



KVINNA TILL KVINNA

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS

Making Progress in the Peace Process

Including Women in Peace Negotiations and Bringing Sexual Violence to the Agenda

Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war in conflicts all over the world. Women's bodies have become the battleground of warfare from the Balkans in the 1990s to the Democratic Republic of Congo today.

WITH THE ADOPTION of the Rome Statute of The International Criminal Court in 1998, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) used as a systematic weapon of war during armed conflict was firmly placed among the gravest human rights violations. With Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council acknowledged women's needs in armed conflict and women's role in peace and security. Resolution 1325 was complemented by UN Security Council Resolutions 1820 and 1888, which state that sexual violence used as a weapon of war is a threat to international peace and security, including developed monitoring and protection mechanisms in the UN system.

Despite some progress at policy level, the different impact that armed conflict has on women and men is rarely part of the political and security analysis, or among the priorities of peacebrokers

involved in mediation and peace negotiation processes. Supporting women's participation in peace negotiations is a twofold strategic investment. It strengthens the prospects of women's security and long-term enjoyment of human rights, thereby contributing to the social, economic and psychological recovery and democratisation of society as a whole. However, the window of opportunity provided by peace negotiations for addressing sexual and gender-based violence and for supporting women's participation in negotiation and decision-making is far too often left unopened.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation has drawn up **20 concrete recommendations** for international decision-makers, mediators, donors and other stakeholders wishing to contribute to making progress in the peace process.



PREPARING FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

1

Put threats of sexual and gender-based violence at the same high level as other components in the security threat analysis. Historical background analysis, mapping of the conflict, incorporating gender-specific data, and oral and written briefings on the experience of women in the conflict are useful methods in this regard.

2

Identify and actively contact women human rights defenders (WHRDs) in the conflict region to ensure that their knowledge and experience is utilised in the security threat analysis. WHRDs and women's organisations could provide crucial information on SGBV not included in the official sources. Bring in expert interviewers to ensure proper information compilation and documentation sensitive to personal security concerns of information providers. Professional translation is required to overcome language barriers.

3

Encourage WHRDs' contribution to the peace negotiations and make sure that WHRDs have the possibility of attending the peace negotiating meetings by making sufficient financial, security and other means at their disposal, for example safe transport and accommodation. Since WHRDs cannot always operate in the open due to their gender and the nature of their work, adequate support and protection is required.

4

Provide expert support to overcome knowledge barriers among civil society representatives concerning the political and technical process of the peace negotiations. Provide facilitators and mediators who have expert knowledge of the local community and special skills relating to the peace negotiations in question.

5

Reorient efforts of peacekeeping forces to focus on protecting women and girls where they are most vulnerable, for instance at checkpoints, at camps for refugees and internally displaced persons and when collecting firewood and water.

6

Hold Heads of UN missions accountable if they fail to enforce disciplinary measures on staff who breach the UN policy of zero tolerance on sexual exploitation. UN missions should have a gender-balanced staff composition and all staff should be given compulsory training in women's human rights and UN codes of conduct.

7

Ensure that recruitment processes of internationals in peacekeeping operations include an assessment of candidates' intercultural sensitivity and gender awareness related to the need of interacting with the local population in a respectful manner.

8

Raise public awareness on the consequences for society in general of SGBV, such as high rates of maternal mortality, the rapid increase of HIV and the negative effects on the social cohesion and economic prosperity of the society.

9

Make sure that the warring parties are made aware of the facts and devastating effects of SGBV as pointed out above and how such violence used as a war strategy weakens the prospects for warring parties to take a seat in any future government.

10

Make sure that the warring parties are given opportunities to take into account all the facts and the information that the women's organisations have on the subject and ensure that mediating and expert roles are given to both men and women.

DURING NEGOTIATIONS

11

State clearly that women's human rights are never negotiable and establish vetting mechanisms for positions in government and the security sector.

12

Establish that the provisions of international humanitarian law and human rights law, the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court and the jurisprudence of the international criminal tribunals, including the parts related to victims and witness protection, are to be incorporated into domestic law.

13

Support national efforts to prosecute rape as a war crime during or after negotiations. This includes support for security sector reform in the police and judicial sectors. At the international level, intensify investigations into the chain of command that encourages or condones rape to be used as a war strategy.

14

Ensure protection and support mechanisms for witnesses and women human rights activists during and after judicial processes.

15

Ensure women's access to property and inheritance rights.



AFTER THE PEACE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED

16

Contribute to lessening the stigma for the victims of SGBV through advocacy at community, national and international levels; consider the special needs of women with HIV.

18

Counteract the culture of silence by supporting victims of sexual violence in being accepted and reintegrated in their communities and by society at large. The crimes need to become part of public awareness and be condemned in public.

17

Greatly increase resources to and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health care to enable survivors of sexual violence to receive the care to which they are entitled. Resources are also needed for psychosocial support to help survivors reintegrate in society.

19

Recognise and support WHRDs that support the survivors of SGBV, fight impunity and advocate for legislation relating to women's human rights. They are the most likely to be in the forefront and speak out publically on the consequences of SGBV.

20

Prosecute SGBV crimes committed by combatants as well as international actors such as peacekeepers. The inevitable consequence of these crimes not being investigated and corrected is the societal acceptance for SGBV also in peacetime.

Kvinna till Kvinna cooperates with more than 100 women's organisations in conflict-affected regions in South Caucasus, the Middle East, the Balkans, the DRC and Liberia. Since 1993 we support women's own initiatives to gain greater influence and increased participation in peace processes. www.kvinnatillkvinna.se
