

Session 13

Women's Rights in War: Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security

OBJECTIVES:

- To learn about UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on the role of women in peacemaking.
- To learn about UN Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, and 2122, which address conflict-related sexual violence against women, and women's participation in peacemaking and rebuilding society after conflict.

In This Session:

Amnesty International reports that half of all peace agreements around the world fail within the first five years. "One missing component to creating a lasting and sustainable peace is the inclusion of those who are disproportionately and uniquely affected by conflict: women."⁶⁵ In this session, we will read about the UN Security Council's resolutions addressing the violence inflicted on women in war, and the critical role women must play in peace negotiations and rebuilding in post-conflict societies.

To put the Security Council's efforts in context, the first of its Women, Peace and Security resolutions was passed in 2000, five years after the close of the Bosnian war and the end of hostilities in Rwanda, in both of which conflicts rape was widely used as a weapon of war. Conservative estimates suggest that 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while approximately 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls were raped in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.⁶⁶ By one estimate, 90% of rapes in war are gang rape.⁶⁷ Elsewhere, the statistics are equally grim:

65 <http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/WomenPeaceSecurityIssueBrief.pdf>

66 <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/299-fast-facts-statistics-on-violence-against-women-and-girls-.html>

67 http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/women_insecure_world.pdf

- Between 50,000 and 64,000 women in camps for internally displaced people in Sierra Leone were sexually assaulted by combatants between 1991 and 2001.⁶⁸
- In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, at least 200,000 cases of sexual violence, mostly involving women and girls, have been documented since 1996: the actual numbers are believed to be far higher.⁶⁹
- Sexual violence was a frequently used weapon in the 14-year long civil war in Liberia.⁷⁰

In this session, we will read about the UN Security Council’s resolutions seeking to respond to this global epidemic of rape in conflict. Another outcome of the increasing visibility of women in conflict situations is that their positive impact on peace negotiations and in recovery planning has also garnered a great deal of attention from the international community. As a result, the Security Council has proposed numerous policies that promote women’s participation in peacemaking as a strategy for securing more enduring and just peace agreements. As we read and discuss the resolutions, consider the following data:

- In contemporary conflicts, up to 90% of casualties are among civilians, most of whom are women and children.⁷¹
- In 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 only 4% of signatories, 2.4% of chief mediators, 3.7% of witnesses, and 9% of negotiators were women.⁷²

Reading Assignments:

United Nations Security Council Resolutions

The UN Security Council’s 15 members are tasked with the “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” Resolutions made by the Security Council are formal expressions of the Council’s will and are technically legally binding; however as a practical matter they cannot be enforced without the ongoing political will and the support of the international community. Most often, international consensus and political pressures move governments to comply with resolutions.

United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325

In 2000, the UN Security Council passed UNSCR 1325 to address the increasing global awareness of, and international responsibility for, women’s critical role in building lasting peace for regions in conflict. The

68 <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/299-fast-facts-statistics-on-violence-against-women-and-girls-.html>

69 Ibid.

70 <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/endviol/>

71 <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/>

72 <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wpssourcebook-03a-womenpeacenegotiations-en.pdf>

Council acknowledged the increasing participation of women in war, as targeted civilians and as soldiers, and the risk to stability if women are excluded from framing peace agreements and participating in rebuilding their society. UNSCR 1325 demands that women and girls be protected from sexual and gender-based violence in war, and includes the protection of women and girl refugees and those seeking humanitarian assistance in refugee camps. The resolution also calls for intervention to prevent violence against women and for the prosecution of those who commit violence against women in times of war.

The Council passed the resolution to encourage support for women's local peace initiatives and women's participation in conflict resolution. In 2005, to strengthen the impact of UNSCR 1325, the Council released a statement calling upon the UN Member States to develop National Action Plans to comply with the full implementation of the resolution.

10 Years On: The Promises to Women Need to be Kept

Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury

International Women's Day in 2000 was a special day for me and for women. That day, I had the honor, on behalf of the UN Security Council as its President, of issuing a statement that formally brought to global attention the unrecognized, under-utilized and under-valued contribution women have been making to preventing war, building peace and engaging people to live in harmony.

The members of the Security Council recognized in that statement that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men. They affirmed equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for peace and security.

It was unfortunate that the intrinsic role of women in peace and security had remained unrecognized since the creation of the United Nations. For a long time, there has been an impression of women as helpless victims of wars and conflicts. Women's role in fostering peace in their communities and beyond has often been overlooked. But on 8th of March 2000, that inexplicable silence of 55 long years was broken for the first time. The seed for Security Council resolution 1325 was sown.

Adoption of 1325 opened a much-awaited door of opportunity for women, who have shown time and again that they bring a qualitative improvement in structuring peace and in the post-conflict architecture.

The main question is not to make war safe for women, but to structure the peace in a way that there is no recurrence of war and conflict. That is why women need to be at the peace tables, involved in the decision-making and in peace-keeping teams. They need to be there particularly as civilians, to make a real difference in transitioning from the cult of war to the culture of peace. 1325 marked the first time that such a proposition was recognized as an objective of the Council. As such, its implementation places a unique and all-embracing responsibility on the international community – particularly the United Nations. . . .

However, the resolution's value as the first international policy mechanism explicitly recognizing the gendered nature of war and peace processes has been undercut by the disappointing record of its implementation. The complicity of the Security Council in international practices that make women insecure, basically as a result of its support of the existing militarized inter-State security arrangements, is disappointing. Also, we should keep in mind that the Security Council itself is yet to internalize gender considerations into its operational behavior.

The role of the UN Secretariat, and the Secretary-General in particular, leaves much to be desired. Undoubtedly there is a clear need for his genuinely active and dedicated engagement in using the moral authority of the United Nations and the high office he occupies for the effective implementation of 1325.

As a start, even after ten years, the leadership of the Secretary-General should be manifested at least in four areas.

First, the Secretary-General should give top priority to energizing and supporting UN Member States to prepare 1325 National Action Plans. Of 192 countries, only 20 have prepared such Plans so far – a meager one-third of which are by developing countries. He should personally write to heads of State and governments suggesting a timeframe to have their Plans ready and get the UN Resident Coordinators to follow that up.

Second, the area that deserves special attention is the need for awareness, sensitivity and training of senior officials within the United Nations system as a whole with regard to 1325.

Third, urgent attention should be given to stopping altogether sexual violence and the abuses which take place in the name of peacekeeping and have been ignored, tolerated and left unpunished for years by the UN. There should be no impunity whatsoever by invoking national sovereignty.

Fourth, the Secretary-General needs to take the lead in setting up a six-monthly inclusive consultative process for 1325 implementation with civil society organizations at all levels, involving the relevant UN entities. He should encourage a similar consultative process with non-governmental organizations at country level.

Organizations like NATO and the African Union, that are engaged in peace operations, should internalize 1325 in real terms, both from the women's victims and participation perspectives in their work. . . .

As we have seen, when women have been included in peace negotiations, their contribution and perspective have often ensured that peace accords address demands for gender equality in new constitutional, judicial and electoral structures.

Calling upon warring parties to adopt "a gender perspective" on peace negotiations and "gender mainstreaming" in all UN peacekeeping missions would be hollow and meaningless unless we build women's capacity and provide real opportunity and support women to get political

and economic empowerment, a place at the peace negotiating table and represented equally at all levels of decision-making.

As my personal contribution to the effective implementation of 1325, I launched my own proposal entitled “Doable First-Track Indicators for Realizing the 1325 Promise into Reality” in July at a Working Meeting on 1325 at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington DC. This outlines measures that could be initiated without further delays and without prolonging the international community’s agony and frustration after ten years of wait in expectation.

Finally, we should not forget that when women are marginalized and ignored, there is little chance for the world to get sustainable peace in the real sense.⁷³

Questions for Group Discussion:

- Resolution 1325 calls for women’s participation in conflict resolution and building the peace, protection of women during violent conflict, and prevention of harm to women as civilians and refugees. What human rights does Resolution 1325 seek to protect?
- How might women’s participation in peace-building lead to higher human rights standards?
- What steps can governments (particularly governments that are not currently consumed with violent conflict but are watching on the sidelines) take to implement Resolution 1325? How can governments influence each other to support the Resolution and implement the provisions of 1325 themselves, even when the conflicts are elsewhere?

Reading Assignments:

Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security

Several times over the last decade, the UN Security Council has revisited the question of how best to address women’s rights in times of conflict, resulting in a total of seven United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) covering Women, Peace and Security.⁷⁴ These include UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 (discussed in the next Reading Assignment). In 2013, with violent conflicts leading to thousands of deaths in Afghanistan, the DRC, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, South Sudan, and Syria, the Security Council passed two more resolutions: UNSCR 2106 and UNSCR 2122. Although these two resolutions do not cover much new ground, their aim is to reinvest the UN and recommit its members to recognizing and resolving the unique

73 <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2010/Women-Security/Women-resolution-1325/EN/index.htm>. Anwarul K. Chowdhury served as **Bangladesh’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN** from 1996 to 2001. He served as **President of the UN Security Council, President of UNICEF Board, UN Under-Secretary-General, Senior Special Advisor to the UN General Assembly President**.

74 For addition Security Council documents relating to Women, Peace and Security, go to: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/women-peace-and-security>

vulnerabilities and contributions of women in times of conflict and recognizing the critical importance of engaging women in decision-making to secure lasting peace.

UNSCR 2106 (2013)⁷⁵ stresses the importance of implementing the commitments made in earlier resolutions and affirms the centrality of gender equality and women's political, social, and economic empowerment to efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. UNSCR 2106 encourages Member States to include the full range of crimes of sexual violence in their national legislation and calls for consistent and rigorous investigation and prosecution of crimes of conflict-related sexual violence. It urges the application of targeted sanctions against those who perpetrate and direct sexual violence in conflict, including, where appropriate, criteria pertaining to acts of rape and other forms of serious sexual violence. The resolution highlights the vital role of Gender Advisors, Women Protection Advisors, and women in general, in ensuring the representation and protection of women in peacekeeping and post-conflict planning.

UNSCR 2122 (2013)⁷⁶ is the most recent Security Council resolution addressing the gap between words and action among the UN Member States in implementing the UN's Women, Peace, and Security agenda. The resolution calls for more attention to women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution and peace-building, including monitoring the Member States' progress in implementation. It stresses the need for continued efforts to address obstacles in women's access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through gender-responsive legal, judicial, and security sector reform and other mechanisms. Most significantly, UNSCR 2122 puts the onus on the **Security Council, United Nations bodies, regional organizations, and Member States to dismantle barriers and provide opportunities for women's participation in peacekeeping processes**. This resolution also points to the importance of economic empowerment of women in building more stable societies and sustainable and inclusive peace.

We Should Support Efforts to End Rape in Conflict

*Gitura Mwaura*⁷⁷

Towards the end of last month [September 2013], the UN General Assembly passed what was touted as “a landmark declaration to stop rape in conflict.”

A record 113 countries – more than half of the UN Member States in one sitting – agreed to support the Declaration.⁷⁸ The countries expressed support for strengthened efforts to end rape in war.

75 For the complete text of UNSCR 2106, go to: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2106\(2013\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2106(2013))

76 For the complete text of UNSCR 2122, go to: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2122\(2013\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2122(2013))

77 Gitura Mwaura is a Kenya-based author and journalist, reporting on human rights and HIV/Aids.

78 For more information about the UN General Assembly's 2013 “Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict,” go to: http://www.stoprapeinconflict.org/113_countries_commit_to_stop_rape_in_conflict_with_historic_declaration_at_un

The Declaration will be the sixth international resolve since the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000. The Resolution calls on Member States to increase the participation of women in the “prevention and resolution of conflicts” and in the “maintenance and promotion of peace and security.”

UNSCR 1325 also calls upon parties involved in armed conflict to abide by international laws that protect the rights of civilian women and girls and to incorporate policies and procedures that protect women from gender-based crimes such as rape and sexual assault.

Other UN Security Council Resolutions include 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 adopted in the years 2008, 2009 and 2010.

To set the pace for the above resolutions, the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict was established in 2007, uniting the work of 13 UN entities.

The aim was to improve coordination and accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and support national efforts to prevent sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors.

In 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched UNiTE to End Violence against Women, a campaign to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls in all parts of the world, in times of war and peace.

The campaign brings together a host of UN agencies and joins forces with individuals, civil society and governments to put an end to violence against women in all its forms.

The subsequent UN Resolutions form the framework. UNSCR 1820 (2008) calls for an end to the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and an end to impunity of the perpetrators.

It requests the UN to provide protection to women and girls in UN-led security endeavours, including refugee camps, and to invite the participation of women in all aspects of the peace process.

UNSCR 1888 (2009)⁷⁹ details measures to further protect women and children from sexual violence in conflict situations, asking the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to lead and coordinate the UN’s work on the issue, to send a team of experts to situations of particular concern, and to mandate peacekeepers to protect women and children.

UNSCR 1889 (2009)⁸⁰ reaffirms resolution 1325, condemning continuing sexual violence against women in conflict situations, and urges UN Member States and civil society to consider the need for protection and empowerment of women and girls, including those associated with armed groups, in post-conflict programming.

79 For the complete text of UNSCR 1888, go to: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES%201888.pdf>.

80 For the complete text of UNSCR 1889, go to: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES%201889.pdf>.

UNSCR 1960 (2010)⁸¹ calls for the establishment of monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements specific to conflict-related sexual violence.

Last month's Declaration [of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict] affirms all of the above, urging strengthened regional efforts to prevent and respond to rape in war. It obliges the States to train the military and police in prevention and protection. . . .

Women and girls experience different forms of sexual violence and harassment. . . ; the experience – or fear – of which can be stultifying and as debilitating as being physically shackled in chains to a post unable to move, thus removing women from their role in development.⁸²

Group Exercise:

In this exercise, ask the group to brainstorm a list of actions against women and men that would constitute conflict-related sexual violence, and discuss who should be tasked with policing and preventing these rights violations. The group should consider what happens on the battlefield, in guerilla warfare, in invasions, and in the chaos that ensues in refugee crises sparked by conflict, as well as sexual violence against protestors and political prisoners, among many examples.

Ask a volunteer to record the group's list of types and circumstances of conflict-related sexual violence. After the list is complete, ask the group to review each violation and consider what human right it violates and who (there can be several suggestions) should be responsible for protecting the victims, policing potential violators, and prosecuting the criminal activity. Violent conflict disrupts the normal order of things and the usual channels of command, so in considering how to implement the Security Council resolutions, take into consideration the warring factions, local police, volunteer security, local lawyers, the UN refugee services, foreign governments, etc.

Questions for Group Discussion:

- What lessons did you learn in this exercise?
- What unique challenges do those trying to end conflict-related sexual violence face?
- Do you think that the UN resolutions help focus attention and action on addressing conflict-related sexual violence? Why or why not?
- Are there any steps you would take, or would want others to take, now that you know more about the Security Council's resolutions to address conflict-related sexual violence? What are they?

81 For the complete text of UNSCR 1960, go to: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES%201960.pdf>.

82 AllAfrica.com, *October 10, 2013*. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201310100773.html>.