

5 October 2015

Open Letter to Permanent Representatives to the UN: Recommendations on the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security and the High Level Review of SCR 1325 (2000)

Dear Ambassador,

Earlier this year, over 110 civil society organizations from around the world wrote to you calling for real action, increased political will, and implementation of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) commitments. Fifteen years after the establishment of the WPS agenda, despite progress at the policy level, women continue to remain largely excluded from peace, security and political processes; civil society organizations, women leaders and women human rights defenders are increasingly targeted; and there is minimal dedicated funding to implement the agenda.

At this month's Open Debate and High Level Review of SCR 1325 (2000), we urge Member States to reiterate their commitment to advancing sustainable peace that can solely be achieved by promoting and respecting women and girls' human rights' and meaningfully integrating women within all efforts to prevent, resolve, and rebuild from conflict. In your statement to the Security Council, we urge you to specifically outline how the following priority areas will be addressed and implemented through financial, technical, and political means:

- **Prioritizing women's meaningful participation**, including women's civil society leaders and women human rights defenders, in all peace and security processes, as well as efforts to combat, reduce and prevent terrorism and violent extremism. This requires:
 - Inclusion of women and gender experts in negotiation parties' delegations and supporting incentive mechanisms to promote their participation;
 - Attendance and participation of civil society organizations in formal, consultative processes parallel to peace negotiations, all international and regional peace and security convenings, and donor conferences;
 - Increasing the recruitment, retention and professionalization of women across all justice and security sector components including in peacekeeping operations; and
 - Ensuring strategies to protect civilians are designed and implemented in consultation with local women, making sure diverse groups of women are represented including those displaced and with disabilities, in order to identify and address their specific needs and safety concern
- **Emphasizing conflict prevention** by employing holistic approaches that aim to address the root causes and drivers of conflict and cycles of violence including violent extremism, and not just their impacts on women, men, girls and boys. This requires:
 - Engaging women in key political and decision-making processes, including in the development of any strategies or approaches aimed at preventing conflict; addressing the needs of local communities; and providing ongoing financial support for local women's civil society organizations;
 - Dedicating efforts to address gender-based violence by providing lifesaving and non-discriminatory GBV response services including health, psycho-social support, legal and safety services in line with international humanitarian law;
 - Supporting the development of gender-sensitive security and justice sectors that are accessible to women and girls, uphold the rule of law, and implement non-discriminatory laws, policies and practices;

- Demanding accountability and reparations for all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including GBV and civilian casualties, by armed groups, security forces including UN mandated troops, and contractors; and
- Strictly enforcing the Arms Trade Treaty to curb the flow of small arms and light weapons where there is a risk they could be used in violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including sexual and gender based violence.
- Developing, implementing and reviewing existing **Regional and National Action Plans (NAP) on WPS** and ensuring they are robustly monitored, well-funded, and inclusive of civil society. This requires:
 - Formalizing a consultative process to include civil society and relevant actors in the NAP design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation process; and
 - Establishing an interagency coordination system for comprehensive NAP implementation that offers clearly assigned roles and responsibilities, as well as strong, results-based monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Pledging to provide multi-year, large-scale **financial support** for WPS, in line with SCR 2122 (2013), including through existing funds and new mechanisms. This funding should advance the implementation of WPS NAPs; be accessible to civil society organizations at national, provincial and local levels; as well as ensure core funding within the UN is dedicated for such efforts. This requires:
 - Increasing Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to gender equality and women's empowerment programs including support for civil society organizations through the provision of accessible, long-term, sustainable and dedicated core financial support;
 - Dedicating specific funding to advance women's inclusion in efforts to counter violent extremism; and
 - In line with Critical Area E of the Beijing Platform for Action, reducing excessive military spending and redirecting this expenditure to efforts advancing women's rights and WPS implementation.
- Advocating for **UN System Leadership** to deliver on WPS over the next decade. This requires:
 - Actively supporting the Security Council's systematic integration of WPS as a cross-cutting issue;
 - Supporting and funding the recruitment of gender expertise, specifically in leadership capacities, both at UNHQ and in the field;
 - Incorporating WPS into the Terms of References of UN leadership, including within special envoys and representatives and senior mediators; and
 - Ensuring that immediate and effective measures are put in place to ensure implementation of the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, across all peacekeeping and special political missions, and with regard to all military and civilian staff;

As civil society organizations committed to ensuring more gender sensitive and inclusive peace and security processes, we will be carefully monitoring the outcome of the High Level Review and tracking the implementation of pledges made. We hope we can count on you to move this agenda forward and in years to come. Thank you very much for your time and attention to this important matter.

Yours Sincerely,

The NGOWG on Women, Peace and Security advocates for the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security. Formed in 2000 following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the NGOWG now focuses on implementation of all Security Council resolutions that address this issue. The NGOWG serves as a bridge between women's human rights defenders working in conflict-affected situations and policy-makers at UN Headquarters.

The NGOWG coalition members are: Amnesty International; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Femmes Africa Solidarité; Global Justice Center; Human Rights Watch; International Rescue Committee; Institute for Inclusive Security; MADRE; Refugees International; Open Society Foundations; Oxfam International; Women's Action for New Directions; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and Women's Refugee Commission;

1325 Action Group, Nepal	1325 Network Finland	1325 Policy Group
Amnesty International	Alianza por la Solidaridad, Spain	Association Dea Dia, Serbia
Association for the Protection of Women's Rights, Azerbaijan	Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka	Athena Consortium
Basque Foundation Haurralde For Women	Center for Development of International Law	Center for Women's Global Leadership
Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights	Democracy Today	Echoes of Women in Africa
Education Center on the human rights of women, Morocco	Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia. México	Femmes Africa Solidarité
Femmes Cote d'Ivoire Expérience	Femmes et Droits Humains, Mali	Forum for Women and Development, Norway
Foundation United Women Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Gender Agency	Gender and Mine Action Programme
Global Gender Program	Global Justice Center	Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)	GPPAC Eastern and Central Africa Region	International Alert
International Alliance of Women	International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict	International Peace Research Association
International Planned Parenthood Federation	International Women's Rights Project	Iraqi Al-Amal Association
Iraqi Women Network	Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange	Karama
Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, Sweden	MADRE	MenEngage Alliance
Muslims for Progressive Values	Nairobi Peace Initiative - Africa	Nataj Organization for capacity development of woman
National Council of Women of Australia	NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security	Older Women's Network Australia
Oxfam	PAX for Peace	Pacificwin
Pacific Women's Watch, New Zealand	Positive Change for Cambodia	Promundo, Brasil
Protect the People	Regional Center for Strategic Studies	Saferworld
Society Without Violence, Armenia	Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa	Soroptimist International of UK
SOS SEXISME, France	The Institute for Inclusive Security	Union Internationale des Avocats/ International Association of Lawyers
UN Women National Committee UK	Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights	Widows for Peace Through Democracy
WILPF Spain	Woman Problems Research Union - Woman's Institute, Azerbaijan	Women's Action for New Directions
Women's Action Network - Sri Lanka	WomenEnabled International	Women for Women International
Women for Progress Center, Iraq	Women Graduates-USA	Women's International for League for Peace and Freedom
Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective	Women Peacemakers Program	Women's Refugee Commission
Women's UN Report Network	Women Watch Afrika	World Federalist Movement - Institute for Global Policy
Youth to End Sexual Violence		