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‘We want strong links to civil society’

Interview with Hilde Klemetsdal, Head of Project on Women, Peace and Security, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

PRIO Gender, Peace and Security Update

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The PRIO Gender Peace and Security Update is an electronic newsletter launched by PRIO’s Gender Team in response to growing interest among the public for information about women, peace and security issues. The newsletter will keep readers informed of the latest developments both internationally and in Norway in relation to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security and subsequent resolutions.

Resolution 1325
10 years 2000 - 2010



Hilde Klemetsdal, Head of Project on Women, Peace and Security, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), interviewed by Suk Chun, PRIO.

Could you briefly introduce the MFA Women, Peace and Security Project to our readership?

The MFA Women, Peace and Security Project is a two-year project, initiated by Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre to strengthen the government’s efforts in implementing the UN resolutions related to women, peace and security (WPS). There is a strong political will in Norway to do more to implement these resolutions. Also, the upcoming 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325, the increased focus on Resolution 1820 on sexual violence, and pressure from NGOs have factored in. The project aims to strengthen the coordination of efforts among the four ministries that have signed the Norwegian National Action Plan (NAP).

Although there have been very positive developments at the normative level the past years, when it comes to the actual implementation of the WPS resolutions, we have not seen substantial effects on the ground in countries affected by armed conflict. This goes for all 1325-related

issues in all phases of conflict and peacebuilding. If we look at past peace processes, there has been a very low percentage of women participating. This reflects the fact that women worldwide are seldom in positions of power. Thus, they don’t have access to central positions in peace processes either. The establishment of this project reflects the Norwegian government’s desire to do something about this. Nothing will change fast unless we have the political will, and are able to undertake targeted and coordinated efforts. With respect to Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in conflicts, there is no specific NAP to address the issue. However, it is high on our agenda. Norway was the first country to support *UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict* and is working closely with the UN Action secretariat. The MFA project also works closely with Margot Wallström, the newly appointed SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Currently we are looking into where to focus our efforts geographically when addressing sexual violence – it is not only an African problem.

What specific role will the 1325 Project play in relation to the Norwegian Government’s efforts to implement UN security resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions?

One important aspect is to push for more political will, and also to do advocacy work within the MFA. This is important so that the whole organisation can become aware of what this issue is all about. The fact that war affects women in different ways than men has to be acknowledged. There is a strong perception of WPS as a women’s issue only. However, it is equally a security issue. Despite the strong, conventional tendency to look at sexual violence against women as something related to the private sphere, it is finally, and rightly so, being recognised as a possible weapon in war – just as much as other conventional weapons and methods of warfare. Thus, it is important for the project to promote a strong security perspective. The project is placed within the Section for Global Initiatives, but it could just as well have been in the Section for Security Policy.

A 1325 + 10 Ministerial meeting in New York is being planned, with a date to be announced.

Our politicians are eager to mobilise and broaden participation at the ministerial meeting and to contribute to a binding outcome document, hopefully one that will hold political leaders and the UN accountable to a greater extent. What is lacking in Resolution 1325 is accountability mechanisms. Hopefully, the work that is now being done to develop indicators will be a step in the right direction.

We have a dialogue with the US State Department on Women, Peace and Security, and we are looking into new areas of possible cooperation. WPS is on the agenda in talks between Foreign Minister Støre and US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton.

It is important to have a dialogue with a broad number of states and actors. For instance, we are strengthening our dialogue with India and Indonesia on this issue. It is also crucial that different regional organisations have a strong gender perspective. Norway has pushed for a stronger focus on 1325 in NATO. We are also cooperating with the African Development Bank, and we will arrange a common side event on 1325 in Abidjan in May. Further, the Ministry is working close with the ministries of defence and justice in Norway. The different ministries behind the National Action Plan (NAP) meet regularly, and there is a strong common will to strengthen the implementation of the WPS resolutions. There are also many positive initiatives taking place within NGOs and amongst researchers on strengthening the NAPs. The relevant ministries have decided to develop an annex to the Norwegian NAP, which will include selected goals, with indicators and timelines. Forum for 1325 (a Norwegian umbrella organisation for a number of NGOs) is currently working on input to the annex, and we are very positive about their active role.

Norway was one of the first UN Member States to adopt a National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2006. However, there has been little follow-up in terms of annual reporting and revisions. Nor has the consultative body promised in the NAP, consisting of an inter-ministerial working group, relevant directorates, research institutions and NGOs, been established. Our Nordic neighbours have already revised their NAPs, and the UK is currently in the process of revising. To what extent will your project be involved in following up and reviewing the Norwegian NAP?

This is an area where the ministry has not been doing enough, and it has not been living up to the promises made. However, the project has now been set up and our ambition is to establish much stronger consultation processes on these matters with civil society. We will invite the relevant actors to a meeting shortly. The planned annex will include time



Photo: Alf Butenschøn Skre, PRIO.

lines and indicators, and will allow for stronger accountability mechanisms of the government.

Fighting sexualised violence in conflicts is high on the agenda of the Norwegian government. What measures have been initiated to follow-up the political commitment?

Just to clarify, we focus on sexual violence in conflict. There are often attempts to include a broad perspective on violence against women, based on the argument that sexual violence is not limited to being a problem only in war. While this is undoubtedly true, it is important that the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict maintains a security focus. Otherwise we will end up watering down the available measures and the responsibility of the commanders, the politicians, and the generals, and the whole possibility of holding them accountable to international law disappears.

As part of the project we are strengthening our dialogue with the Ministry of Defence. Norway is the first country that has decided to develop operational guidelines to enable military personnel to prevent and protect civilians from sexual violence in armed conflicts. There are very high expectations, for instance as to what peacekeeping personnel can do, despite the fact that peace operations sometimes are not given the necessary resources or training. We are strengthening our dialogue with and providing funding to UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO), on both the civilian and military side. I think that on the civilian side, things have come quite far when it comes to gender training of peacekeeping personnel. On the military side, it's more difficult. Military organisations can be hard to turn around. However, there is a political will in Norway, including in the Ministry of Defence. The Chief of the Norwegian Armed Forces, Harald Sunde, is very engaged in this issue. He met with Margot Wallström when she was in Oslo in March.

We are currently in a dialogue with India looking into the possibilities of co-operation between our

two countries on gender sensitivity training for military personnel. I will be going there in mid-April to discuss this matter. Foreign Minister Støre was there last month (March 2010), and he and his Indian counterpart agreed to explore the possibility of co-operation on developing guidelines to protect civilians from sexual violence. It is at its initial stages, but very interesting, as India is a very large troop contributing country (TCC). The fact that 1325 issues will be included in the Human Rights Dialogue with Indonesia is another exciting development. Indonesia is also quite a big troop contributing country. I think it is very important to engage with these large TCCs because they are the ones operating on the ground in conflict-affected countries, and they have valuable experiences from the field.

Moreover, we are trying to do more on fighting impunity for sexual violence. It is crucial that the perpetrators are held responsible. This, in turn, will have a strong deterrent effect. Of course, it is extremely difficult in countries where the whole judicial system is barely functioning. In countries such as the DRC, it is important to strengthen the existing judicial systems and to support the UN efforts. In the DRC the UN, in cooperation with the government, has developed a comprehensive strategy to combat sexual violence. Coordination is crucial, as there are many different donors and organisations each contributing ad hoc here and there. Strengthening national ownership and promoting political will and accountability in affected countries is also important. What we often see is that low-ranking personnel are charged and prosecuted, but not higher ranked personnel. It is crucial to look at their role. Even though they may not be issuing commands to rape, they often condone it. They should be held accountable. Victim support is also a priority, both through offering medical and psychological support, and through developing income generating skills. Income generation is important to ensure the survival of victims of sexual violence, as they are often ostracised by the community. We are increasing funding to different organisations such as the UN and to organisations on the ground. We are also looking into how policy can be made stronger and more experienced-based.

This month, the Ministry had security policy consultations with DPKO/DFS (Department for Field Support). As always, gender issues were one of the priorities we raised. One thing we always stress in meetings with heads of different UN entities is that it is the leadership that has the responsibility to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into the work of the UN. You cannot just place that responsibility in a small gender unit in the different UN departments and entities.

Recent studies released by a number of NGOs and UN specialised agencies emphasise the significant role men can play in combating sexual violence. It has also been pointed out that men can be victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts. Does your project include any initiatives targeted at men or emphasise the role of men?

I think that is a very important aspect. I was in a meeting recently with a group of representatives from the National Police Directorate. Several men there are engaged in training on resolutions 1325 and 1820. The importance of men getting involved has started to sink in at the MFA as well. We have gradually come to a point where male ambassadors are taking responsibility to promote 'women, peace and security', and it of course helps to have a Foreign Minister that is so engaged. I think it is very important that men get involved. Otherwise WPS may end up being regarded as "only" a 'women's issue' and it will not be on the agenda in strong decision making fora. In the military, it is recognised that applying a gender perspective and recruiting women improves the quality and effectiveness of military operations as well as the security of the forces. We need to speak a language that resonates in other areas; for instance we could look more into the economic cost of sexual violence in conflict. In his recent meeting with SRSR Margot Wallström, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre suggested that the

costs of sexual violence be calculated as part of the costs of armed conflicts. Providing such figures to heads of state and finance ministers of affected countries could send a strong message.

Men can also play a strong role in reducing the stigmatisation of the survivors. At the field level, the Ministry is supporting some projects in the DRC that involve men. I think we need more knowledge on these issues, including on men as victims of sexual violence in conflict. We must also remember that there are a lot of men, and women, doing a lot of impressive work on the ground. We met with Bernard Kalume when he was in Oslo. He does a lot of preventive work in Eastern DRC, for instance through drama. It is crucial to involve men, and also religious leaders, as they are in positions to alleviate social stigma.

What are the Norwegian initiatives for the 10th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security?

We are still awaiting the date for the Ministerial meeting in New York. But we are in a dialogue with Forum for 1325 to see what they might come up with. We have discussed possible events that can be organised together with them, such as a film-festival or inviting women from the Global South to an event in Oslo. We are ready to cooperate with NGOs. However, they and we are

still exploring ideas. We are also encouraging the Embassies to mark the anniversary in their different countries.

What kind of co-operation or partnerships do you foresee with NGOs on WPS?

I really want to have a strong dialogue with NGOs. We would not have had the resolutions and the international framework if it were not for the work and momentum created by NGOs, researchers and organisations on the ground. 'Women, peace and security' has been moved forward by the special dynamics of these actors – dynamics that governments can never have alone. I think having a dialogue with civil society and getting the perspectives from the ground is crucial. We need to ensure that the findings and/or problems present on the ground in affected countries are clearly communicated to the policy development level, both nationally and internationally. We need to see results on the ground – that is, after all, the real measure of our success. We are very open to input, ideas and criticism from civil society organisations and researchers. In terms of strengthening the NAP for instance, there is valuable expertise and experience among different actors which can improve the work that we do and strengthen the accountability measures. That's why we want strong links to civil society. ■

International News

Lady Glenys Kinnock of the United Kingdom has been appointed as the Special Representative for tackling violence against women overseas at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that the role of the Special Representative will be to coordinate the UK's efforts to address violence against women, and to work in particular with the United Nations to ensure international commitments are met and action is taken. Her profile can be accessed online at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/who-we-are/our-ministers/g-kinnock>

The Geneva Declaration hosted an expert workshop on indicators of violence against women (VAW) on 25 and 26 of March in Geneva. The aims of the expert workshop meeting were to discuss how to use research and evidence for programming purposes, and how to foster a systematic global, regional and national measuring and monitoring system on VAW. The outcomes of the workshop can be accessed online at <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measur->

[ability/indicators-of-armed-violence/indicators-of-violence-against-women-vaw.html](http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measur-ability/indicators-of-armed-violence/indicators-of-violence-against-women-vaw.html)

The UN Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflicts Margot Wallström visited the Democratic Republic of Congo from 12 April to 18 April to 'gain a better sense of the actions undertaken in the context of the fights against sexual violence, listen to victims as well as actors of this fight at the local level'. Her press conference transcript can be accessed online at <http://monuc.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=932&ctl=Details&mid=1096&ItemID=8617>

The Permanent Mission of Bangladesh, Sweden and Canada to the United Nations hosted a panel discussion titled 'Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Implementation Challenges' at the United Nations Headquarter in New York on 22 April. The panellists included ambassadors from Bangladesh and Canada, Sarah Taylor from the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and Theresa Kambobe, Senior Gender Advisor at DPKO. The discussion emphasised the need to address the impact of war on women and girls, and the need for UN peacekeeping operations to be responsive to women's rights and gender equality concerns.

UN Security Council Discussion on Resolutions 1888 and 1889: The UN Security Council held its consultation on Women, Peace and Security on 29 April. Resolution 1888, paragraph 26, requested that the Secretary General devise a proposal on ways to ensure monitoring and reporting in a more effective and efficient way within the existing UN system. Resolution 1889, paragraph 17, requested that the Secretary General submit to the Security Council within 6 months a set of indicators for use at the global level to track implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000). The Secretary-General's report on indicators is available online at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/305/16/PDF/N1030516.pdf?OpenElement> The Presidential Statement from the Security Council is available online at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/331/57/PDF/N1033157.pdf?OpenElement>

SRSR for Sexual Violence on Conflict Margot Wallström briefed the Security Council on her recent visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo on 29 April. Wallström emphasised ending impunity is one of her priorities, in addition to empowering women, mobilising political leadership, increasing recognition of rape as a tactic and consequence of conflict, and ensuring a more coherent response



Margot Wallström. UN Photo

from the UN system. The news coverage of her meeting at the Security Council is available online at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34502&Cr=sexual+violence&Cr1>

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic control of Armed Forces (DCAF) recently launched the *DCAF Gender and Security Sector Reform Training Resource Website*. The website is meant to provide a user-friendly, online access to the complete Gender and SSR Training Resource Package, as well as a place of exchange for all those involved in Gender and SSR Training. The website can be accessed online at <http://www.gssrtraining.ch/> ■

News from Norway

The Norwegian Military Academy, Linderud Oslo, organised a seminar titled '*UN Resolution 1325 and Protection of Civilians*' on 30 April. The seminar was organised as part of the module on Military Leadership. The seminar aimed at introducing officers to the challenges involved in implementing Resolution 1325 in their operational activities.

The Women, Peace and Security Project at the Norwegian MFA and the Africa Development Bank (AFDB) will arrange a side event titled '*Women in Fragile States: From Passive Victims of Violence to Active Agents of Change*' during AFDB's annual meeting on 24 May in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. ■

News from PRIO

Christin M. Ormhaug

gave a lecture 24 March at the Centre for Peace and Development Studies, Juba University in Sudan titled 'Gender and Development', including issues related to gender and conflict.

Helga Hernes

participated in a United States Institute of Peace (USIP) workshop titled 'Women, Peace and Security: Setting an Agenda for Action and Research for the Next Decade of UNSCR 1325' on 29 March. The participants of the workshop included Kathleen Kuehnast (USIP), Donald Steinberg (International Crisis Group), Tilman Bruck (German Institute for Economic Research), Inger Skjelsbæk (PRIO), Elisabeth Wood (Yale), and Sanam Anderlini (International Alert).

The PRIO Gender Team

hosted a seminar titled '*Gender Equality and Peace Operations*' with Dr. Louise Olsson (Folke Bernadotte Academy) on 29 April. The seminar was based on her new book titled 'Gender Equality and United Nations Peace Operations in Timor-Leste'. ■

Recent PRIO Publications

Inger Skjelsbæk (2010) 'The Elephant in The Room: An Overview of How Sexual Violence Came to Be Seen as a Weapon of War', *Report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Skjelsbæk's report outlines how our understanding of the political significance of the use of sexual violence in war has changed over time, and what challenges and implications these changes might pose. The report is available online at http://www.prio.no/upload/people/Inger_Skjelsbaek/Inger%20Skjelsb%C3%A6k%20MFA%20Report%202010.pdf

Torunn L. Tryggestad (2010) 'The UN Peacebuilding Commission and Gender: A Case of Norm Reinforcement', *International Peacekeeping* (Special Issue), Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 159-171. ■

Other Recent Publications

Carol Harrington (2010) *Politicization of Sexual Violence: From Abolitionism to Peacekeeping*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited. 250 p.

Elvan Isikozlu and Ananda Millard (2010) 'Wartime Rape: Identifying Knowledge Gaps and their Implications', *Sicherheit und Frieden*, Vol. 1, 28 Jahrgang, pp. 35-41.

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam America (2010) '*Now, The World Is Without Me: An Investigation of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*', April. The report is available online at <http://hhi.harvard.edu/publications/hhi-program-publications>

Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park (2010) *Progress Report on Women in Peace and Security Careers: US Executive Branch, Women in International Security*. The report is available online at <http://wiis.georgetown.edu/92624.html>

Louise Olsson (2009) *Gender Equality and United Nations Peace Operations in Timor Leste*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden/Boston.

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (2010) *Monthly Action Plan*: April. Available online at <http://www.women-peacesecurity.org/>

Susan Willett (ed.) (2010) 'Women, Peace and Conflict: A Decade after Resolution 1325', Special Issue of *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 17, No. 2. ■



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