

THE SECURITY OF WOMEN

Building a Safer Future

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United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325



- Calls for the representation of women at all levels of decision making to **prevent, manage and resolve conflict**
- Criticised for:
 - Conceptual gaps
 - Lack of guidelines in practical application
 - Failure in implementation

In light of this resolution, today I do four things:

- Ask why special consideration of women's security is needed.
- Explore some problems with women's absence from official peace processes
- Offer some positive examples of roles women play in building peace and security
- Ask what role does the international community play in assisting security.



Why be concerned with women's security?

- Battlefields are everyday locations
- The human cost of war is enormous
- Gender-specific experiences of conflict
- Increase in the use of child soldiers
- War rape is used as a weapon
- Women become strategic targets



Why be concerned with women's security?

A 45 year old woman and her 13-year-old daughter were woken from sleep by a group of young militiamen who forced their way into the house. Once inside, they looted and destroyed property and accused the mother and daughter of hiding rival combatants. They then attempted to abduct the daughter. When the mother tried to intervene, both she and her daughter were brutally raped side-by-side by two of the militiamen.



Why be concerned with women's security?

- Northern **Uganda** and **Sierra Leone**: girls are kidnapped as 'AK-47 brides' for bush commanders.
- **The Congo**: for every three women survivors, one suffered from rape.
- **Sierra Leone**: 64,000 incidents of war-related sexual violence against internally displaced women.
- **Rwanda**: between a quarter to half million female rape victims.
- **The former Yugoslavia** estimated sexual assaults between 10,000 and 60,000.
- **Burundi**: 60% of rapes are committed against minors



Why be concerned with women's security?

Women and children make up 70.5% of refugee and displaced persons



**SECURITY FOR MANY WOMEN
IS NON-EXISTENT**

Does it matter if women are absent from official peace processes?

YES



- Everyone is affected by peace agreements
- The presence of women is part of achieving inclusive social justice
- The presence of women makes a difference to the sorts of issues addressed

Positive examples of women building peace and security in our region

- The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- The Fijian government's Women's Plan of Action
- The contribution of women to peace processes in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville



What role does the international community play in assisting security?

Key proposals for peace agreements:

1. statutory guarantee of **women's rights** and **equal treatment**
2. minimum **30% quota** of women in decision-making processes
3. special measures that ensure the safe **return and reintegration** of displaced women
4. women's rights to property **ownership and inheritance**
5. **the end of impunity.**





Increasing the representation of women

- Increase in the proportion of women in national parliaments:
 - Rwanda, South Africa, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Croatia, Mozambique, Peru, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe
 - **Rwanda** tops the chart for women's representation at **48.8%**, with Mozambique at 34.8%, South Africa at 32.8% and Burundi at 30.5%

The role of the international community in increasing the representation of women

- In Rwanda, UNIFEM distributed an illustrated brochure on the 22 articles of the Constitution that include references to gender equality and women's rights.
- Funding from the Netherlands trained women in decision-making and political awareness.



What's Australia doing about 1325?

- In UN debates states support of the Australian government for 1325
- Ongoing training programmes on implementation of 1325 for Australian and Asia-Pacific defence personnel
- Supported the Pacific Islands regional workshop on Gender, Conflict, Peace and Security
- New gender policies are being developed for overseas aid to address gender issues



Role of international community in capacity-building and empowering local women

- A threefold process of
 - implementing 1325
 - monitoring
 - evaluating policies



**WE NEED DEEDS NOT
WORDS**



A definition of peacebuilding

Peacebuilding involves all processes that build positive relationships, heal wounds, reconcile antagonistic differences, restore esteem, respect rights, meet basic needs, enhance equality, instil feelings of security, empower moral agency and are democratic, inclusive and just.

(Porter 2007: 42)



