



1325

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On October 31, 2000, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was passed unanimously - Women's inclusion increases chances of peace lasting - Courtesy of UN Women Official Website.

UN Resolution 1325: Significant but lacking

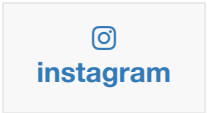
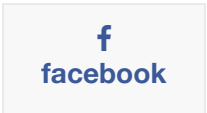
By: **Lolwa Reda** Tue, Mar. 6, 2018



CAIRO – 6 March 2018: It is undeniable that UNSCR 1325 represents a milestone in the fight for women’s fundamental human rights; however, the level of its significance, considering that it lacks enforcement measures, has repeatedly been called into question by academics and practitioners alike.

On October 31, 2000, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was passed unanimously. This was the first time that the UNSC had devoted a resolution for women during peace and conflict. Despite UNSCR 1325 being an essential first step towards

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reaching equality between women and men, 16 years later, more should have happened since its signing.

UNSCR 1325 Info-graphic



UNSCR 1325 contains four pillars: participation, prevention, protection, and resolution and recovery. Under the first pillar – **protection** – UNSCR 1325 recognises the contribution of women in the peace building and conflict resolution processes. Thus, it calls for the increased participation of women in decision-making processes at national, regional, and international levels.

The second pillar – **prevention** – urges organisations and countries to consider gender issues at the policymaking level in order to prevent attacks on women.

The third pillar – **protection** – acknowledges that wars and armed conflicts have gendered aspects. The resolution also urges that warring parties need to protect women’s rights, including guarding women and girls from gender-based violence. The fourth and final pillar – **resolution and recovery** – urges local actors, Member States, and the UN agencies to adopt a gender perspective in peace operations, negotiations and agreements, and to include women in the resolution and recovery phase (S/RES/1325). Women’s contribution, according to a 2005 study by Noeleen Heyzer, at all levels is urged by UNSCR 1325, which rightfully argues that the inclusion of women will create more stable and inclusive policies.

UNSCR 1325 is vital for the fight for women’s human rights for three main reasons. First, as the famous Katherine Barnes suggests, UNSCR 1325 brought gender issues into the mainstream and



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provided the international community with a viable framework that can be adapted and used. The existence of a document at an international level that recommends that gender-issues are respected and incorporated into peace building and reconciliation policies and programs has pushed states and organisations to incorporate UNSCR 1325 into already existing and new practices.

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Furthermore, according to Torunn L. Tryggestad's analysis, the adoption of the resolution by the Security Council has broken the barrier between women's issues and international peace and security, which is a vital first step to establishing new norms. This is important because it opens up space for everyone to discuss the different goals that need to be achieved for gender security.

Second, UNSCR 1325 identified women as active agents rather than passive recipients. This is the most vital part of the resolution because it identifies women's participation as a right, not something that men are giving women out of goodwill.

Barnes, in 2010, published a study where she suggested that, on an international level, one can see that UNSCR 1325 had very effective positive contributions to women's rights.

o In 2007, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human



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Rights (ODIHR) at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) funded training on UNSCR 1325 for government personnel and civil society representatives from Central Asia. They also took part in developing a handbook to integrate gender issues into the security sector.

o In 2009, NATO released a military manual outlining measures implementing UNSCR 1325 into NATO-led missions.

o In 2010, the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) supported the implementation of UNSCR 1325 across the region by holding a workshop and developing a common agenda on this issue in March 2010.

This strengthens the resolution's impact without making it legally binding because it identifies women's participation as a right. Instead of being seen as weak or victims, according to Tryggestad's analysis, as well as that of Pratt and Richter-Devroe's works, UNSCR 1325 managed to balance women as human beings in need of protection and equals who have good inputs and are needed at all levels of peace and conflict mitigation processes.

The view of women as active agents has a second important implication. It starts to erode the idea of women as weak, meaning that the feminine will no longer be synonymous to weakness and fragility. The importance of this is twofold. First, femininity, and all that is associated with the feminine, not being seen as weak means that soldiers will not be afraid of their feminine traits, which means that they will not commit atrocious acts to show that they are "aggressors". Second, it empowers women and allows them to demand that they are heard and incorporated into processes at all levels.

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Third, according to a study by Kristine St-Pierre published in 2011, titled "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Peace Operations: Overview of Recent Efforts and Lessons Learned", despite UNSCR 1325 not being legally binding, the fact that it is a Security Council Resolution that passed unanimously holds states and organisations, at least to some extent, liable to its recommendations. States who would wish to be on the good side of the United Nations and the Security Council are likely to respect the resolution.

What do Egyptian women think?

Multiple women rights' advocates told Egypt Today that the UNSCR 1325 encouraged women's rights groups to demand inclusion of women in the reconstructions and nation-building process in Iraq. As a result of the existence of UNSCR 1325, the Security Council was able to include women and give legitimacy to the demands of these women groups through Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2003), which explicitly urged the inclusion of women in the processes.

More importantly, UNSCR 1325 is essential as it constitutes the first time that the Security Council, which had been previously resistant towards gender-based issues, devoted an entire session to debating women's experiences in conflict and peace situations. The importance of this lies in the simple idea that the first time something is passed in

the UN is, arguably, the hardest time. The passing of time brings to the UN involvement and normalisation, which we have seen happen during the past decade and a half.



Women's inclusion increases chances of peace lasting - Courtesy of UN Women Official Website

This is not to say that UNSCR 1325 has not had some shortcomings. The language, as Barnes suggests, used in the resolution is very ambiguous, which leaves it open to multiple interpretations. However, it must be noted that the ambiguity of the language is a result of the dynamics of the UN, which would have deemed the resolution impassable had the language been any less ambiguous.

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Furthermore, the inability of the Member States to prioritise certain recommendations over others also weakens the resolution. The eighteen-point resolution covers too many potential interventions and changes that cannot be realistically implemented. For countries to take it on board and attempt to implement it, the resolution needed to give some kind of indication as to which points are more important.

This is also problematic for donors who wish to invest their money in UNSCR 1325 because they are left unclear about which objectives they are sponsoring when donating money or resources.

This also halts organisations that aim to fundraise money for women's human rights because they cannot offer credible and certain information about the objectives that they are fundraising for. Despite this, the UNSCR 1325 was truly a ground-breaking document that facilitated and encouraged more talks on the subject of women's human rights in war and peace times.

Still, it must be emphasised that the lack of accountability mechanisms is not unique to UNSCR 1325. Most norms that exist in the world today, including the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), started off as a resolution much like UNSCR 1325. This suggests that the slow progress concerning the case for women at an international, regional, and national levels has not been because of its nature but rather because of the nature of the UN and the current international system.

UNSCR 1325: From Policy to Practice



plans, and it took the first step in creating new international norms that protect women and integrate them into all levels. UNSCR 1325 has also identified women as active agents, which has empowered women to demand what is rightfully theirs. Its identification of women's participation as their right is especially important as it allows women to advocate their cause further.

Finally, UNSCR 1325 has also encouraged organisations and governments to implement gender-based programs and integrate women into their working ranks. This is because countries and organisations often desire to follow UN recommendations. Thus, despite its lack of enforcement measures, the resolution has led to some substantial progress.


During this year's Commission on the Status of Women, Egypt Today looks forward to seeing how non-governmental organizations and institutions will work together to develop upon Resolution 1325, and its other extension resolutions.

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