

## **Enhancing Security and the Rule of Law:**

How can gender be better  
integrated into the priorities of  
the UN Peacebuilding  
Commission?

5 June 2007

### **About the event**

This event was initiated by International Alert and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO Working Group) and was co-organised in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Norway to the United Nations and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations. The roundtable was hosted by the Delegation of the European Commission to the United Nations and the Liaison Office of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. The event was made possible thanks to the support of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the UK Department for International Development. The full agenda for the roundtable can be found at the end of this report. We would also like to thank the speakers and participants for their important contributions to the discussion.

### **About the NGO Working Group**

The NGO Working Group was formed in May 2000 to advocate for a UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) on women, peace and security. This was achieved collaboratively with the unanimous adoption of SCR 1325 on 31 October 2000. The NGO Working Group advocates for and monitors the participation of women, prevention of conflict and protection of all civilians, to ensure full and rapid implementation of SCR 1325's promises. The members of the NGO Working Group are: Amnesty International, Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, Femmes Africa Solidarité, Global Action to Prevent War, Global Justice Center, Hague Appeal for Peace, Human Rights Watch, International Alert, Internal Women's Tribune Center, Women's Action for New Directions, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Women's Environment and Development Organization, United Methodists Women's Division, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. For more information contact Gina Torry at [gtorry@womenpeacesecurity.org](mailto:gtorry@womenpeacesecurity.org)

### **About International Alert**

A founding member of the NGO Working Group, International Alert is an independent peacebuilding organisation that has worked for over 20 years to lay the foundations for lasting peace and security in communities affected by violent conflict. Our multifaceted approach focuses both in and across various regions; aiming to shape policies and practices that affect peacebuilding; and helping build skills and capacity through training. Our regional work is based in the African Great Lakes, West Africa, the South Caucasus, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Colombia. Our thematic projects work at local, regional and international levels, focusing on cross-cutting issues critical to building sustainable peace. These include business and economy, gender, governance, aid, security and justice. For more information contact Karen Barnes at [kbarnes@international-alert.org](mailto:kbarnes@international-alert.org)

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the NGO Working Group and International Alert and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of our donors.

## Executive summary

This roundtable focused on the gender dimension of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Burundi, with the aim of influencing the members of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), as well as UN agencies and the national government in those countries. Participants heard directly from leading Burundian and Sierra Leonean women peacebuilders as part of a wider effort to enhance communication between local women's organisations and decision-makers.

Over the past year, the PBC has identified critical priority areas for peace consolidation in the two countries and has launched processes to develop integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS) for Burundi and Sierra Leone. The draft outline IPBS for Sierra Leone to be finalised later this year highlights gender equality and human rights as cross-cutting issues. Two weeks after the event, the Strategic Framework document for Burundi was agreed and welcomed by the PBC. This framework shows some initial signs that the leading stakeholders in the PBC processes are recognising the fundamental importance of incorporating a gender dimension in building sustainable peace. For example, the Framework for Burundi states that:

- The full participation of women in decision making, selection of priority actions and especially in their implementation is not guaranteed yet.
- Discriminatory laws and regulations, legal gaps, especially in the areas of inheritance, marriage liberality and settlements, affect women and their personal, moral and material development.
- Over the thirteen years of the conflict, Burundi has seen an unprecedented increase of violence against women, and rape in particular. Fighting the impunity of such crimes, preventing them and providing support to victims are major challenges.

**There has not yet, however, been an explicit recognition that such gender-related violence, inequity and discrimination profoundly undermines the development of countries as a whole. It remains, therefore, vital for national and international stakeholders to implement, and build on, the progress made to date. We would emphasise the following key points:**

1. Linking developments at the policy level with the realities facing the populations on the ground is an urgent but challenging priority for the PBC. Socio-cultural barriers, gender stereotyping and discrimination within the law continue to severely limit women's ability to engage in peacebuilding, and are an entrenched obstacle to change.
2. It takes a very special effort, one that is both *focused* and *mainstreamed*, to target discriminatory attitudes and behaviours and to ensure that the different needs of women and men are identified and addressed in the long term.
3. To achieve impact, the PBC must ensure an intensified process of public sensitization and awareness-raising on the commitments made, and how they will be implemented. It is important to ensure that rural populations, especially women, get actively engaged with the in-country processes of policy change as well as project funding.
4. Government actors charged with developing and implementing policy, particularly with reference to security and access to justice, must have the skills and necessary information to identify, analyse and differentiate the experiences and needs of men and women.
5. Measures to tackle gender based violence must be urgently and meaningfully integrated into the policy commitments, strategies *and* activities of national and international decision-makers, particularly in respect of justice systems, policing and legislative reform.
6. Monitoring must be effective, collective and sustained. This applies, on the one hand, to the stakeholder commitments made in the peacebuilding framework documents and which must be overseen by the PBC. On the other, it applies to the Peacebuilding Fund, administered by UN officials and spent through UN agency systems in country. Despite its distinct function, the Fund must not be seen in isolation from the strategy.

## Introduction

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) can play a key role in coordinating, promoting and supporting engagement with women's groups and in mobilising political will at the national level to further advance gender priorities and policies. With this mind, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO Working Group) organised a roundtable on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2007 in New York, to provide an opportunity for informal discussion around the gender dimensions of the specific priorities and challenges facing the PBC in the coming months.

The meeting was co-organised by the NGO Working Group (led by members International Alert, Human Rights Watch and the PeaceWomen Project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) and the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Norway and the Netherlands. It was hosted by the Liaison Office of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union and the Delegation of the European Commission to the United Nations.

A key aim of the roundtable was to link up policymakers with women involved in building peace within their communities in Burundi and Sierra Leone. To that end, International Alert and the NGO Working Group supported four women from the two countries to attend and directly share their experiences and insights with participants at the roundtable meeting. Their analysis and recommendations were backed up by interventions from government, donor and UN representatives. The discussion affirmed that in Burundi and Sierra Leone, as in every conflict-affected society, it takes a very special effort, that is both women-focused and gender mainstreamed, to target discriminatory attitudes and behaviours and to ensure that the different needs of women and men are identified and addressed in the long term.

The recommendations made by the key civil society speakers, Goretti Ndacayisaba (Dushirehamwe, Burundi) and Gladys Brima (Women's Partnership for Justice and Peace, Sierra Leone), reflect two key levels where systemic change and action is required to enable the incorporation of a gender perspective into the security and rule of law priorities of the PBC. The first is the level of broader underlying principles such as accountability, transparency and democratic governance. The second is the level of practical implementation of coordinated security sector reforms as part of the peacebuilding process. It is clear that to effectively initiate a process of mainstreaming gender, an understanding and analysis of the gender barriers to security is necessary. If simultaneous action at these two levels and coordinated efforts to incorporate gender issues into the policy and practical aspects of security and rule of law reforms are undertaken, then the possibilities for addressing the needs and interests of men and women and building their capacities will be greatly strengthened.

## Discussion themes

In both panel discussions on Sierra Leone and Burundi, the key speakers discussed various obstacles to women's full and effective participation in peacebuilding processes.

In Burundi, much work remains to be done to better integrate women into national decision-making institutions and in national programs on peace, security and development. This is partly due to discriminatory legislation, but also because of widespread poverty and the lack of equitable access to justice. In Sierra Leone, women also face many security-related concerns stemming from low levels of education and economic security, socio-cultural discriminatory practices and laws, sexual violence and harassment and the exclusion of women from decision-making within the security sector.

Despite the different backgrounds and perspectives of the various speakers, there were a number of common threads in the discussion. These themes speak to the roles and responsibilities of all the different stakeholders in contributing to an effective and equitable peacebuilding process in Burundi and Sierra Leone, and highlight some of the main challenges in making the PBC a relevant and positive force at the country level. Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security speaks to many of

the issues raised related to security and the rule of law, and could be a useful tool for the PBC, UN and national and local stakeholders to engage women and advocate for more gender-sensitive peacebuilding policy and practice.

***Information-sharing and awareness-raising:*** There are high expectations of the PBC's potential to contribute to stability and reconstruction in its first two focus countries. Linking developments at the policy level with the realities facing the populations on the ground in these countries is therefore an urgent but challenging priority for the Commission. While some civil society organisations in both Burundi and Sierra Leone have been very active in creating awareness and raising the profile of the work the PBC is doing in-country, limited capacity has restricted the degree to which the general population is aware of the roles, responsibilities and activities of the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), and the relationship between them. This needs to be clarified by more proactive and regular information sharing. The collective engagement of national and international actors around a common agenda and the perception that all stakeholders are able to participate in and support the peacebuilding process are incredibly important in giving individuals and societies confidence in the process, and to engage in driving it forward. An essential part of this process is intensifying public sensitization and awareness-raising on the work of the PBC throughout both Burundi and Sierra Leone. Again, it is essential to take deliberate steps to ensure that rural populations, especially women, are actively engaged with the process of identifying and establishing implementation strategies for projects that are considered for PBF funding under agreed key priority areas.

***Gender-differentiated needs and priorities in security and rule of law:*** As pointed out by Ms Brima, integrating a gender perspective in security sector reform means asking fundamental questions such as: How is security defined by different people? Whose security are we talking about? Who should legitimately participate in decision-making within the security sector? The reality is that not everyone is involved in setting priorities around security and rule of law issues, but that each person is affected by these decisions in different and multiple ways. Understanding how men and women's security needs and access to justice differ can inform the development of more targeted and effective programmes. When developing the priority areas of the integrated peacebuilding strategies, the PBC and associated stakeholders should consider these gender-related issues.

***Approaches to bridging the policy-practice gap:*** Women and gender issues must not only be mainstreamed into the strategies and programmes of the PBC on paper, but also in their application on the ground in the form of PBF-funded activities. All stakeholders at the national and international levels can play important roles in ensuring that accountability mechanisms for integrating gender issues into security sector and justice reform processes are strengthened or developed. Responsibility for implementation should be shared across all levels.

***The need for both women-specific and gender mainstreaming approaches:*** All too frequently, the term gender is assumed to mean women, and women-specific projects are claimed to address gender issues. Clarity is needed around the idea that a gender perspective identifies and analyses the experiences of both men and women, while recognizing that conflict may have distinct impacts on women and may transform gender relations. While the PBF has made an important step in funding a specific women-focused project in Burundi, it is critical that all other projects, especially those in the security and justice sectors, also integrate a gender perspective as a matter of course.

***Culture and gender stereotypes:*** A culture of silence around gender inequality and discrimination against women is typical of many countries, and is often particularly marked when it comes to security and justice issues. As such, a great deal of national awareness raising and public sensitization regarding women's rights and capabilities is needed to transform attitudes. These efforts should be targeted at both the general population and among government actors charged with developing and implementing policy, particularly with reference to security and access to justice. Thus, as noted by one participant, making DDR processes gender-responsive is impossible unless commanders and other military leaders understand the importance of gender. In addition, both Burundi and Sierra Leone have obligations under

international human rights instruments such the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) regarding discriminatory stereotypes and practices.

***Gender-based violence and the lack of access to justice and security:*** Gender-based violence is the largest security concern facing women in Burundi and Sierra Leone. Sexual and domestic violence in particular are common, and recourse is limited with many women having little access to functioning justice mechanisms. The PBC and other stakeholders should recognize the debilitating impact of these forms of violence on women's ability to engage fully in the social, economic and political recovery of their communities. A coordinated effort is needed to identify and integrate measures to address gender based violence into the framework of activities, strategies and commitments made by PBC stakeholders, particularly in any support given to judicial systems, policing and legislative reform.

***The importance of consultation between the government, the UN and civil society:*** The perception appears to exist within both Burundi and Sierra Leone that the process around the PBC had enhanced the level of cooperation and communication between national-level stakeholders in particular, and also with the international community. In Sierra Leone, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and UNIFEM have also facilitated national-level consultations to identify a range of actionable priorities ensuring the incorporation of gender issues within each of the four priority areas. However, such consultations are not routine, and mechanisms should be developed to facilitate more regular and sustained dialogue and exchanges between the government, UN and representative members of civil society, including women's organisations.

## Recommendations for the peacebuilding process in Burundi

- There is a need for more effective gender mainstreaming within the integrated peacebuilding strategies and the funding allocations of the Peacebuilding Fund. While the funded project on women's role in the reconciliation and reconstruction process at the community level is an important step, we urge the Commission to ensure that the integrated peacebuilding strategy and the allocations of the PBF reflect efforts to mainstream gender throughout all of the priority areas.
- All stakeholders, in particular the Government of Burundi, should develop mechanisms to integrate a gender perspective in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all PBF projects.
- The participation of all members of civil society, including women, is critical to the legitimacy and sustainability of the peacebuilding process. Representatives of women's organizations who participate in the country-level Steering Committee have joined the process at a very late stage and therefore were not able to input into the discussions on the first projects presented to the Committee. The PBC should encourage governments to put in place mechanisms to allow for effective engagement of civil society at the earliest stages.
- Despite the goodwill of the key institutions in charge of peacebuilding, there is a lack of gender analysis submitted to the Steering Committee by the various ministries. We recommend that the PBC ensure that the capacity of national institutions to conduct gender analysis and to mainstream gender in their different projects is strengthened for example through the provision of gender training for ministry staff and experts.
- Currently, information about the peacebuilding process in Burundi is not widespread, and knowledge of the workings of the PBC still rests in the hands of the elite in Bujumbura. We urge the PBC and national-level stakeholders to ensure that the peacebuilding process is widely explained and that debates and roundtables are organised to engage the population throughout the country.

- Insecurity is still high both in rural and urban areas due to the proliferation of arms due to civilian attitudes and the behaviour of the police and FDN members. In order to see an improvement in freedom to go to work, school, and elsewhere, we recommend the PBC encourage the government to create gender desks in police offices where victims of gender-based violence go to report these crimes in safety and confidence, and encourage the government to reinforce women's machineries within ministries and to effectively implement the National Gender Policy adopted in 2003.

## Recommendations for the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone

- There is a clear need for gender analysis and the collection of sex-differentiated data to enable a more holistic understanding of the gender-related gaps, needs and priorities within the peacebuilding process. A joint gender impact study of the DDR programme by the PBC, Government and civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's CSOs, and a gender needs assessment of the security sector would be useful starting points.
- Socio-cultural barriers and gender stereotyping continue to limit women's ability to engage in formal peacebuilding activities in Sierra Leone. CSOs should launch intense national awareness-raising campaigns on women's equal rights, women's political participation and other gender related issues. Women's CSOs should also intensify advocacy for and the government should support the recommended 30% quota for women in all decision making positions as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The government should remove section 27 4d-f of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.
- The weak capacity of women's CSOs and the Gender Ministry, which is to a large extent a result of the weak educational and professional background coupled with huge financial constraints, acts as an obstacle to the ability of women to engage in the peacebuilding process. The PBF should support scholarship programmes for women to study professional areas especially in the field of gender, politics, security and other relevant professional courses. The Government and CSOs should initiate programmes that economically empower women to respond to certain human security needs such as food, healthcare, and the payment of school fees and extra school charges for their children. The PBF could support such programmes. The Government should initiate support for capacity-building for judicial and security human resource personnel, supervisors and staff of the security sector, and should prioritise the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs for financial and logistical resource allocation.
- Strengthen the gender mainstreaming capacity of *all* ministries, not just the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. There is a need for gender advisors within the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Defence, Finance etc. The government should institute the quota system and/or other affirmative action to ensure women's equal representation in decision-making positions within the security and justice sectors.
- Put mechanisms in place to ensure the effective participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in reviewing and finalising the draft compact for Sierra Leone and monitoring the implementation of PBF funded projects. This should include application of gender-differentiated indicators for monitoring.
- Ongoing violence, sexual harassment and abuse against women are critical issues in Sierra Leone. The government should enforce internal codes of conduct and/or policies on zero tolerance towards discrimination and violence against women at all levels of society especially within the educational institutions and the security sector. The government and CSOs with support from the PBF should design special programmes aimed at working with disadvantaged groups like the bike riders associations, girls and boys on the street. Such programmes should include psycho-social trauma healing, training in human relations, communication skills, human

rights, and civic education programmes on tolerance and non-violent responses to resolving conflict. Finally, the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police must be strengthened with logistics, financial and appropriate training for adequate response to GBV cases.

- There is a lack of policies, programmes and mechanisms to ensure that women are equally represented in decision-making bodies within the security sector. Recruitment policies and processes that take on board the needs and aspirations of women and men and the development and enforcement of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) policies and codes would be an important step.



# Enhancing Security and the Rule of Law: How can gender be better integrated into the priorities of the UN Peacebuilding Commission?

Tuesday 5 June 2007  
10:00-14:00

Liaison Office of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union  
222 East 41st Street, 20th Floor, New York

## AGENDA

### **9:30: Coffee and Snacks**

### **10:00: Opening Welcome**

H.E. Mr. Fernando M. Valenzuela, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to the United Nations

Ms Roxanna Carrillo, UN Peacebuilding Support Office

### **10:30-12:00: Sierra Leone Discussion**

*Discussion Chair:* H.E. Anwarul K. Chowdhury Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

*Speaker:* Gladys Brima, Women's Partnership for Justice and Peace, Sierra Leone

*Respondent:* H.E. Frank Major, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations

*Respondent:* Vina Nadjibullah, Gender Focal Point, UN Peacebuilding Support Office

*Respondent:* H.E. Mrs Memunatu M. Koroma, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Sierra Leone

Coffee Break and Lunch

### **12:15-1:45: Burundi Discussion**

*Discussion Chair:* H.E. Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations and PBC Chair

*Speaker:* Goretti Ndacayisaba, Dushirhamwe, Burundi

*Respondent:* H.E. Ambassador Johan Løvald, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Norway to the United Nations

*Respondent:* Natacha Meden, SSR and Small Arms Unit, BINUB

### **1:45-2:00: Closing Remarks**

H.E. Ms Elda Stifani, Head of the Liaison Office of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

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