

Advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda: 2015 and beyond

By Laura J. Shepherd

Executive summary

This expert analysis evaluates the current state of the United Nations' Women, Peace and Security agenda, with particular focus on three themes drawn from the most recent UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) (S/RES/2122): the articulation of a whole-of-UN mandate for improving performance in the implementation of UNSCR 1325; the importance of civil society inclusion at all stages of peace and security governance, including conflict resolution and peace negotiations; and the upcoming High-Level Review that will take place in 2015 on the 15th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

Introduction

Under the provisions of the United Nations (UN) Charter, the UN Security Council (UNSC) is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. The council has taken steps towards accounting for the ways in which gender matters in and to peace and security governance through the adoption of seven interrelated resolutions on the theme of "Women, Peace and Security" (WPS; see Table 1). The foundational resolution in the WPS

architecture, UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, articulates three priority issues: the representation of women at all levels of peace and security governance; the meaningful participation of women in peace and security governance; and the protection of women's rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations. Like all UNSC resolutions, the WPS resolutions are binding on all UN member states and other UN entities, creating a range of obligations for national and international actors.

Table 1: Key issues and core provisions in UNSC WPS resolutions

Resolution/year	Key issues and core provisions
S/RES/1325 (2000)	Representation and participation of women in peace and security governance; protection of women's rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations
S/RES/1820 (2008)	Protection of women from sexualised violence in conflict; zero tolerance of sexualised abuse and exploitation perpetrated by UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) personnel
S/RES/1888 (2009)	Creation of office of special representative of the secretary general on sexual violence in conflict (SRSG-SVC); creation of UN Action; identification of "team of experts"; appointment of women's protection advisors (WPAs) to field missions
S/RES/1889 (2009)	Need to increase participation of women in peace and security governance at all levels; creation of global indicators to map implementation of UNSCR 1325
S/RES/1960 (2010)	Development of conflict-related sexualised violence (CRSV) monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements; integration of WPAs into field missions alongside gender advisors
S/RES/2106 (2013)	Challenging impunity regarding and lack of accountability for CRSV
S/RES/2122 (2013)	UN Women identified as key UN entity providing information and advice on participation of women in peace and security governance; whole-of-UN accountability; civil society inclusion; 2015 High-Level Review of implementation of UNSCR 1325

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, progress on the WPS agenda has been deeply inconsistent. This expert analysis evaluates the current state of the agenda, with a particular focus on three themes drawn from the most recent UNSC resolution (S/RES/2122): the articulation of a whole-of-UN mandate for improving performance in the implementation of UNSCR 1325; the importance of civil society inclusion; and the upcoming High-Level Review that will take place in 2015, on the 15th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

UNSCR 2122: whole-of-UN action and women's agency

As shown in Table 1, the priorities of the various WPS resolutions have varied over the years, with more or less attention being paid to different elements of the foundational resolution. Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106 focus primarily on sexualised violence in conflict (SVC, also known as conflict-related sexualised violence (CRSV)), while resolutions 1889 and 2122 are more concerned with women's participation in peace and security governance.

The adoption of both UNSCR 2106 and UNSCR 2122 in 2013 was indicative of the tremendous amount of energy devoted by civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure that the emphasis on CRSV evident in UNSCR 1960 and then UNSCR 2106 was "balanced" by a similar emphasis on women's agency. UNSCR 2106 links the International Criminal Court and the WPS framework in an effort to combat impunity and enhance accountability for the perpetration of CRSV (S/RES/2106, operative paragraph (OP) 3), but otherwise restates existing commitments rather than furthering the WPS agenda with new initiatives or new ways of presenting the issues at hand.

"... without a significant implementation shift, women and women's perspectives will continue to be underrepresented in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding for the foreseeable future"
S/RES/2122, OP 15

UNSCR 2122 is radically different. UN member states, with sustained assistance and input from CSOs, created a resolution that is firmly focused on the agency and meaningful inclusion of women in peace and security governance at every level. The resolution identifies UN Women as the key UN entity providing information and advice on the participation of women, equivalent to the office of the SRSG-SVC and the related but separate entity UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict. There is a call for *whole-of-UN action*, including enhanced expectations of the UNSC itself, and a demand for more – and more meaningful – *civil society participation*, both at UN Headquarters in New York and in in-country field missions. Finally, the resolution stresses the need for the High-Level Review of the *implementation* of UNSCR 1325 due in 2015.

Whole-of-UN action

UNSCR 2122 represents a radical departure from previous WPS resolutions in its calls for information from various UN entities. Both the executive director of UN Women and the SRSG-SVC are called upon to brief the UNSC more regularly, which is in keeping with the functions of these offices. The request that regular briefings by DPKO, the Department of Political Affairs, the special envoys and special representatives of the secretary general, and the various commissions of inquiry update the UNSC on matters pertaining to WPS is unprecedented. Opening channels of communication in this way will create an environment conducive to more coherent system-wide analysis and more effective system-wide action.

Crucially, UNSCR 2122 also demands action of the UNSC itself in terms of integrating the provisions of the WPS resolutions into the core business of the council's agenda. Various thematic areas of UNSC business are noted (S/RES/2122, OP 3), including, but not limited to, the "promotion and strengthening of the rule of law", "peace and security in Africa", and "post-conflict peacebuilding", with the intention that the WPS agenda is progressed in these areas. The resolution also notes the intention to take account of WPS provisions when the mandates of UN missions are renewed (S/RES/2122, OP 4).

The political dimension of the WPS agenda developed in UNSCR 2122 is perhaps the most notable. OP 4 expresses the UNSC's intention "to include provisions to facilitate women's full participation and protection in: election preparation and political processes, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs, security sector and judicial reforms, and wider post-conflict reconstruction processes" (S/RES/2122, OP 4). Although these last activities are reliant on inclusion in the mission mandate, the reference to "wider post-conflict reconstruction" makes possible the inclusion of political and economic dimensions of gendered inequalities and injustices that were previously considered beyond the scope of the UNSC's remit.

The consideration of the political and economic dimensions of conflict and post-conflict situations is foreshadowed in the preamble to the resolution, where the UNSC welcomes "the Peacebuilding Commission's declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding of 26 September 2013 (PBC/7/OC/L.1)" (S/RES/2122, preamble). It is recommended that the UNSC develop better links with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which has an excellent record of facilitating peacebuilding-related activities aimed at enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment. A closer relationship between the two UN entities will enable better coordination in the management of peace and security.

It is also recommended that the UNSC give consideration to the creation of a second WPS SRSG, to complement the SRSG-SVC. Ultimately, the core aim of the WPS agenda is

to change the cultures of gendered behaviour to eliminate gendered inequalities and injustices. There is a very practical operational manifestation of this goal in the aim to increase the meaningful participation of women in all forms of peace and security governance, ranging from peacekeeping to peacemaking, peacebuilding and security sector reform. Creating the office of a special representative of the secretary general on women's participation in peace and security governance (SRSG-WPPSG) is an important and necessary action. The SRSG-WPPSG would support and be supported by the work of UN Women in the same way that the SRSG-SVC supports and is supported by UN Action, and will help ensure whole-of-UN action on all dimensions of the WPS agenda.

Civil society participation

The articulation in UNSCR 2122 of the centrality of civil society to efforts to advance the WPS agenda is potentially transformational. UNSCR 1325 does not mention civil society at all: civilian actors are visible only as victims of violence and as police/military personnel in situations of armed conflict in the foundational WPS resolution (S/RES/1325, preamble, OPs 4, 6, 9, 12 and 14). UNSCR 1820 further provides repeated representations of "civilians in need of protection", but recognises the importance of engagement with "women's civil society" by the UN Peacebuilding Commission in its country-specific configurations (S/RES/1820, OP 11). "Civil society networks" are also recognised as service providers in the aftermath of sexual violence in armed conflict (S/RES/1820, OP 13).

UNSCR 1888 contains the first representation of "civil society" actors as entities capable of addressing "sexual violence in armed conflict, while promoting cooperation and coordination of efforts among all relevant stakeholders" (S/RES/1888, OP 4; see also OPs 9 and 26). UNSCR 2106 recognises the "important role" that civil society can

play in exerting pressure to address conflict-related sexualised violence (S/RES/2106, OP 11) and also emphasises the significance of civil society actors in "community-level" service provision and protection initiatives (S/RES/2106, OPs 19 and 20).

The extent to which UNSCR 2122 entrenches the role of civil society actors across the WPS agenda is significant. OP 6 of the resolution "recognises the importance of interactions of civil society, including women's organisations, *with members of the Council at headquarters and during Council field missions*" (S/RES/2122, OP 6; emphasis added). It is recommended that the UNSC member states consistently and regularly make available mechanisms through which such interactions can occur. It is also recommended that research expertise be harnessed in efforts to progress the WPS agenda as part of civil society. Support for and consolidation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Academic Network¹ is an important step towards this goal, and the creation of WPS academic collectives at the national level can also be productive in consolidating research on WPS and engaging in advocacy with national governments.² This is particularly crucial when these national governments sit on the UNSC in a permanent or non-permanent capacity.

High-Level Review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325

In his annual reports to the UNSC on the topic of WPS, the UN secretary general has repeatedly commented on the difficulty of the system-wide implementation of measures aimed at attaining the objectives mapped out in UNSCR 1325. In a 2004 UNSC presidential statement, the council requested the formulation of the first System-wide Action Plan (SysAP), which was outlined in 2005 (S/2005/636). The 2005-07 SysAP required 269 actions by various UN entities across 12 different areas of the WPS agenda (see Table 2).

¹ The WILPF Academic Network offers web-based seminars on relevant topics and creates an online presence for a global network of scholars and peace activists; see <<http://www.wilpfinternational.org/academic-network/>>.

² An example of such an organisation is the Australian-based Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective, which was founded in 2012 to engage in evidence-based advocacy during Australia's term of office on the UNSC. The collective has an online presence at <<http://wpsac.wordpress.com>>.

Table 2: Changing mechanisms of implementation review (2000-10)

2004	2005	2007	2009	2010
S/PRST/2004/40	S/2005/636	S/2007/567	S/RES/1889	S/2010/173
Requests SysAP on the full implementation of UNSCR 1325	<p>First SysAP (2007-09) organised around 12 areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conflict prevention and early warning; 2. peacemaking and peace-building; 3. peacekeeping operations; 4. humanitarian response; 5. post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation; 6. disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; 7. preventing and responding to gender-based violence in armed conflict; 8. preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse by UN staff, related personnel and UN partners; 9. gender balance; 10. coordination and partnership; 11. monitoring and reporting; and 12. financial resources. 	<p>Second SysAP (2008-09) consolidates 12 areas for action into five thematic areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. prevention; 2. participation; 3. protection; 4. relief and recovery; and 5. normative. 	<p>Calls for indicators to track implementation of UNSCR 1325</p>	<p>Reported on four of five thematic areas identified in the second SysAP (2008-09).</p> <p>(The “normative” dimension is deemed to “cut across” the remaining four thematic areas.)</p> <p>It develops 26 indicators to track implementation, categorised using the four thematic areas.</p> <p>Each indicator is clearly linked to a goal.</p> <p>Twenty of the 26 indicators are the primary responsibility of various UN entities.</p> <p>The remaining six indicators are the primary responsibility of member states.</p>

As shown in Table 2, the 2005-07 SysAP was reviewed and updated at the end of its term, and the 2007 *Report of the UN Secretary-General on Women Peace and Security* outlined the new 2008-09 SysAP for operationalisation across the UN system (S/2007/567). Further, S/RES/1889 (OP 17) called on the secretary general to develop indicators to track the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which was at that time layered over the 2008-09 SysAP.

The secretary general presented the 26 indicators in his report to the UNSC in September 2010 (S/2010/498). These indicators are organised into four thematic areas identified in the 2008-09 SysAP (the fifth thematic area, the normative dimension, was deemed to cut across the other four areas and thus was not separately considered). Since this report, the secretary general has reported in terms of these indicators in his subsequent thematic reports to the UNSC (S/2011/598; S/2012/732; S/2013/525). The most recent *Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security* (S/2013/525) foreshadows the provisions of UNSCR 2122 in important ways, not least in the call to focus “more attention on women’s leadership and participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding” (para. 75a) and in the support for the High-Level Review that the Security Council president called for in 2010 (S/PRST/2010/22).

The High-Level Review in 2015 was requested in 2010 “to assess progress at the global, regional and national levels in implementing resolution 1325” (S/PRST/2010/22). Situated in a UNSC presidential statement, the request has clear normative influence, but no authoritative status. The articulation in UNSCR 2122 of the same request renders the review an obligation, and some progress has already been made towards it. UN Women and CSOs coordinated a Global Technical Review Meeting in 2013, for example, to investigate accountability in implementation, for which 29 background papers were prepared by academics and civil society consultants on the localisation of the WPS agenda, and the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national action plans.

A key obstacle remains the provision of adequate resources for UN entities to gather the information needed to report against the 20 indicators for which the UN is primarily responsible. As shown by the Global Technical Review Meeting, the gathering of information on “good practice examples, implementation gaps and challenges, as well as emerging trends and priorities for action” (S/RES/2122, OP 16) can be partly outsourced to parties external to the UN. It is recommended that funds be made available through UN Women to build links with research centres, CSOs and universities across the world to facilitate such commissions, which will enhance the 2015 High-Level Review.³

³ There are numerous examples of such organisations and centres that operate with tiny budgets to produce evidence-based policy advice and advocacy in their national contexts. Examples include the Women’s Resource Centre in Armenia; the Women’s Problems Research Union in Azerbaijan; the Women, Peace and Security Research Institute in Afghanistan; the Mano River Women Peace Network in Liberia; United Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina; and Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2015 and beyond

The 2015 High-Level Review will no doubt reveal gaps and obstacles in the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 across the UN system and in the various country contexts where the UN has operational missions of various kinds.

As outlined above, however, it is fair to say that the passage of UNSCR 2122 in October 2013 not only demands that serious attention be paid to the implementation gaps that remain, but also reconfigures the WPS agenda in interesting ways.

A key challenge moving forward from this point is the effective integration of parallel and allied frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan for Gender-responsive Peacebuilding. There is also the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which has normative weight, even if it does not have legal standing. In 2015 it will be 20 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace that took place in Beijing and gave rise to the BPfA. The coincidence of this anniversary with the 15-year anniversary of the passage of UNSCR 1325 offers a unique opportunity to harness civil society energy around the WPS agenda and take forward the momentum created by UNSCR 2122.

Recommendations

Based on the above discussion, the expert analysis recommends:

- that the UNSC develop better links with the UN Peacebuilding Commission;
- that the UNSC give consideration to the creation of an SRSG-WPPSG to complement the SRSG-SVC;
- that UNSC member states consistently and regularly make available mechanisms through which meaningful interactions with CSOs can occur at UN Headquarters and in country settings;
- that WPS academic collectives are developed at the national level to consolidate research on WPS issues and engage in advocacy with national governments; and
- that funds be made available through UN Women to build links with research centres, CSOs, and universities to enhance information sharing and inform the 2015 High-Level Review. ■

■ THE AUTHOR

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