

A Call to Ensure Women's Participation in Resolving the Conflict in the Solomon Islands

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG), a coalition of women's organizations and NGOs working for the full implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, expresses its grave concern over the recent violence in the Solomon Islands.

We urge Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, the members of Parliament, and other responsible authorities to put in place measures to ensure the security of vulnerable sections of the population, to reduce the likelihood of a resurgence of the violence and, most importantly, to begin to address the underlying causes of instability, including corruption, economic inequality and militarization.

While women's groups in the Solomon Islands played an active role in peacemaking and reconciliation during the country's civil conflict, there has been little effort to increase women's involvement in the formal processes of conflict management and in decision-making in the post-conflict phase.

We urgently call on the Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, the members of Parliament, and other responsible authorities (including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat) to fully implement UNSCR 1325 and to ensure women's full participation in all processes aimed at building peace and resolving current tensions.

It is widely recognized that the achievement of sustainable peace requires the centralization of the needs and interests of women, as well as the incorporation of their knowledge, experiences and perspectives into peace-making and peace-building. UNSCR 1325 specifically calls on Member States to fully include women in conflict management, to ensure their protection from violence during conflict and to incorporate gender perspectives into peace support operations.

We respectfully remind the government of Solomon Islands of its commitment to implement UNSCR 1325 and Beijing Platform for Action, two landmark documents that recognize the unique and important role that women play in peace building and conflict resolution.

We equally urge the government and other responsible authorities to heed the call of the National Council of Women of Solomon Islands and other women's organizations to fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), the Pacific Platform for Action and stipulations of the Peace and Gender Conflict Analysis Reports.

It is imperative that the Solomon Islands government and the international community recognize and support women's capacities in peace-building, create opportunities for women's participation in governance and mainstream a gender perspective into all initiatives, programs and projects aimed at reconstruction and development.

In this regard, Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) must ensure the integration of gender-sensitive policies into its operations, gender-training for personnel, strengthening of its gender advisory capacity, close collaboration with women's groups on addressing their peace and security concerns, and utilizing the community skills available through these networks.

Signed, Members of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security:

Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights
Hague Appeal for Peace
Femmes Africa Solidarité
International Alert
International Women's Tribune Centre
Women's Action for New Directions
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
United Methodists Women's Division