programs to promote women political participation. During the 2009 elections the organization distributed grants to eight affiliated SuWEP groups in both the north and south. Each group had a specific focus and the Election and Leadership sub-committee led campaigns on women's political

participation in the lead up to the elections.<sup>cxixiv</sup> Two important objectives in the campaigns were getting women to register to vote and training candidates in order to fulfill statutes in the CPA towards an accountable, democratic government.<sup>cxixv</sup>

Since 2008, SuWEP has conducted seven capacity building trainings to educate women who seek to enter politics focused on campaigning, institutional management, transitional justice, reconciliation and leadership. On a larger scale, UNIFEM and UNDP set up training sessions to empower female candidates for future elections in all southern states of Sudan.<sup>cxixvi</sup> All trainings seek to ensure that qualified and educated (future) women leaders can benefit from the CPA and the GoSS quota for women in decision-making positions.<sup>cxixvii</sup> Recently, SuWEP hosted a series of roundtable meetings on the elections and women's participation. These meetings created a "women's agenda" that pinpointed what women want from political, development, education and health sectors. This agenda will soon be distributed to election committees in Sudan, to AU missions, and to UN agencies.

With all of the progress in encouraging women's participation and empowerment, field-based organizations like SuWEP still find it difficult to carry out their goals because of limited funding. Zaynab El Sawi from SuWEP remarked on this obstacle, "...donors don't want to contribute. It is hard to get money for publications. [It is] hard to document activities of the organization. [It is] hard to get institutional support from sub-groups."<sup>cxixviii</sup>

Change in Sudan is occurring and the hard work of local organizations is seeing results. In the Nuba mountain region of Sudan, 80 women registered to vote for the regional elections, considered a large turnout for a single day.<sup>cxixix</sup> Additionally, there

is evidence that women have responded to civil society efforts by mobilizing around common goals: “... in the beginning the women weren’t working together now they are friends and there is harmony in the movement. In 1997 they didn’t even greet each other.”<sup>cxxx</sup> Focused trainings to educate and empower women to be future political candidates and participatory citizens have created change both in the political realm and in societal attitudes towards women. As noted by Ms. El Sawi, “Elections used to be a ‘man’s issue’. They [women] used to vote but used to vote for what their husband told them to. Now they understand the value of their vote and their rights.”<sup>cxxxi</sup>

## **Afghanistan (Kabultec and National Democratic Institute): Promoting Female Parliamentarians**

In the post-Taliban era women’s rights and gender equality have risen to the forefront of nation-building efforts. With international support and strong and courageous advocacy from local women’s organizations, the following tangible victories for women have occurred<sup>cxxxii</sup>

- Women were active participants in the main bodies responsible for developing the new constitution—the Constitutional Loya Jirga (20% women) and the Constitutional Drafting and Review Commission
- Approximately 25% of the seats in the Wolesi Jirga and in each of the Provincial Councils are reserved for women (Article 83 of the Constitution)
- Endorsement of the Afghan Women’s Bill of Rights by President Karzai and creation of the Ministry of Women’s



## Affairs (MOWA)

- Afghanistan ranked 32nd in the world for the percentage of women represented in parliament, with 27.3%<sup>cxxxiii</sup>

However, these legislative and constitutional victories are being overshadowed somewhat by realities on the ground. Women continue to experience enormous challenges, such as poverty, a lack of education and security, and ongoing targeted violence. In a 2009 survey conducted by Women for Women International (WfWI), 66.2% of women respondents said that the security situation was their central concern.<sup>cxxxiv</sup> Political participation remains highly difficult for women given the “systematic, violent targeting of women in public life in Afghanistan.”<sup>cxxxv</sup>

Organizations, such as Kabultec and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) have recognized these barriers and sought to address directly issues of literacy and capacity building. Kabultec has organized a number of campaigns focused on women’s political participation over the past eight years. During the 2005 parliamentary elections the organization developed a toolkit called the ‘Women’s Guide to Winning an Election’. The toolkit includes information on how to fundraise, organize a successful campaign, counter gender stereotypes and establish networks. The organization conducted seminars on the toolkit with female candidates in 6 cities and 14 provinces. With the assistance of UNIFEM in 2005 and 2007 the organization took 30 elected women to France and Turkey for ‘good governance’ training. According to Nasrine Gross Executive Director of Kabultec, “for many participants the structures of democracy were new and the process of introducing legislation intimidating”. The program enabled the women parliamentarians to ‘shadow’ elected officials, observe and learn.<sup>cxxxvi</sup>

A core program developed by Kabultec is their education and literacy project targeting husbands and wives. With rates of illiteracy among women near 80%, Ms Gross sees this project as critical to developing a skilled pool of women to enter into government service. The program has provided a one year long literacy program to 750 participants and won the Purpose Prize.<sup>cxxxvii</sup>

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has also provided training for female parliamentarians on budgeting, media, and legislative processes. In the lead up to the 2009 Provincial Council (PC) election NDI organized ‘Women in Politics Campaign Schools’ for women PC candidates, with a one week curriculum for women from all regions of Afghanistan. More than 70% of women candidates across the country participated in these activities. The organization also plans to hold orientation workshops for women elected to the provincial councils. The workshops are designed to help women councilors overcome unique challenges including engaging effectively with male-dominated civic and government entities, and identifying issues of interest to women and vulnerable constituencies.<sup>cxxxviii</sup>

Wider societal gains have been realized through these leadership training programs, with women in government sponsoring a variety of potentially beneficial measures including campaigns to ban marriage under the age of 18, legislation to prevent violence against women and support the rights of minorities, challenging the legitimacy of warlords, and broadening women’s voter participation.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

While pursuing many beneficial outcomes for women and men, Ms. Gross noted that the “Afghan women’s movement is still in its first phase – they are still competitive and not always working as a team

(each for herself) not always networking and supportive. Hopefully in the next round this will be reduced and greater cooperation will be enhanced— they still need time and experience and this will happen.”

### **Uganda (Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare and Huairou Commission): Local to Local Dialogue**

In 2002, the US-based Huairou Commission organized pilot projects in Argentina, the Czech Republic, Kenya, Tanzania, Russia, and Uganda to expand on an initiative called ‘Local to Local Dialogue’. Huairou has utilized this methodology to spread good governance practices and help grassroots women participate in local decision-making that affects their lives and their communities.<sup>cxl</sup> In 2008, Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC) commenced ‘Local to Local’ dialogues to address the limited participation of women in local councils, and to create space for deliberation and develop an ongoing relationship with the local authorities.

In Uganda, affirmative action policies established by the national government have allowed some women to hold positions in government. However, due to a lack of capacity building, lack of awareness of their right to participate, and an often rigid patriarchal culture of discrimination, women are not participating fully with few in important decision-making roles. Further research has indicated that economically challenged women (often the grassroots base in many Ugandan communities) “are unlikely to participate effectively if they have not first come together as a group to develop relationships, discuss and debate their experiences, concerns, and opinions, and develop a shared analysis and agenda for action.”<sup>cxli</sup>

According to Frances Birungi Odong a trainer at UCOBAC, “Local

to Local, identifies and recognizes the fact that not many women have the opportunity to run for election because of severe constraints: lack of capacity, resources, education... This methodology provides an alternative structure for women to engage and influence policy.”<sup>cxliii</sup>

Within local communities in the district of Bugiri, UCOBAC supported a grassroots women-led process. In the preparation phase, women first came together to identify, discuss, and collectively prioritize their needs. The group selected some members to serve as leaders to represent the joint agenda of the group and engage with other local leaders in dialogue. Making contact with authorities to find an open space for discussion was frustratingly slow and bureaucratic but through the women’s perseverance the authorities were brought into dialogue. Local women targeted key leaders who could prioritize their needs, enabling them to influence local planning, resource allocation and local programming.<sup>cxliii</sup>

Women selected for the ‘Local to Local’ dialogue were provided training by the Huairou Commission in areas of coalition formation, advocacy and lobbying, women’s and human rights, and gender-based budgeting and allocation. This training is critical in building grassroots capacity, especially the confidence and skills of local women.

The women-led process has resulted in positive impacts, with the local government sending representatives to meetings of the women’s group on a regular basis, sharing information about local projects, and channeling women’s concerns back to local government. There is also increased accountability as local women can now keep their officials honest by questioning them openly, creating a sense of obligation and transparency. Finally the process has aided in transforming the way that women leaders are viewed in the community. Since the Local to Local dialogue began, local

authorities have improved their ability to address the needs of poor women in their communities and “appreciate the ability of women to contribute effectively to the political discussion.”<sup>cxliiv</sup>

## C. Security

Security within a peacebuilding framework involves components such as peacekeeping, Security Sector Reform (SSR), and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Re-Integration (DDR). Integrating a gender perspective into these issues includes addressing them from a broader social perspective, and drawing on and promoting community-based security initiatives, local dialogue and cross regional consultations. The following case studies focus on a range of community-based and wider security issues.

### Security Sector Reform

*There is strong recognition that governance of security institutions should be on the basis of dealing with the different security needs of men, women, boys and girls. The integration of a gender analysis and perspective is central to the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, and to local ownership and legitimacy of reform processes. - Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit, 2008*

The transformation of the security sector in post conflict societies, including instances where the security sector has actually perpetrated the conflict, is critical for sustainable peace. This is a complicated process that usually occurs behind ‘closed doors’ and often fails to incorporate gender analysis or sufficient women’s participation. Without ensuring that all security sector institutions are inclusive of women and responsive to their rights, post-conflict countries

effectively institutionalize inequality and injustice, thus potentially destabilizing already fragile security situations.<sup>cxiv</sup>

A gender perspective on security sector reform (SSR) involves four key components: 1) Identifying and prioritizing different security needs for women, men, girls, and boys, 2) Assessing the role of security sector reform mechanisms in preventing and addressing gender-based violence (GBV), 3) Ensuring greater female representation in SSR bodies and initiatives and 4) Gender mainstreaming, i.e. policies that incorporate gender perspectives and enable greater participation of women in security sector reform.

Critical to this assessment is consultation with women's organizations, who "often have expertise in designing and implementing community-level security-related programming, for instance on the prevention of gang violence or human trafficking, and skills in delivering training on gender and human rights issues."<sup>cxlvi</sup> Women's organizations and networks are not only able to identify local security threats but assist in facilitating dialogue and mediation between local communities and policy-makers. These women can also implement SSR related initiatives as a trusted security service provider.

While some progress is being made in relation to female participation in SSR, as seen with the modernization of the Nicaraguan police force (26% of the police force is now women)<sup>cxlvii</sup> and increased female representation in the Kosovo and Afghanistan police forces, overall this continues to be a slow process. Addressing the rising tide of pervasive gender based violence and gender gaps is critical to devising and implementing effective SSR programs and initiatives.

## **Fiji (femLINKPACIFIC): Women’s Security through Regional Mechanisms**

The Pacific Island of Fiji has dealt with considerable political, economic and social turmoil as a consequence of military coups in 1987 and 2006 and a civilian coup in 2000. A military regime continues to rule the country, which faces growing human security and development concerns, specifically rising poverty and high levels of violence against women, with 80% of all women reporting witnessing violence in their home.

Due to the role of the military in these conflicts, specifically its ongoing influence on instability in Fiji, women have learned to negotiate and communicate with the security forces. This was illustrated through the Peace Vigil in 2000 against the civilian-led coup and subsequent meetings with the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and Military Council. In 2003, through the UNIFEM Pacific Project ‘Women, Peace and Security for Melanesia’ a Women, Peace and Security Fiji Coordinating Committee (WPS CC) on SCR 1325 was established.<sup>cxlviii</sup>

Subsequently, the WPS CC held consultations and contributed a series of recommendation to the National Security and Defense Review that were grounded in women’s human rights commitments including SCR 1325. These recommendations represented a gendered approach to security discussions including the appointment of women to provincial and district level security committees, gender balance in all decision making levels of the security forces, inclusion of women to the national security assessment unit, and the appointment of a Minister of Women to the National Security Council.<sup>cxlix</sup> In response, the National Security and Defense Review stated that “defense and security is the business

of men and women, therefore the organizational mechanism that deals with it should ensure that issues of men and women are given the same level of attention.”<sup>ci</sup>

Despite the ongoing coup in Fiji, femLINKPACIFIC<sup>ci</sup> has sought regional access to ensure continued engagement on the issue of women and security. In 2006 femLINK partnered with the Gender Adviser and Political Division of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the UNDP Pacific Center to organize a series of consultations to gain direct access to and help influence the security policy of the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) – the principal forum for setting the Pacific Islands regional security agenda. In 2006 the issue of women, peace and security made its way onto the FRSC agenda for the first time and women leaders were invited to attend and present statements at official meetings.

Since 2006, with efforts from women’s groups such as femLINKPACIFIC (which also coordinates a regional media and policy network on SCR 1325 linking advocates in Fiji, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Tonga), gender concerns have been incorporated into each annual agenda. One key outcome is that the Political Division now convenes a bi- yearly dialogue with women and civil society groups to inform FRSC deliberations and engage together on regional peace and security issues. FemLINKPACIFIC and other CSO networks, such as GPPAC Pacific and the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre also have an opportunity to submit regular briefing papers to the FRSC process.

FemLINKPACIFIC’s policy focus is to realize a strong gender architecture in national and regional processes by supporting Regional Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security which would provide a broad framework to assist Forum Members to



develop national programs and implement SCRs 1325 and 1820. This work is needed both to institutionalize current agreements and to complete viable National Action Plans. Further, this will enable the development of a Track II process for civil society groups to dialogue with government officials (at capitol and divisional level) and provide oversight on issues concerning gender and security policy.

The organization also seeks to translate its security agenda to the community and divisional level (local districts) by strengthening its own Women, Peace and Security architecture. A key barrier noted by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls at femLINK is the lack of sustained resources to maintain the information and communication processes needed to help women at the local level contribute towards defining their own security. “Women market vendors have to sit at the market. They don’t get invited to workshops – we need to go to them.”<sup>clii</sup> To counteract this problem the organization provides resources for monthly SCR 1325 meetings conducted by its rural and regional network correspondents. In Fiji, femLINKPACIFIC works to convene regular consultations and conducts community radio broadcasts, which enable women from rural communities to share their stories, testimonies and concerns. This is documented and looped back into the Track II dialogue.<sup>cliii</sup>

## **Sierra Leone and Liberia (Women Peace and Security Network Africa): Training for Accountability and Responsiveness to Gender Equality and Women’s Rights**

Women’s organizations and human rights groups have been demanding a larger participatory role and greater accountability

for the rights of women in the security sector. West African countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia have been targeted by NGOs to shape their Security Sector reform through a gender lens. SSR is expected to ensure more responsive and accountable delivery of security as a public good to all citizens. However, as Ecoma Alaga, a Gender and Security Sector Reform expert from The Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) proclaims, “for women the promise of this new vision of security is elusive because of the increasing spate of violence and discrimination that is targeted at women, especially in situations of armed violence...the security sector is often lagging behind in the responsibility to protect, prevent and or/respond to violence against women.”<sup>cliv</sup>

According to Ms. Alaga, the participation of women and the integration of gender and women's rights perspectives in SSR can help to decrease gender-based violence. Similarly, the Project Coordinator at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Kristin Valasek, emphasized the importance of the increased participation of women instead of solely responding to women as victims and placing all of the attention on protection.<sup>clv</sup>

WIPSEN and DCAF jointly developed and launched a 'Gender and SSR' project to provide a gender lens on reform processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The project began with a 'needs-assessment' in which various personnel were interviewed. Those interviewed included a mix of female security personnel, male heads of security institutions, and members of non-traditional security agencies (such as civil society, parliamentarians, private security companies, traditional and religious leaders). WIPSEN found that a new strategy

needed to be implemented when addressing SSR. This strategy aimed to change the perception of gender-in-security discussions and processes from being seen strictly as a “women’s issue” to one of national security.<sup>clvi</sup>

New thinking and capacities were needed to advance this strategy. Consequently in the first phase, WIPSEN trained a number of security actors including the parliamentary committees on defence and security, the technical committee of the Justice Sector Coordination Office, civil society women’s groups, female security sector personnel, and personnel of the Gender Ministry. All were educated on the language and process of SSR and gender issues. After the first trainings it became clear that greater engagement on the part of the male dominated heads of the Ministry of Defence and policing units was needed to attain further progress.

In July 2009, WIPSEN along with DCAF engaged in trainings with the senior ranking officials at the Ministry of Defence (including Chief of Staff) in Sierra Leone.<sup>clvii</sup> These interventions resulted in the development of a gender policy and gender training manual for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). In line with the national security strategy of Sierra Leone, WIPSEN also organized a series of interventions that were targeted at decentralized security structures (namely the Provincial and District Security Committees –PROSECs and DISECs). This included a set of trainings that took place in the communities to ensure that gender and women’s rights perspective are instilled in community security processes, institutions and structures.

The positive impact of these initiatives was highlighted when the Chief of Staff committed to gender training for all commanders down the chain of command, which culminated in the development

of a gender policy and gender training manual specifically on how to integrate women's rights perspectives into the operations and procedures of the RSLAF. In addition to this, the minister committed to increase female recruitment from 4% to 30%, commission a sexual harassment board, and request the National Security Council to appoint an Assistant Chief of Staff to head the gender directorate which is to be created within the Ministry of Defence.<sup>clviii</sup> Through focused trainings at the community level, WIPSEN facilitated the creation of networks of community women to monitor security structures at local levels. These networks have been established in three districts and in addition to monitoring have become a conduit for channeling the specific security needs and concerns of women to the PROSECs and DISECs. Once received by the DISECs and PROSECs such information is then passed to the national level to create important security linkages.<sup>clix</sup>

The main obstacle found by WIPSEN was the absence of other women's groups also committed to engaging in SSR, "This is a man's world – many women's groups are intimidated by the security world and stick to broader peacebuilding issues".<sup>clx</sup> Funding has also been a difficult obstacle, or rather the labeling is the problem. Some funders are reluctant to get involved with something they see specifically as a "women's issue", because they do not see how it benefits them.<sup>clxi</sup>

## **Serbia and Kosovo (Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe and UNIFEM): Security in the Balkans**

During the protracted conflict in the Balkans, community and family members found themselves taking security measures into their own

hands due to fears of the Serbian police. The former Serb police would frequently commit more abuse than provide protection for the population.<sup>clxii</sup> Women in present day Kosovo still face immense challenges related to sexual violence, trafficking, and domestic abuse.<sup>clxiii</sup>

In addressing the gender dimensions of what is now a post-conflict situation, international and local organizations have initiated gender-mainstreaming programs in the security sector. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) launched a project known as “Enhancing Response” that trained over 7,000 police officers to address cases of domestic and sexual violence. Further, to implement a gender-sensitive police force, women were recruited into the sector and now make up 15% of the Kosovo Police (KP).<sup>clxiv</sup> UNIFEM has also collaborated with the KP to develop a gender architecture comprised of the newly established Human Rights and Gender Equality Unit, Gender Focal points in each of 30 stations, a KP Internal Advisory Board on Gender Equality, and a KP Gender Equality Task Force. The Security and Gender Coordination Group (SGCG) initiated by UNIFEM brings together all UN agencies, other multilateral security players, KP leadership and Government of Kosovo officials at Deputy Prime minister or ministerial level. In June 2009 the SGCG contributed directly to the Kosovo Security Strategy.<sup>clxv</sup>

National and Regional organizations have also mobilized women in the Balkans to cross ethnic lines to discuss common security and judicial issues. The Regional Women’s Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWLSEE) is one of the groups that has brought together women leaders from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and

Serbia. In 2008 with financial support from UNIFEM, RWLSEE convened its members to discuss security concerns relating to transitional justice, security sector reform and peacekeeping. The meeting resulted in programs to deepen connections across borders, develop a common strategy and guidelines on security sector reform, and issue a joint statement addressing security gaps. Participants also arranged for high-level meetings to discuss SCR 1325 with policy leaders as well as prepare official letters to governments and embassies.<sup>clxvi</sup>

However, women's participation and gender mainstreaming in Serbia and Kosovo remains difficult given the history of ethnic hostility, noted Ana Lukatela an independent program consultant on women, peace, and security for UNIFEM Southeast Europe. Ms. Lukatela also highlighted institutional and patriarchal structures that limit engagement. "Women want to be involved, however, if they show support they have to do it behind the scenes... there is minimal institutional setup to bring women in the peace process and civil society is at times ignored."<sup>clxvii</sup>

In order to counteract these challenges, UNIFEM and other organizations in the region find it important to engage with government agencies and senior officials. "UNFEM's good relationship with the Chief of Police in Kosovo resulted in his active engagement on gender issues, keeping the agenda inside the rank."<sup>clxviii</sup>

Despite the difficult territory women in Kosovo and Serbia must navigate, they have experienced significant improvement in terms of gender equity with the creation of the first law in Serbia addressing gender equality and anti discrimination. This law has facilitated development of the SCR 1325 National Action Plan for Serbia. As highlighted by Natasa Petrovic of the Belgrade Fund for Political

Excellence, “Ministries are already stating that all gender laws are important and are being placed as higher priorities. This is opening a whole new perspective.”<sup>elxix</sup>

## **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)**

Women are increasingly involved in combat, either voluntarily as armed combatants or as forced members of armed groups (war wives, child/girl soldiers, cooks/porters). However, most DDR programs focus on male combatants and fail to account for the large number of women associated with armed factions. Many programs also fail to recognize the multiple roles played by women from fighters to porters, rendering many women ineligible to access the services and benefit packages they need. “The term ‘combatant’ needs to be broadened to include women and girls who are not armed.”<sup>elxx</sup> Women are not only impacted as physical participants in armed forces but also by the return of men who have been disarmed. The failure to place a gender lens on DDR programs through addressing interpersonal issues including hostile or biased attitudes towards women can translate into an increased risk of gender-based violence for many women in post- conflict situations.

The magnitude of female involvement in combat is reinforced by recent data. Over the last decade women/girls have been a part of fighting forces in 55 countries and been involved in armed conflict in 38 countries (internal conflicts). The proportion of female participation in national armies, guerrilla or armed liberation movements varies, ranging from 10% to 33% of total combatants. In Sri Lanka women made up 33% of fighting forces, while 25% of the combatants of El Salvador’s Farbundo Marti National

Liberation Front, and 30% of soldiers and leaders of Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front were women.<sup>clxxi</sup>

A critical phase in any DDR program is reintegration. Female ex-combatants usually suffer the most in this process as fear of stigmatization from their community and families causes many women to remove themselves from the system and its potential services. Furthermore, reproductive health needs such as women who have been raped, forcibly impregnated, or infected with HIV/AIDS are often excluded from reintegration programs, further marginalizing these women.

SCR 1325 notes the importance of women's inclusion in DDR programs, stating that "all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents." The UN has also undertaken numerous initiatives to include gender perspectives into the programs. The United Nations International Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) cross-cutting section 5.1 is dedicated to Women, Gender and DDR.<sup>clxxii</sup> IDDRS carefully outlines why and how women need to be included in DDR. Greater access to and consideration of women within DDR programs is intricately linked to women's participation at the peace table and negotiations. Insisting on the participation of women representatives at the negotiations, ensuring they understand DDR-related clauses and insisting on their active involvement in DDR planning phases aids the greater inclusion of women's needs within a wider DDR process.

While knowledge and awareness of women's direct and indirect involvement in combat are increasing, the current reality still remains



grim. DDR programs tend to “focus on neutralizing the most potentially dangerous members of a society (because of limits imposed by the size of the DDR budget); but leaving women out of the process underestimates the extent to which sustainable peace-building and security require them to participate equally in social transformation.”<sup>clxxxiii</sup>

## **Nepal (Transcultural Psychosocial Organization and Center for Victims of Torture): Filling the DDR Gap**

*“My family doesn’t accept me and society looks at me with hatred,” Rachna Shabi, former PLA soldier, 2010*

In a county where over 20% of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) ex-combatants are female (often girls under the age of 18), ensuring that gender perspectives are integrated into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is critical. In February 2010, 3,000 combatants (of which a third were women) were discharged from the PLA.<sup>clxxxiv</sup> Many female ex combatants “who were treated as equals in the PLA and bore arms, are now encountering rejection from their communities and struggling with traditional female roles.”<sup>clxxxv</sup>

With the disarmament and demobilization components of the Nepal program near completion, a significant gap still remains for many of these female ex-combatants regarding the rehabilitation section of the program. UN agencies have developed rehabilitation packages including vocational training, sponsored schooling and health education training. Yet many combatants are dealing with the psychosocial trauma of reintegrating into communities and the ‘double stigma’ of being associated with armed groups combined

with having transgressed social norms of female behavior that implicate their ‘sexual purity’.<sup>clxxvi</sup>

In seeking to address these DDR gaps two organizations -- Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) and the Center for Victims of Torture (CVICT) -- have started to provide counseling services to these combatants upon their release. Most women require counseling prior to release but these NGOs were not given access to the soldiers when they were in the camps. According to Jamuna Poudel of CVICT, “A holistic approach is needed to help their proper rehabilitation and reintegration. [They] have specific needs and face more difficulties than the male [ex-] combatants.” Through identifying specific needs of the female ex-combatants both organizations have tailored specific counseling programs to address issues of female identity, reproductive health concerns, gender based violence and child support.<sup>clxxvii</sup>

Both organizations noted that accessing female combatants was key. Due to the stigmatization that sometimes accompanies association with a DDR program, many women ‘self demobilized’, drifting back to their families or disappearing from the system altogether. To tackle this problem CVICT approaches village development committees as well as community meetings to aid with identification of eligible female participants for reintegration counseling services.

The availability and customization of these psychosocial services for former women and girl combatants are critical. Often the most vulnerable and marginalized, these women if neglected easily slip through the cracks of society, becoming easy targets for trafficking and sinking deeper into poverty.

## Democratic Republic of Congo (Caritas): Reintegration of Demobilized Female Ex-Combatants

*“...the social situation for female ex-combatants is really difficult. Most of them were forcibly recruited while going to work in the fields or fetching water. They have endured really difficult moments in the armed groups. Now that they are demobilized, they live in precarious conditions.” Boniface Nakwagelewi, Caritas Project Manager, 2008*

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) began the Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project (EDRP) in 2004 to reintegrate thousands of ex-combatants back into society. The first phase of the project ended in Dec 2006, at which point EDRP had processed 186,000 combatants, of which 132,000 were demobilized including 30,000 children and 2,670 women.<sup>clxxviii</sup> This was followed by ‘Programme National de Desarmement, Demobilization et Reintegration’ (PNDDR), which included “a gender study and formulation of a strategy for women associated with armed groups.”<sup>clxxix</sup> According to Noeleen Heyzer (UNIFEM former executive director), “peace in the Great Lakes Region... hinges on transforming soldiers into citizens... peace and democracy hinge on the equitable participation of women, men, boys and girls in all reconstruction processes, including demobilization and reintegration.”<sup>clxxx</sup>

Although efforts through PNDDR have helped disarm ex-combatants, problems after demobilization are prevalent particularly in the case of female ex-combatants. Often women and girls are forced into armed groups and when they try to assimilate back into society, the widespread assumption that they have lost their ‘sexual purity’ marginalizes them from their community.<sup>clxxx</sup> Other discriminations include fears that former military commanders

will come after the female ex-combatants, that these women will influence bad behavior of other girls in the community, or that the girls have developed militaristic behavior and will not re-assimilate into the accepted gender norms of the community.<sup>clxxxii</sup>

Both Caritas and the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) have developed a special initiative: LEAP (Learning for Equality, Access and Peace). LEAP has sought to address the many challenges faced by women in the DDR process. The project's goal is to fully support female ex-combatants in reintegration. Women receive training in household and business management, awareness of gender based violence, and skills needed for income-generating activities. Boniface Nakwagelew, Caritas Project Manager, remarks on LEAP's significance: "This project is important because it will help these women's socio-economic reintegration. It will help them take charge of themselves and their dependents."<sup>clxxxiii</sup> The program utilizes a selection committee, including representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the PNDDR implementation unit. 200 applicants are then chosen to participate of which 140 are female ex-combatants. The rest are local community members including men, elders and other women. The program runs for 10 months, beginning with sensitization training for the local communities on gender based violence and including basic literacy and numerical skills for the participants.

This initiative illustrates a more community based re-integration approach that benefits both the local population and ex-combatants. Reflecting on past re-integration programs Caritas has found higher success rates if the local community is involved in the DDR initiative. Overall, DDR programs administrated from government and UN agencies often ignore the special needs of women and

children. Organizations like Caritas have helped to re-integrate women alongside their community so that they are not stigmatized and can return successfully to their former lives.

## Peacekeeping

*“When a crowd needs to be controlled, a house searched or a suspect questioned, a policewoman’s presence can defuse tension and guard against offense. When women and girls suffer sexual violence, they know they will find a sympathetic ear. And when they see female role models keeping the peace, we have seen women and girls become inspired to join the force and do the same. These are all key ingredients for a durable peace.”<sup>elxxxiv</sup> - Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon, speech to General Assembly, 4 June 2010*

Peacekeeping missions have grown more complex and multidimensional, with an increased emphasis in peacekeeping mandates focused on civilian protection, especially of women and children. With the expansion of peacekeeping missions there has been a growing recognition of the importance of women’s participation in missions and of the need to mainstream a gender perspective at all levels of peacekeeping activities. Such was noted in SCR 1325 which called “for expansion of women’s role and contribution in UN peacekeeping activities.”<sup>elxxxv</sup>

In 2006 (and updated guidelines in March 2010), The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) issued a policy directive on Gender Equality on UN Peacekeeping Operations, defining and describing the requirements to ensure equal participation of women in peacekeeping. This was followed by the launch of an international campaign in August 2009 to increase the percentage of female peacekeepers to 20% in police units, and 10% in military units, by 2014.<sup>elxxxvi</sup>

In this regard the UN and Member States can point to some successes with the deployment of all-female Indian Formed Police Units (FPU) to Liberia<sup>clxxxvii</sup> and more recently the deployment of an all female Bangladeshi FPU to Haiti.<sup>clxxxviii</sup> The immediate benefits seemed clear to Khanam Rocktar, commander of the Bangladeshi Female FPU serving in Haiti with MINUSTAH: “Sometimes distressed people among the women feel it easier to talk to women. Women have some kind of natural qualities. It is to help distressed people. I think that might [help] the Haitian people as well as the UN.”<sup>clxxxix</sup>

While gender-mainstreaming programs are underway, women’s participation in missions remains low. As of May 2010, only 2.3% of 88,661 military peacekeepers serving in UN missions worldwide were women (2.18% in 2008).<sup>cx</sup> The area with the greatest improvement has been in UN police where approximately 8.2% of the 13,221 police personnel are women, a doubling of ranks in the past three years.<sup>cxci</sup>

Analysis of peacekeeping missions indicates that women are particularly well suited to carry out diverse and important peacekeeping tasks, such as interviewing victims of sexual and gender-based violence, working in women’s prisons, assisting female ex-combatants, and mentoring female police officers.<sup>cxcii</sup> This was illustrated in the UNMIL mission (Liberia) where the presence of women in uniform in 2007 appeared to encourage Liberian women to report crimes of sexual violence.<sup>cxci</sup>

Peacekeeping has always been a difficult arena for civil society and women’s organizations to access and contribute their skills and expertise. In our research, while seeking grassroots organizational activity, minimal available information led us to larger non-profits and peacekeeping centers for interviews and data analysis.

## **Sudan - UNAMID and UNMIS (The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre): Gender- Sensitive Capacity Building**

The conflicts in Sudan have seen the Security Council authorize two peacekeeping missions: the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), located in south Sudan, and the AU-UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Member States have slowly been increasing the female representation of these missions, with UNAMID having 695 female peacekeeping personnel,<sup>exciv</sup> and another 200 female police officers from Rwanda recently being qualified for peacekeeping deployment.<sup>excv</sup> While women's participation is increasing, levels of gender-specific training and knowledge are often limited (both for men and women). Furthermore, cultural barriers and negative perceptions of women in military and police have often restricted women's participation and compounded challenges for women already in missions.

The high incidence of sexual and gender based violence in Sudan, however, has compelled Sudanese women's organizations to work more closely with the peacekeeping missions. On June 10, 2010 forty women representing women's organizations and peace groups from all over Sudan gathered at the UNMIS compound in Khartoum to demand an "increase in the number of women recruited in the security sector" to help address gender-based violence issues. They presented their demands to Inés Alberdi, the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Jasbir Singh Lidder, UNMIS Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG), and also called for the establishment of peacekeeping team sites for the protection of women.

In their efforts to fulfill obligations under SCR 1325, Canada's

Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC) provides expertise and advice on the integration of gender perspectives in training and education, the implementation and monitoring of SCR 1325 and 1820 in peacekeeping missions, and the development of strategies to promote the meaningful participation of women in their national organization and in peace operations (in particular during recruitment, retention, promotion, deployment and reintegration processes). The Centre also provides specialized training for police, military and civilian personnel.<sup>cxvii</sup>

Specific to gender-sensitive capacity building in Sudan, during 2008 and 2009 the PPC delivered eight Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) courses to 208 police officers (175 women and 33 men) working with the UNAMID mission in Darfur. More recently, in June and July 2010, the PPC delivered three SGBV courses in Khartoum, Sudan in which 72 female police officers from UNMIS, UNAMID, the Government of Sudan and the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) took part.<sup>cxviii</sup> The objective of the courses is to strengthen interviewing, mentoring and report writing skills of police officers to help them prevent and/or respond to sexual and gender-based crimes. Other Pearson trainings (not exclusive to UNAMID or UNMIS) include all-female UN pre-deployment police courses, mentoring and leadership courses, ‘women in peace operations’ seminars and capacity building workshops. By offering these courses and trainings, the PPC not only enhances the skills of female police officers, but also provides a safe environment for sharing experiences, learning and practicing skills, and building confidence.<sup>cxviii</sup>



## D. Justice (Reform and Access)

Achieving justice for women in countries torn by war and violence is immensely difficult. This involves addressing struggling state institutions, societal shifts and accounting for perpetrators and victims. Justice can also be formulated in a multitude of combinations; retributive (settlement involving punishment or revenge); restitutive (involving recovery of losses, reparations or compensation); and restorative (restoring or healing relationships between conflicting parties).<sup>ccix</sup> Developing accountability and ending impunity requires reform of harmful domestic laws and practices, ensuring that women are empowered to claim their rights, increasing women's access to justice, and developing reforms that promote accountability for gender-based crimes.<sup>cc</sup>

It is also critical that women participate in the judicial process as planners and designers of gender justice mechanisms (truth commissions, national legislation), as lawyers and judges, and as civil society advocates monitoring and holding the State accountable for inclusive justice reform.

*International jurisprudence has helped bring about significant progress in attaining justice for women. Bodies like the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone have prosecuted rape and sexual violence as crimes against humanity and even as a component of genocide.<sup>cci</sup> According to UNIFEM the International Criminal Court (ICC) is “one of the most significant examples of gender mainstreaming in an international treaty. It explicitly includes rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity.”<sup>ccii</sup>*

While progress is clear in the domain of international law there

has often been insufficient translation at the national level. Many countries operate under archaic laws that discriminate against women and curtail their access to justice. Women especially face enormous barriers to accessing justice in the aftermath of armed conflict. This is often due to a lack of awareness about women-friendly legal services (coupled with high illiteracy), a fear of repercussion and a climate of impunity.<sup>cciii</sup> These barriers have meant that while there were 538 cases of rape documented during Peru's civil war, only 2 cases have been brought to the courts.<sup>cciv</sup> Further, over 3,800 women and girls have been killed in Guatemala since 2000, yet only 1-2% of these crimes have been prosecuted.<sup>ccv</sup>

Representation of women across most public sector institutions remains significantly low and this is especially true in the judiciary. A recent, 'Women and Conflict' report found that only one-third of international courts have more than 30% women judges and more than two-thirds of the countries surveyed have fewer than 25% women judges on their Supreme Court benches.<sup>ccvi</sup> The importance of women at all levels of the judicial system is seen as critical for addressing gender based crimes, as female victims may feel more comfortable and safer when dealing with female police, investigators, lawyers and judges.

Women's organizations have been at the forefront demanding reform and access to justice. As noted by Richard Goldstone, former Chief prosecutor of the ICTY "if women had not been involved with the tribunal in its early years, there might not have been any indictments for gender-based crimes."<sup>ccvii</sup> The cases below illustrate some examples of women's integral role in the area of judicial reform, in both legislative and institutional aspects of the system.

## Myanmar (Women’s League of Burma): Gender Justice

*“There is no rule of law in Burma – generals are above the law.” - Phyu Phyu Sann, Global Justice Center and on behalf of Women’s League of Burma, 2010*

Burma (Myanmar) is a country marked by ongoing violence and repression, ruled by a military junta that has been condemned by the international community but continues to enlist child soldiers, employs sexual violence against women and forcibly displaces its population with impunity.<sup>ccviii</sup>

This culture of impunity was institutionalized in the 2008 constitution, which states “no proceeding shall be instituted against the Councils or any member thereof or any member of the Government, in respect of any act done in the execution of their respective duties.”<sup>ccix</sup> It also allows amnesties for sexual violence against ethnic women in conflict.<sup>ccx</sup> The devastating nature of the new constitution<sup>ccxi</sup> spurred many Burmese organizations into advocacy and campaign action in the effort to highlight a situation that affects so much of the population (and especially women).

The Women’s league of Burma (WLB), comprised of 12 women’s organizations of different ethnic groups, has been working with local and international NGOs to highlight gender injustice in Burma and the critical need for judicial reform. According to the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School sexual violence in the country has reached levels tantamount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. Furthermore, Burmese women’s organizations have documented 875 cases of rape, which is believed to be a ‘drop in the ocean’ due to lack of reporting, difficulty accessing victims and cultural stigma.<sup>ccxii</sup>

To raise awareness of gender injustice and the need for criminal accountability the WLB together with the Nobel Women's Initiative held a 'mock trial' in March 2010, bringing together key advocates, victims and international lawyers. Termed the "People's Tribunal", it provided a unique forum for women to tell their stories and raise awareness of the suffering endured by the Burmese women and their communities. At the conclusion of the trial, those involved presented trial outcomes - including demands that the international community ask the UN Secretary General to refer Burma to the International Criminal Court.<sup>ccxiii</sup>

WLB also continues to work with its organizational partners like the 'Karen' women's organization to document gender-based crimes in their ethnic areas. Through local networks and access to internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugee camps, the partner organizations keep a record of crimes, which the WLB then analyzes and documents. This is a critical step in legal fact-finding and evidence gathering for prosecution and accountability.<sup>ccxiv</sup> Partnership with the Burma Lawyers Council has also enhanced adoption of a gender sensitive approach in their constitutional analysis. This approach facilitated calls for a Commission of Inquiry to investigate gender-based crimes and start the process of addressing criminal accountability.<sup>ccxv</sup>

The long road towards gender justice in Burma continues through the determined work of these local and international organizations. Improved access for women victims, documentation and greater public awareness of the need for criminal accountability are all significant successes. Khin Ohmar, a founding member of the Women's League of Burma noted a critical success factor being, "women uniting and working systematically, to encourage more

women to engage in critical issues and promote the idea that women have to take joint responsibility for Burma's development."<sup>ccxvi</sup> Phyu Phyu Sann of the Global Justice Center reinforced this organizational philosophy noting that WLB's collaborative approach and 12-member organizational strength has increased its reach, resources and credibility.

### **Tajikistan (INIS and American Bar Association, Rule of Law Initiative): Legal Clinics and Theatre to Promote Women's Access**

The 1992-97 Civil War between the Moscow-backed government and the Islamist-led opposition, while ending with a UN brokered peace agreement, continues to leave its scars. With a large percentage of the male population killed in the Tajik civil war many households are now headed by women, which has created new legal hurdles in relation to inheritance, land rights and protection from violence.<sup>ccxvii</sup> Tajikistan has legislation in place that in principle upholds equality for all citizens; however in reality the "enforcement of these legislations are hampered by gender stereotypes, and strong patriarchal views and practices, which have made little difference in promoting women's rights."<sup>ccxviii</sup>

To counter gender stereotypes and improve access to justice mechanisms, the local organization INIS (an independent, indigenous NGO) operates women's legal advocacy centers in Dushanbe and Khujand. Lawyers from INIS access women through a network of crisis centers, shelters and health care facilities and provide legal consultation. Recently the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) initiated a two-year program in partnership with INIS and the Tajikistan League of Women Lawyers

to support litigation in local courts (and international tribunals) and boost gender-equality legislation.

A key element of the INIS program is informing and educating rural women on their legal rights and challenging existing stereotypes. Lawyers travel to remote districts, establish roving pro bono legal clinics, and train local attorneys in both substantive areas of the law and in trial techniques. Topics of legal advice include domestic violence, inheritance and employment discrimination. The program is also looking to litigate six cases to bring attention to women's rights and runs a concurrent awareness-raising media campaign.<sup>ccxix</sup>

An innovative component of the program is the use of theater to highlight gender sensitive issues. Theatre is a powerful medium in Tajikistan, especially in areas with limited access to television, radio or print media. The project partnered with Theatre Padida (well-known Tajik troupe), and commissioned a production addressing issues of gender equality. More than 600 people have seen the play in the three districts. The program and play have also encouraged government officials to engage more fully on gender issues.<sup>ccxx</sup>

### III. Obstacles and Local Responses to Women's Participation

This report has sought to share creative and pertinent programmatic information in the area of women's participation in various stages of peace processes, through numerous interviews with women's organizations and civil society representatives. A critical component of the analysis is to understand the range of obstacles faced by these individuals and organizations - across diverse regions with multiple political, cultural, social and ethnic dimensions.

Women's organizations demonstrate over and over their tenacity through their innovative responses to overcoming barriers to full participation, utilizing partners and champions, networks and training. These and other hopeful local responses offer evidence that a decade after the passing of SCR 1325, some lasting change is taking place, with regional, national and local women's and civil society organizations at the heart of this change.

Table 1: Summary of Obstacles and Local Responses

	Obstacle	Local Response
Peacemaking	Ethnic divisions & polarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Spitting sessions' to share concerns</li> <li>• Networks bringing together women from both sides of the conflict</li> <li>• Utilizing popular media to create an open space for dialogue</li> </ul>

	<b>Lack of formal place for women at the mediation table</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All female delegation to negotiate with local parties</li> <li>• Informal ‘hallway’ lobbying and support for female mediator</li> </ul>
	<b>Traditional gender roles and cultural barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing wives of traditional leaders</li> <li>• Trainings to nurture ‘supportive men’</li> </ul>
	<b>Gap between government obligation and action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of mass media and high level summits to pressure governments</li> <li>• Formation of ‘gender expert support team’</li> </ul>
	<b>Lack of cultivation of local female leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of networks to share knowledge and best practices</li> <li>• Early warning program-with civil society and local government to cultivate negotiation and leadership skills</li> <li>• Re-education of communities with ‘traditional’ understandings of female mediation roles</li> </ul>
<b>Political Participation</b>	<b>Fragmentation and lack of unified advocacy strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Local to Local’ dialogue to access local government authorities</li> <li>• ‘Team 1325’ designed to train and help women contest for local and provisional elections.</li> </ul>



	<b>Closing governmental and legislative gaps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring local government and fulfillment of quotas</li> <li>• Lobbying village religious authorities</li> </ul>
	<b>Familial obligations and time constraints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding and assistance in organizing political campaigns</li> <li>• Governance networks to support women seeking candidacy</li> <li>• Mobile training units to access women unable to leave their families</li> </ul>
	<b>Lack of resources, education and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shadow training and exchange programs</li> <li>• Grants for voter registration education and campaign assistance</li> <li>• Training programs and orientation workshops for female parliamentarians</li> <li>• Literacy programs for couples</li> <li>• Published roster of qualified female candidates</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	<b>Lack of consultation with community networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access local women and translate needs to regional Track II process</li> <li>• Integrate local security monitoring into national policy</li> </ul>

	<b>Traditional patriarchal structures and institutional barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training heads of defense ministry and policing units</li> <li>• Organizing cross border security dialogue</li> </ul>
	<b>Lack of attention to female ex-combatants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village committees utilized to identify ex-combatants</li> <li>• Sensitization programs</li> </ul>
<b>Justice</b>	<b>Culture of impunity and lack of accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock trial on gender crimes</li> </ul>
	<b>Lack of documentation and access to victims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender crime evidence gathering and documentation</li> <li>• Mobile legal clinics</li> </ul>

## Obstacles and Local Responses to Women's Participation: Narrative

### Peacemaking

**Ethnic divisions & polarization.** In some circumstances the complexity of women's identities (ethnic, political) made a single voice and platform difficult to attain, as noted in the Kenyan case study with women's diverging agendas mirroring the polarization in the society. This was reinforced in the West African case study with divisions sometimes leading to conflicting goals and difficulties in managing networks. In the Northern Caucasus, the women who came together realized their commonalities were greater than their differences. It is important to understand that women of diverse interests exist within the same, often polarized communities and thus solutions need to recognize and address these differences.

#### *Local Response:*

- In Kenya the organization of 'spitting sessions' to share concerns, air different views and develop a common agenda.
- In the Northern Caucasus creating networks that bring together women from all sides of the conflict to create mutual understanding and a sustainable peace-building platform.
- In West Africa utilizing popular media such as the 'Voice of Women' radio program to create an open space for dialogue and reconciliation.

**Lack of a formal place for women at the mediation table.** This common theme was highlighted by many organizations and is reflective of the low participation levels of women on negotiating

teams. This is compounded by a lack of clear mandates for formally engaging women, thereby adding to the exclusion. As noted in the Kenyan case, space needs to be reserved for women's (not party) interests that can be championed by both men and women. Women's place at the table is critical but women representation may not "automatically lead to advancement of women's concerns in a peace agreement."

*Local Response:*

- In Kenya, mediation teams initiated informal 'hallway' discussions, lobbying president's wives and supporting engaged female negotiators.
- In the Philippines (Mindanao), an all female delegation negotiates with local leaders and shows the "strength and commitment" of the women for peace.

**Traditional gender roles and cultural barriers.** Deep-rooted cultural and patriarchal structures (especially in male dominated processes such as peace negotiations) often result in women being barred from accessing information and expressing opinions. In the Cameroon case, cultural structures often prevented rural women from becoming involved in local peace initiatives. In the Netherlands program (conducted in Africa) changing men's views was seen as key towards long term transformation.

*Local Response:*

In Cameroon, accessing the 'Queens' within highly traditional societies to influence the Chiefs (Fons) and provide role models to women in local/rural communities.

In the Netherlands (Africa programs), conducting trainings to

nurture “supportive men” within the peacebuilding community and slowly shift attitudes.

**Gaps between government obligation and action.** The gap between ‘words and action’ was consistently quoted as a challenge by organizations. This was noted in the Philippines case study: even with the implementation of a SCR 1325 national action plan and female ministry level leadership, female representation at the peace table only came about after much civil society pressure. In Sudan extensive international and women’s network pressure was also required to gain entry into the peace process.

*Local Response:*

- In the Philippines, mass media was used to draw attention to the situation of women in Mindanao and high-level summits were utilized to pressure the government into addressing women’s participation in the peace process.
- In Sudan (Darfur), international support was utilized to form ‘gender expert support teams’ within the mediation process.

**Lack of cultivation of local female leadership.** Lack of technical leadership training and the unwillingness to promote (and support) women’s leadership within local communities are major impediments. Often cultivation is confined to elite urban centers, with minimal investment in localized leadership in rural areas.

*Local Response:*

- In West Africa, development of networks to share knowledge and best practices.

- Involvement of women in an early warning system (on monitoring gender based violence) thereby facilitating civil society and local governments public acceptance of women's role in decision-making processes and providing experience with government negotiations and processes.
- In Ghana, reeducation of communities regarding the role of women elders in the community.

## Political Participation

**Fragmentation and lack of unified advocacy strategies.** The power of women operating as a collective with a unified message was seen as a sophisticated (but sometimes elusive) strategy in promoting women's engagement. As noted in the Nepal case study, the unity which existed during the height of the conflict fragmented with the onset of peace: "When women's organizations have lobbied for a joint cause, it has been largely successful. But afterwards they have fragmented again, and the lack of concerted efforts has weakened their political influence."<sup>ccxxi</sup> The Ugandan case study also highlighted the importance of accessing rural (and often poor) women into dialogue to provide a stronger voice and local ownership. A further disconnect was highlighted in the Sri Lankan case study with a lack of cohesion between organizations focusing on advocacy/policy and those providing direct services to communities.

### *Local Response:*

- In Uganda, providing forums through 'Local to Local' dialogue for women to voice their concerns as a collective and access local government authorities.
- In Sri Lanka, 'Team 1325' was designed to train and help

women contest for local and provisional elections, and expand participation by women in local communities.

**Closing governmental and legislative gaps.** Many interviewees explained that women were often utilized as ‘tools’ for peace but continue to be excluded from decision-making roles in both negotiations and government. Participants noted that senior government officials often lacked the motivation to push the agenda of women’s participation. In addition, established quotas for government participation could be manipulated if women weren’t brought into leadership positions, thereby reducing women to ‘political puppets.’ A critical legislative gap highlights the inconsistency of quotas and reservation policies among federal and district/ local levels as noted in the India (Manipur) and Nepal cases.

*Local Response:*

- In Nepal, monitoring of the ‘local peace committees’ (at the district level) to ensure committees abide by federal reservation policies.
- In India (Manipur), lobbying village religious authorities (churches, mosques, temples) to encourage more local engagement by women and to advocate for more equal representation on village committees.

**Familial obligations and time constraints.** Most women referred to the high level of time and resource investment required for participation in the political process. Such participation could require women to simultaneously organize campaigns, attend campaign meetings, work long and difficult hours in parliament (and local

government) and manage family commitments.

*Local Response:*

- In Sudan, funding and other assistance are provided to women in organizing their political campaigns.
- In India (Manipur), the “Women in Governance” network has been developed to support women seeking to become political candidates. Mobile training in the Hill districts is provided to access more remote communities.

**Lack of resources, education and training.** This barrier was the most commonly stated among organizations and from our analysis is the most widely addressed by funders and civil society.

*Local Response:*

- In Iraq, shadow training and exchange programs where women obtain direct experience from overseas parliamentarians (USA and France) on governance, democracy and legislation.
- In Nepal, the ‘Who is Who of Nepali Women’ publication contains the names of 3,000 qualified Nepali women.
- In Sudan, providing grants prior to elections for training, voter registration education and campaign assistance.
- In Afghanistan, organizing training programs and orientation workshops for potential female parliamentarians. Literacy programs are offered for couples to encourage women’s participation and expand the pool of female candidates.



## Security

**Lack of consultation with community networks.** Women are often the victims of violence and face grave insecurity but are rarely consulted in regards to addressing this insecurity or reshaping security structures. Women in networks and community groups often address security through innovative community strategies and policies such as the ‘torchbearers’ from the India (Manipur) case study. However, traditional security partners often fail in their efforts to translate this local knowledge and expertise into national policy.

### *Local Response:*

- In Fiji, monthly ‘1325’ meetings are conducted by rural and regional network correspondents to access local women (i.e. market vendors) and discuss security concerns.
- In Sierra Leone, creating a network at the district and local level to monitor security developments and pass information to the national security sector.

### **Traditional patriarchal structures and institutional barriers.**

Nearly all interviewees as well as the research team noted the considerable gaps that still exist as women’s groups engage the wider security, DDR and peacekeeping sectors. As highlighted in the Sierra Leone and Sudan cases, security is still a “man’s world” and many women’s organizations are intimidated by this sector. In addition, many face the barrier of seeing gender in security as a ‘women’s issue’ rather than an essential component of overall security. As noted in the Serbia/Kosovo case study, breaking stereotypes regarding how gender and security are understood has been a struggle. With minimal institutional structures and ingrained traditional and

cultural barriers many women as well as their organizations face ongoing difficulties and resistances when it comes to accessing the security sector.

*Local Response:*

- In Sierra Leone, engaging with the defence committee and training heads of the defence ministry and policing units to address institutional access in a way that has national implications beyond being a ‘gender issue’.
- In Serbia/Kosovo, organizing cross border security dialogue to share regional best practices and engage with key security personnel.

**Lack of attention to female ex-combatants.** Case studies in both Nepal and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) highlight the lack of programs in place for female ex-combatants and the barriers faced by organizations seeking to assist these women. Often organizations lack access to these combatants. In addition, due to stigmatization many self-demobilize and opt out of the system altogether. In most instances, minimal training, education and reintegration skills as well as local community rejection continue to impede the reintegration process for these women.

*Local Response:*

- In Nepal, working with village development committees and community groups to identify female participants for reintegration services.
- In the DRC, developing programs that engage female ex-combatants with local community members (elders, men, women) to sensitize the local community and provide necessary skills sets to assist reintegration.

## Justice

**Culture of impunity and lack of accountability.** This critical barrier has impeded gender justice for decades and while numerous resolutions and international obligations have called for an end to impunity, crimes continue without accountability in countries such as the DRC, Burma and Sudan.

### *Local Response:*

- In Burma/USA, organization of a mock trial called the “People’s Tribunal” that provided a unique forum for women to testify and raise international awareness about gender-based crimes.

**Lack of documentation and access to victims.** In many countries experiencing ongoing conflict, accessing victims and gathering required evidence is often difficult. This was noted in the Burma case, with much of the gender based violence occurring behind closed doors with minimal access by the international community.

### *Local Response:*

- In Burma, accessing IDP camps and local networks to document gender-based crimes in ethnic areas. Crimes are recorded, analyzed and documented as part of the evidence gathering process.
- In Tajikistan, mobile legal clinics access remote communities, provide training to local attorneys and educate women on their legal rights.

## **IV. Policy Recommendations**

This report has outlined numerous challenges facing civil society in implementing SCR 1325. The report has also highlighted a range of innovative local responses undertaken by organizations to overcome these barriers and promote women's full participation. The following policy recommendations reinforce existing local responses while providing a set of recommendations to governments, women's organizations/civil society and international actors in efforts to advance women's participation and bring more meaningful responses to our responsibilities under SCR 1325. Initial recommendations are by thematic area followed by general recommendations for target actors.

### **Category Specific Policy Recommendations**

#### **Peacemaking**

- Provide clear mandates within peace negotiations to include consultations with women's rights organizations and women leaders
- Provide training and support for civil society groups on how to effectively engage within peace processes and enhance technical and content-related expertise
- Establish networks, forums and summits enabling women to formulate a common agenda and overcome ethnic, political and social divisions
- Encourage the participation of women in peace processes at senior levels

- Encourage ‘informal’ strategies of local organizations that support long-term formal inclusion of women in peace negotiations
- Strengthen the technical capacity and awareness of men regarding the inclusion of women and incorporation of a gender lens in all stages of the peacemaking process

## **Political Participation**

- Mandate increased women’s representation in leadership and decision-making positions
- Improve education and provide capacity building training to increase the pool of women available to participate in the political sphere
- Assess country-specific dimensions of insecurity (political and economic) and their impact on participation
- Monitor provincial and local level political participation and remove quota and reservation inconsistency between federal and local political systems
- Continue to support quotas and reservation policies, while increasing women’s access to leadership positions and into decision-making roles
- Evaluate the role and impact of national Women’s Ministries

## **Security**

- Increase financial and technical assistance to women’s organizations at the local level to promote greater organizational participation in security areas such as SSR,

DDR, peacekeeping, and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control and disarmament

- Improve access to and transparency of the security sector by consulting with women's organizations and networks on how to address their security, particularly in relation to gender based violence
- Increase training of senior and mid level security personnel - men and women on gender mainstreaming and the importance of women's networks and community groups in capturing and defining local security needs

## Justice

- Support the documentation, prosecution and data gathering of women's rights abuses, specifically with regard to gender based violence
- Ensure meaningful consultations with local women's groups and civil society when constructing judicial reform or transitional justice programs
- Link discussions between civil society organizations and the security and judicial sectors to ensure gender specific rule of law decisions are discussed from a holistic perspective

## General Policy Recommendations

### Governments

- **Implement policies to enhance gender mainstreaming.** Governments must undertake gender equitable policy changes, promote training and funding, and initiate positive institutional change to enhance women's participation across peace processes and within government structures. Governments must also encourage national-level female leadership in senior positions at the UN and in other international forums.
- **National level commitments.** Governments should make national level commitments, which can include SCR 1325 National Action Plans, to ensure support for women's full participation in and leadership of peace processes. These commitments should be fully resourced, should be developed and implemented in collaboration with civil society, and should be monitored and evaluated using time-bound, results-oriented measurements.
- **Consult women's organizations.** Governments should utilize the expertise, field based experience and network capacity of women's organizations (from urban and rural communities) to understand the concerns of women and formulate gender sensitive policies. These consultations must be systematic, inclusive and long-term to ensure women's needs and aspirations are recognized through a holistic and strategic approach.

- **Remove institutional and legislative barriers.** Governments should improve access, information and transparency regarding government structures and officials, especially at the local and provincial levels. They should also ensure legislative consistency regarding compliance with international gender participation standards.
- **Women's Organizations and Civil Society.** Program evaluation & monitoring. Women's organizations and civil society must ensure programs are formulated with effective and reliable monitoring mechanisms. Evaluation should involve independent consultation and program revision should reflect key learning from those evaluations.
- **Formulation of networks.** Women's organizations and civil society should promote strong and sustainable networks at the rural and community level. Current women's networks predominantly operate in urban settings and greater efforts must be taken to access rural and community-based women's organizations. Evidence from the case studies indicate that women's organizations achieve greater success when united, presenting a common voice and agenda. Networks must also be formulated for strategic engagement rather than solely for project level support.
- **Reach out to non-traditional actors.** Women's organizations and civil society should expand training, advocacy and awareness-raising to individuals outside of the traditional 'women and

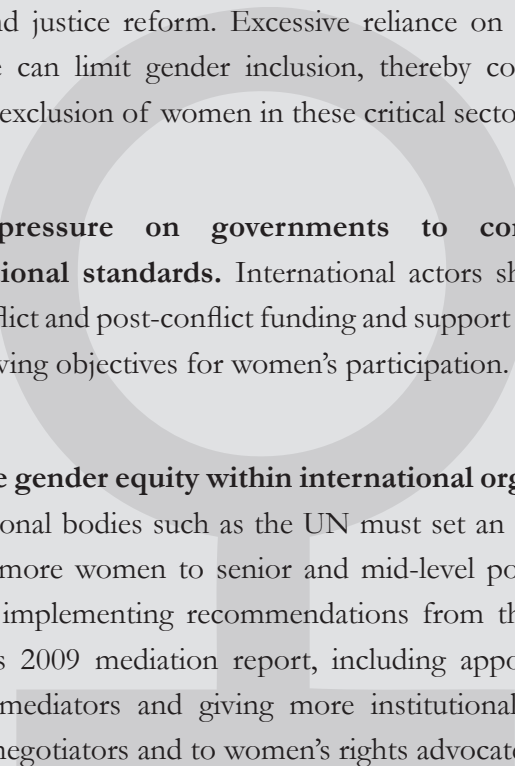


peace' community. The actors documented in the case studies often relied on men, religious communities, tribal chiefs and village leaders to create contexts for long-term transformative action in support of women's participation.

- **Develop programs in the security and judicial sectors.** Women's organizations and civil society must develop the skills and technical expertise to operate in the security and judicial sectors and ensure that women's voices are incorporated into policies that mandate gender mainstreaming within security and judicial structures.
- **Coordination between International NGOs (INGO) and local actors.** INGOs must regularly consult with local civil society networks and women's organizations, especially when INGOs consult with governments or multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, World Bank). INGOs must also ensure coordination on the ground and prevent duplication of programming and funding.

### **International Actors**

- **Increase funding of local initiatives and capacity building.** International actors must diversify funding and divert more of it to smaller grassroots organizations to help cultivate local leadership and prevent a few organizations from dominating security policy discussions. Funders must target organizations that have diligently consulted with local communities when formulating programs and policies to increase women's participation.

- 
- **Promote women's organizations in early post conflict development (especially SSR, DDR and justice reform).** International actors should enhance the skills, knowledge and technical expertise of local and regional organizations wishing to represent gender concerns within restricted sectors such as SSR, DDR and justice reform. Excessive reliance on international expertise can limit gender inclusion, thereby continuing the cycle of exclusion of women in these critical sectors.
  - **Place pressure on governments to comply with international standards.** International actors should ensure that conflict and post-conflict funding and support is dependent on achieving objectives for women's participation.
  - **Promote gender equity within international organizations.** International bodies such as the UN must set an example and appoint more women to senior and mid-level positions. This requires implementing recommendations from the Secretary-General's 2009 mediation report, including appointing more women mediators and giving more institutional support to women negotiators and to women's rights advocates.

## Conclusion

The stories of courageous women and their dedicated organizations detailed in this report are intended to be suggestive of the vast and largely underappreciated work being done by women worldwide to maintain and restore peace. There are many creative initiatives underway, many exclusions and stigmas being challenged and many fresh new faces rising to prominence in public life.

However, the challenges ahead for women's full participation are numerous and at times daunting. The recommendations listed earlier represent some key pathways to progress for women in diverse peace processes. But for these pathways to result in successful outcomes for women, we need more descriptions of hope and change, more vigilance on the part of policymakers, and more robust indicators to help us track progress and inform future advocacy.

As illustrated through the case studies, examples of courage and perseverance in promoting women in peace processes are available in abundance. Opportunities for advocacy will only be magnified as the 10th anniversary of SCR 1325 draws new attention to persistent barriers to participation. And, through the efforts of the UN Secretariat, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and other key civil society actors, a set of strong and comprehensive indicators will soon be available to help guide our deliberations and actions.

While navigating many obstacles and disappointments, we need to keep focus on the women worldwide who are struggling to gain access to the policies and processes that impact their lives and those of their families and communities. Full participation by women is

not a feel-good moment, but a fundamental matter of equity and capacity. We simply cannot hope to resolve conflict successfully or restore communities to health while banishing so many skills, commitments and passion to the sidelines. *Fortunately for us, the game is changing. The women are ready. The time is now.*

## Afterword: Cautious Hope from Guatemala

*Luz Méndez is internationally recognized for her many accomplishments in negotiation and mediation as well as her major role in promoting women's leadership and participation in peace processes through diverse national and international organizations. She has long recognized the dual obligation to engage local women and build global capacity.*

*In the mid-90s, Luz participated in the peace negotiations in Guatemala as the only female member of the delegation of Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca and contributed greatly to the inclusion of what are considered to be unusual commitments to gender equity within the peace accords.*

*Here, she reflects on those accomplishments and the long road still to be traveled.*

An important feature of the Guatemala Peace Accords is that they included specific commitments aimed at eliminating discrimination against women. In this context, the fundamental factor for the inclusion of the gender dimension in the agreements was the participation of women in the peace process, both through Civil Society and at the negotiating table, where I had the opportunity to participate.

While the Accords offered some hope for women's participation, the post-conflict situation in Guatemala has been extremely complex and contradictory. On the one hand, the peace process opened up new spaces for gender organizing and raising awareness of women still oppressed. It increased the participation and activism of women, especially at the local level. It highlighted particularly the empowerment and visibility that indigenous women have achieved in

recent years. In some important ways, progress has been significant towards shaping a legal and institutional framework for women's rights and democratic participation.

At the same time the women's movement has helped achieve full citizenship and equal access to elected office; dignity, compensation and justice for women survivors of sexual violence; structures for punishing and eradicating new acts of violence against women; the right to decide about our bodies in the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights; and access to non-discriminatory education, housing and property rights.

However, despite these achievements, the tendency to marginalize women in politics continues. At present, in Guatemala the legislature only consists of 12% women, making it one of the lowest levels of women's political representation in Latin America. In addition, violence against women during the post-conflict period is the most serious social problem for women and one of the greatest obstacles to women's participation at the political level. The patriarchal system in Guatemala helps to create a social context characterized in part by an increase in narco-trafficking, impunity for sexual crimes, and the persistence of cultural and social-economic inequalities, all of which disproportionately impact women.

The women's movement in Guatemala must continue to fight for the full implementation of the peace agreements and to help strengthen legislation and government institutions that are needed to address poverty, violence and other social problems. In terms of women's political participation, one of the greatest challenges continues to be strengthening the social conscience and organizational skills of women, from the local to the national level, so they can do more to advance to a society where women and men can live equally and

with respect for their integrity, freedom and human dignity.

In looking back, I believe that we have had an important impact both in Guatemala and beyond. Through Union Nacional de Mujeres Gautemaltecas (UNAMG) and other organizations, we have helped transform legal and institutional frameworks in Guatemala to advance women's organizations and institutionalize women's rights. We have created more situations for women to take part in political and peace processes and, steadily, to assume leadership and decision making roles within those processes.

Women have a right to be 'at the table.' Through efforts at the national and international levels, we are helping to make that possible.

# Appendix

## Authors

**Kavitha Suthanthiraraj** is a researcher with strong policy and advocacy experience gained working in International Non Profits. She has developed specialist expertise on women, peace and security as well as UN peacekeeping operations. Kavitha currently works at the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPACS) as their research and policy manager. From 2007-09, she was the International Program Manager at Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW), working across their women, peace and security and UN peacekeeping programs. She has published articles and reports and organized workshops and conferences on civilian protection and conflict prevention for policymakers and scholars. Recently she published a report on UN Peacekeeping, “Standing for Change in Peacekeeping Operations”. Kavitha is an executive and founding board member of an NGO focusing its work in the South Asian Region, she also undertook extensive field-work and research in India and Sri-Lanka. Kavitha has also worked in Marketing in the profit sector and collaborated with non profits on fundraising/ advocacy and sponsorship programs. She holds a master’s degree in development studies (focus on peace and conflict studies) from the University of Sydney (Australia). Ms. Suthanthiraraj served as the primary author of this report and can be contacted with questions or comments at [kavitha@globalactionpw.org](mailto:kavitha@globalactionpw.org)



**Cristina Ayo** is a researcher working with Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW). She specialized in projects dealing specifically with women's peace and security and has become the key researcher for the organization's women's peace and security program. Cristina has worked for the American Friends Service Committee's immigration social services agency in Miami, both as a researcher on Latin American immigration and as a liaison between Spanish-speaking clients and the agency. She has also interned for the University of Miami Law School in the Center of Ethics and Public Service as a researcher in immigration issues, international human rights violations, and public law. Cristina graduated from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and an academic focus in Human Rights law. Cristina Ayo worked as a key researcher and contributing writer on this report. Ms. Ayo can be contacted with questions or comments at [cristinaayo@globalactionpw.org](mailto:cristinaayo@globalactionpw.org).

## **Partner Organizations**

### **Global Action to Prevent War**

Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW) is an emerging transnational network dedicated to practical measures for reducing global levels of conflict and to removing the institutional and ideological impediments to preventing armed conflict and severe human rights violations. The organization's programs promote action towards advances in early warning, the prevention of armed conflict, nonviolent means of conflict resolution, post-conflict peace-building, conventional disarmament, the implementation of standing, rapid-response peacekeeping to combat genocide and crimes against humanity, and other hopeful, confidence building measures that empower women and protect human rights.

Further, in partnership with the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, GAPW works to ensure the full and rapid implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and advocates for the participation of women in all aspects peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building.

### **NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security**

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO Working Group) was formed in May 2000 to advocate for a UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) on women, peace and security. With the adoption of SCR 1325 in 2000, and SCR 1820 in 2008, advocacy is focused on the full and effective implementation of these resolutions.

The NGO Working Group's mission is to collaborate with the United Nations, its Member States and grass-roots civil society towards the full implementation of SCR 1325 and SCR 1820, including the equal and full participation of women in issues relating to peace and security. Using SCR 1325 as its guiding instrument, the NGO Working Group promotes a gender perspective and respect for human rights in all peace and security, conflict prevention, conflict management and peace-building initiatives of the United Nations.

## **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), established in 1915, is the oldest women's international peace organization. WILPF brings together women from all over the world who oppose war, violence, exploitation and all forms of discrimination and oppression, and who wish to unite in establishing peace by non-violent means based on political, economic and social justice for all.

The organization's PeaceWomen Project monitors and works toward rapid and full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

To these ends: PeaceWomen hosts [Peacewomen.org](http://Peacewomen.org), a website that provides accurate and timely information on women, peace and security issues and women's peace-building initiatives in areas of armed conflict; PeaceWomen works to facilitate communication among and mobilization of advocates and supporters in civil society, the UN system and governments working on women, peace and security issues; and PeaceWomen advocates for the integration of gender analysis in the governance, peace and security work of civil society actors, the UN system, and governmental bodies.

## Civil Society Organizations – Interviewees and Participants

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) - Philippines

Memem Lauzon

Solidarity and Networking Coordinator

[memen.lauzon@gmail.com](mailto:memen.lauzon@gmail.com)

[www.iidnet.org](http://www.iidnet.org)

Women in Alternative Action (WAA) - Cameroon

Justine Kwachu Kumche

Executive Director

[waacameroon@yahoo.com](mailto:waacameroon@yahoo.com)

<http://www.waa-cm.org/en/news/index.php>

Community Development Association (CDA) – Sudan (Darfur)

Safaa Elagib Adam

Secretary General and Gender Adviser

[safcdasudan@yahoo.com](mailto:safcdasudan@yahoo.com)

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) - Nigeria

Bridget Osakwe

Program Manager

[bosakwe@wanepnigeria.org](mailto:bosakwe@wanepnigeria.org)

[www.wanep.org/wanep](http://www.wanep.org/wanep)

Thelma Ekiyor – West Africa

Co-Founder of the Women, Peace and Security Network

(WIPSEN-AFRICA), and First Regional Coordinator of

WIPNET

[tekiyor@yahoo.com](mailto:tekiyor@yahoo.com)

IFOR Women Peacemakers Program - Netherlands

Isabelle Geuskens

WPP Program Manager

[i.geuskens@ifor.org](mailto:i.geuskens@ifor.org)

<http://www.ifor.org/WPP/index.html>

League for the Protection of Mother and Child

Dagestan Ayshat Magomedova

Program Representative

<http://www.owl.ru/eng/womplus/2002/ayshat.htm>

Mothers for Non Violence - Ghana

Becky Adda-Dontoh

President

[beckyadda@yahoo.com](mailto:beckyadda@yahoo.com)

<http://www.mofanv.org/>

SATTHI - Nepal

Bandana Rana

President

[bandanarana@gmail.com](mailto:bandanarana@gmail.com)

[www.saathi.org.np](http://www.saathi.org.np)

Association of War Affected Women (AWAW) – Sri Lanka

Visaka Dharmadasa

President

[venuwan@sltnet.lk](mailto:venuwan@sltnet.lk)

<http://www.awawsl.org/index.html>

Integrated Rural Development Service Organization (IRDSO) –  
Manipur, India  
Nonibala Yengkhom  
Executive Secretary  
nonibala@yahoo.com

Women's Alliance for a Democratic Iraq(WAFDI) - Iraq  
Basma Fakri  
President  
basma.fakri@gmail.com  
<http://www.wafdionline.org/index.html>

Bagdad Women's Association - Iraq  
Liza Nizzan Hido  
President  
liza\_hido1@yahoo.com  
[http://www.bwa-iraq.org/par\\_en.htm](http://www.bwa-iraq.org/par_en.htm)

Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP) - Sudan  
Zaynab El Sawi  
Coordinator  
zelsawi@hotmail.com  
<http://www.suwepmovement.org/forum/>

KABULTEC - Afghanistan  
Nasrine Gross  
Founder  
kابلtec@gmail.com  
<http://www.kابلtec.org/index.html>

Huairou Commission - Uganda  
Francis Birungi  
Trainer  
nfo@huairou.org  
<http://www.huairou.org/index.html>

femLINKPACIFIC - Fiji  
Sharon Bhagwan Rolls  
Founder, femLINKPACIFIC: Media Initiative for Women  
femlinkpac@connect.com.fj  
<http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj>

WIPSEN Africa – Sierra Leone and Liberia  
Ecoma Alaga  
Director of Programmes  
ecoma2876@yahoo.com  
[www.wipsen-africa.org/wipsen/](http://www.wipsen-africa.org/wipsen/)

UNIFEM: Southeast Europe  
Ana Lukatela  
Independent Programme Consultant in the SEE region ana.  
lukatela@unifem.org  
<http://www.unifem.sk/>

Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence - Serbia  
Natasia Petrovic  
Program Coordinator  
npetrovic@bfpe.org  
<http://www.bfpe.org/bfpe/indexENG.php>

Pearson Peacekeeping Centre – Canada

Kristine St. Pierre

Gender Advisor

[www.peaceoperations.org/](http://www.peaceoperations.org/)

Women's League of Burma (WLB) - Myanmar

Lway Aye Nang

General Secretary

[lwayayenang@gmail.com](mailto:lwayayenang@gmail.com)

[www.womenofburma.org/](http://www.womenofburma.org/)

LIMPAL - Colombia

Ximena Correal

Consultant

[ximena@limpalcolombia.org](mailto:ximena@limpalcolombia.org)

<http://www.limpalcolombia.org/>

WILPF - Colombia

Amparo Guerrero

Vice-President of International Board

[amparoelisa@hotmail.com](mailto:amparoelisa@hotmail.com)

<http://www.peacewomen.org/>

African Democratic Forum (ADF) - Democratic Republic of  
Congo

Franck Kamunga

Coordinator

[franckamunga@yahoo.fr](mailto:franckamunga@yahoo.fr)

<http://www.africandemocracyforum.org/>



United Nations Information Centre - Cameroon

Anne Nsang

National Information Officer

[anne.nsang@undp.org](mailto:anne.nsang@undp.org)

<http://unic.un.org/aroundworld/unics/en/index.asp>

PACFAW Pacific - Fiji

Ema Tagicakibau

Peace and Disarmament Consultant

[etaggy@hotmail.com](mailto:etaggy@hotmail.com)

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) - Kenya

Judy Waruhiu

Tracing Coordinator

[judywaruhiu@gmail.com](mailto:judywaruhiu@gmail.com)

[www.kenyaredcross.org](http://www.kenyaredcross.org)

Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (ISIS: WICCE) -

Uganda Juliet Were

Information and Documentation

Coordinator [wjuliet@isis.or.ug](mailto:wjuliet@isis.or.ug)

[www.isis.or.ug/](http://www.isis.or.ug/)

Center for Peace Education at Miriam College - Philippines

Jasmin Nario-Galace

Associate Director

[jgalace@mc.edu.ph](mailto:jgalace@mc.edu.ph)

## **Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)**

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and recalling also the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed

conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

Reaffirming also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

Recognizing the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard noting the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

Recognizing also the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

Recognizing that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to

guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. Encourages the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. Urges the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. Further urges the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. Expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and

the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, invites Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. Urges Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;
8. 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;

9. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
10. Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;
11. Emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;
12. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;
13. Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs

of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents;

14. Reaffirms its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;
15. Expresses its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;
16. Invites the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution,
17. and further invites him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;
18. Requests the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;
19. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

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