
Statement at the Security Council Arria Formula Meeting on the Implementation of SCR 1325

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On behalf of the NGO Working Group, I thank the governments of Ireland and Jamaica for initiating this dialogue today. On behalf of women all over the world, I thank you for resolution 1325, a Security Council resolution with a broad and global constituency committed to its implementation.

Resolution 1325 firmly placed gender on the Security Council's agenda. UN departments, governments and NGOs have responded with initiatives and action plans for implementing the resolution, which we have listed in a compilation distributed today, Security Council resolution 1325: One Year On. We would like to highlight three positive examples:

- The UK Department for International Development and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have developed gender awareness guidelines and training materials. Member states, especially troop contributing countries and international organisations should make use of these resources which will be online at www.genderandpeacekeeping.org
- You have heard about the groundbreaking results of one of your Gender Units in the field, a model for all future Gender Units in each peacekeeping operation. A Gender Unit in DPKO would ideally support these field units. One of the results of UNTAET is that women are now represented in the East Timor Public Administration (ETPA) at unprecedented levels.
- Your mission visits to East Timor, DRC and Sierra Leone really made a difference to women's organisations. The deliberate emphasis placed on meeting with women's organisations and valuing their input through your reports has encouraged the UN missions in the field to tap this under utilised resource. We urge you to routinely meet with women's organisations on your mission visits.

Today the situation in Afghanistan presents both a challenge and an opportunity for implementation of 1325, both in terms of women's protection and their participation in prevention, conflict resolution and peace building. The basic right to seek asylum is currently being contravened as states close their borders to those fleeing conflict. Neighbouring countries must keep their borders open with the support of the international community; women and girls' lives are at stake.

The Security Council must seek to ensure that women are not only victims of this conflict but must also be part of the solution, at every stage of peace building and at every negotiation. Last year you heard from Luz Mendes of Guatemala and the Ambassador of Guatemala that the involvement of women changed the architecture of peace and security. We urge Mr. Brahimi to ensure that this lesson is not forgotten in the context of any future mission in Afghanistan. We believe the recommendations arising from the December NGO summit for Afghan Women must inform the UN's work in Afghanistan.

We anticipate a more detailed and forward looking resolution when the Secretary General's Report is tabled next year, which we believe should address the following issues:

1. NGOs are not satisfied that Secretary General's reports received by the Security Council contain adequate information on the situation of women in the field, or gender disaggregated data, as called for by 1325. As the Council changes its working methods, formal channels should be developed for it to receive information from a variety of sources, including NGOs. For example, Protection Partners are sending my organisation information from Sierra Leone such as reports on abuses women experience, which I would be happy to elaborate on.
2. In the context of the Secretary General's report on Conflict Prevention, we believe the UN system should develop and utilize common gender-based indicators for early warning and response procedures.
3. Peacekeepers continue to violate human rights. The Secretary General should establish uniform procedures and disciplinary measures for these violations. In a 1994 paper, Amnesty International called for "no international silent witnesses", calling on all international field personnel, including those engaged in military, civilian and human operations to report through explicit and proper channels any human rights violation they witness. The SG in his report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, called for this principle to apply to all UN personnel. We urge the Security Council to affirm this principle for the peacekeepers they send into the field. Since you passed 1325, a network of NGOs have formed Peacekeeping Watch to monitor any abuses, to insist upon prosecution and to make concrete recommendations that would uphold the essential trust between the protected and the protectors.
4. The human rights components of peacekeeping operations should be fully staffed and required to integrate women's rights in all documents and reporting.
5. Women continue to be grossly under-represented throughout the UN, especially at senior levels. Of 46 Special Representatives of the Secretary General, there are no women, of deputies, there is just one.
6. We know that the Council is concerned about the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. There are increasing numbers of NGOs in the field at risk, and women on their staff are more at risk of rape and sexual violence. Part of the mandate of peacekeeping operations should ensure their safety. In encouraging women to take their place at the peace table and at all levels of peace building, special measures are needed to protect them.
7. We applaud Nigeria's recognition of the high rate of HIV/AIDS among their returning ECOMOG soldiers. Why is nobody asking about the rates of infection of the tens of thousands of ECOMOG babies and their mothers?
8. We are alarmed at reports of landmines and cluster bombs being used in Afghanistan. Apparently the cluster bombs have yellow flags, easily confused with the yellow food packages being distributed. Security Council Resolution 1325 refers to landmine awareness and clearance, efforts that will have to be redoubled in Afghanistan as landmines are being planted as we speak.
9. In the spirit of civil society and UN collaboration, we are eager to work with you to realise the full potential of 1325.