Resilience and Resolution

A Compendium of Essays on
Women, Peace and Security

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Foreword

Resilience and Resolution... but, where are the women?

In 2020 the international community will celebrate the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It is a time to take stock and evaluate.

It has been almost 20 years since the adoption of the resolution, but as time has marched by the relevance of 1325 has increased, it is still so very pertinent today.

We have learned that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without women's security and equality. We know that the treatment of women in any society is a barometer where we can predict other forms of oppression. And, we know that countries where women are empowered are vastly more secure. We measure the rise in violence through the decrease in women's rights and shrinking spaces for women's voices.

We know that gender equality and peace are so closely linked: peace is vital to promote gender equality because gender inequality can undermine peace and drive conflict and violence. There is a cost to failing to protect women in the context of armed conflict, but also tremendous collective costs we pay as a global community for failing to achieve our goals of building peace, and reconstructing post-conflict societies.

It is clear that the constituency of women is a key resource for promoting peace and stability. Women can act as catalyst in the transformation from conflict to peace. Women can play a prominent leading role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in the restoration of the rule of law, governance and democracy.

We must anchor the vision of security to the inclusion of women in all our activities. It is women who serve as the mediators of disputes at the community levels; hold families together in times of conflict; identify and manage resources when there are few and in many cases defend and protect often at great risk. Their bodies carry the scars of violence and the wounds of loss, but still in the face of all adversity and destruction women are resilient.

And yet, still women are missing from the centre of discussions. Where are the voices of women? The voices of those who have suffered and lost so much and yet remain so resilient?

The 20th anniversary provides us an opportunity to re-think, re-evaluate and re-vision the WPS agenda. NATO is doing just that! As we approach the anniversary, NATO is inviting WPS experts, both academic and practitioners, to submit reflections on and vision for the WPS agenda.

This essay series provides a wide scope of views and perspectives about the implementation of the WPS agenda. From the importance of civil society engagement, to the rising threat of violent extremism and integration of gender perspectives into small arms and light weapons; the essay series offers a vigorous examination of the WPS agenda and proposals for advancement.

I would like to extend a very sincere thanks to all who participated in the essay series and for their work on this agenda in their respective roles as visionaries, leaders and women and men who are committed to making change. Thanks goes especially to Robin Barnett, who kindly edited the essays for this publication.

As stated clearly throughout the essays in this series, it is time to seize the momentum; assess the gains made and the recognize opportunities missed. Learning from the past we can forge a new vision for the future. While not necessarily a time for celebration; it is a time for reflection and renewed commitment - but we cannot rest – because commitment is only as good as the actions taken.

Ms. Clare Hutchinson

NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

Women Civil Society – the Bedrock of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

By Louise Allen

The 20th anniversary of the women, peace and security agenda is less than two years away. Member states and multilateral and regional organisations, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), will convene at the United Nations (UN) Security Council in New York to commemorate the unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). This historic resolution recognises the differentiated impact of conflict on women and girls and emphasises the need and right of women to participate in peace and security decision making processes at all stages and levels.

The resolution while adopted in New York did not originate there. It was the result of sustained and collective advocacy and campaigning by women activists, peacebuilders and civil society around the globe. Women civil society continue to assert their central role in the implementation, monitoring, accountability for and advancement of the women, peace and security agenda.

With the Women, Peace, and Security agenda now in its 18th year, it would feasible to assume that the participation of women and women's organisations has been successfully institutionalised across all national, regional and global peace and security fora. Yet access for women's organisations to vital deliberations spanning national security, conflict prevention, cessation of hostilities, countering violent extremism, protection of civilians and even humanitarian responses, remain in many places contested, politicised and even dangerous.

In Afghanistan, women civil society leaders – including those on the High Peace Council – are warning that they are being deliberately excluded from negotiations with the Taliban and in strategy discussion to address insurgencies and violent extremism. There is a real fear that within these closed-door negotiations, the previous gains relating to women's rights, empowerment, and freedom of speech could be traded away.

Wazhma Frogh, Director of Women and Peace Studies Organization, and Member of Afghanistan High Peace Council, has been advocating for Afghan women's participation in peace and security processes for the past 20 years. In December 2017 she warned that when the Taliban assert their presence in a community, the first impact is that girls' schools are re-closed, and women are told not to come out of homes asserting that "*previous achievements relating to the women's rights are being threatened or eroded. However, Afghan women do not have a role in decisions on how to combat insurgency in their own communities at the national or local levels*".[1]

This comes against a backdrop where women in public roles are being increasingly targeted across Afghanistan, whether they be teachers, politicians, civil society, human rights defenders or employed in non-traditional sectors such as police and security. In 2016, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan recorded a 25 percent increase in targeted and deliberate killings of women.[2] In 2017, there were 58 docu-

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1 Wazhma Frogh civil society statement to the UN Security Council, 21 December 2017: http://www. womenpeacesecurity.org/files/UNSC_Briefing_Afghanistan_Frogh_12-2017.pdf
2 Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2016, p23

mented women casualties that had being intentionally targeted for supporting the government, committing 'immoral acts' or being police officers.[3]

Afghan women's groups, however, continue to campaign for their rights and inclusion in Countering violent extremism strategies, security sector reform efforts and across all negotiations and political processes.

Mariam Safi, Director of Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies in Afghanistan (DROPS), told the UN Security Council in March this year that for Afghan women it is imperative for the state to define the type of peace that would ensue from negotiations as women believe that the future of their rights is intricately tied to the outcomes of the peace process.

According to Safi, "*The peace deal with Hizb- I-Islami, signed in September 2016, showed that peace is possible in Afghanistan. However, it also showed how easily actors could sideline the need for community healing, exclude women and civil society engagement and take steps that reinforce a culture of impunity in the pursuit of achieving that peace.*"[4]

In Libya, the deteriorating security situation caused by increased armed hostilities and presence of armed groups coupled with a rise in religious extremism has significantly restricted women's freedom of movement and ability to participate in political, reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. Civil society including women's organisations and those representing Indigenous and youth groups are largely excluded from formal processes.

In January this year, Libyan activist Hajer Sharief told a UN Support Mission in Libya briefing: "*the support from the international community continues to be greatly needed, but this support going forward must be completely and urgently redesigned to empower the Libyan people, including women and youth to play an active role in peace building*".[5]

Libyan human rights defenders and social media activists are being targeted across the country, attacked, intimidated, arrested and even disappeared. Women civil society representatives face even greater threats due to their gender and for their work promoting gender equality, women's rights and inclusive societies which challenge the ideologies of religious leaders and armed militias. There has been a spike in assassination and assassination attempts of Libyan women activists since 2014.[6]

Participation challenges and security threats against women in civil society are not limited to Afghanistan and Libya. Patterns of intimidation by government and non-government actors towards women civil society, including the threat and use of

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3   Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2017, p9
4   Mariam Safi's full statement to the UN Security Council is available here: http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/files/
     UNSC_Briefing_Afghanistan_Safi_03-2018.pdf
5   Hajer Sharied statement to UN Security Council, 17 January 2018: http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/files/
     UNSC_Briefing_Libya_Shareif_01-2018.pdf
6   Human Rights Watch: Libya Activists Being Silenced, 27 July 2017 https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/27/libya-
     activists-being-silenced

sexual violence, assassinations and abductions against individuals and their family members, span the globe. Women's rights groups are cataloguing increasing instances of systematic and targeted attacks, violence and harassment of women civil society leaders operating at grassroots and national levels both in conflict-affected and non-conflict countries. It is important to emphasise that state actors are also responsible for these attacks. Civil society crackdowns are routinely conducted by government authorities under the guise of national security measures.

Despite this, women's groups across all crisis and conflict-affected countries and regions continue to campaign for their inclusion and for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, are the front-line service providers and first humanitarian responders, mobilize for change, develop early warning signs, call for justice and accountability, security sector and institutional reform and disarmament, as well as work on deradicalization efforts.

During international meetings on the women, peace and security agenda, many member states routinely express support for women civil society and women human defenders. There are also a plethora of international resolutions recognising the critical contributions of civil society, including women's organizations, towards conflict prevention, the maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peacebuilding. The international community's support for women civil society must urgently develop and expand beyond positive statements of support.

Nuanced and context specific strategies and policies, developed in consultation with women civil society, are required which directly ensure diverse women's groups ongoing access to decision making and monitoring processes and which consistently condemn any form of threat or restriction towards civil society. Threats to civil society including women human rights defenders and activists, should be considered by multilateral peace and security apparatus as early warning signs of escalating conflict or instability. The critical role civil society plays in all stages of conflicts and crises must be further accentuated including through institutionalised and regular consultations between peace operation leaders, force commanders and women's groups. The additional layers of gender-based threats and intimidation women civil society face should also be further integrated into all conflict analysis, monitoring and response.

The safeguarding of progress on women's rights and participation, alongside women's organisations, is as important. For women civil society, the women, peace and security agenda extend beyond the implementation of Security Council resolutions, to the prioritisation and promotion of women's rights in conflict and post conflict and the organisations and individuals that defend them. A greater emphasis on promoting gender equality and the status of women would see more systematic recommendations to member and partner countries to establish gender-sensitive institutions, policies and legislation at national and provincial levels.

By 2020 the international peace and security apparatus should be better versed at not only recognising, but applying across its country-specific work, a security lens which promotes women's rights and women civil society. NATO's Civil Society Advisory Panel is uniquely positioned to lead on this important work and develop best

practices of engagement which prioritises the voices of conflict affected women civil society organisations.

Women, Gender, and the Rising Threat of Violent Extremism

By Michelle Barsa

Violent extremism and radicalisation that leads to violence pose an ongoing threat to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Member and Partner States. With a spate of large-scale attacks, departure and return of foreign fighters, and prominent re-emergence of far-right groups, the threat continues to evolve. This requires constant innovation in the methods used to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE). Effective CVE measures are cross-disciplinary, requiring proactive engagement from both civilian and security actors. But while the global agenda has shifted to focus on prevention of violent extremism and terrorism, the role of the security sector in this effort has yet to be well-articulated.

Detailed explorations of the CVE and security sector reform (SSR) nexus have focused predominantly on community policing and promotion of the rule of law more generally, but lack coherence within a broader analytical framework for how to counter violent extremism. The majority are also gender-blind, overlooking the ways in which men, women, boys, and girls are differently impacted by, moderating, or proactively engaging in VE. Assumptions that counterterrorism measures predominantly affect men inform these strategies and curtail women's inclusion in related decision-making processes. Security policies and approaches that overlook meaningful consultation with, and inclusion of, women are more likely to lack a robust understanding of community dynamics, under-resource responses to gender-specific security needs, and reflect an overly militarized approach.[7] Empirical evidence shows that an investment in women's meaningful inclusion is an investment in the security and stability of nations.

Women's voluntary involvement with violent extremist organizations (VEOs) is not new. Instead, patterns can be traced back centuries across ideologies. What is new is the steady rise in the number and proportion of female suicide bombers—a phenomenon that tells us as much about women's agency as it does about how VEOs take advantage of gendered contextual dynamics. The reasons why women join VEOs often mirror the reasons why men join. There is no single path; though, in western countries, seeking recourse for perceived or personal grievances is a recurring theme. Women serve as fighters and operatives, but also play critical roles in recruitment, fundraising, intel collection, public representation, and logistical support.

To date, VEOs have proven better than the security forces that try to stop them at exploiting gender dynamics. They tailor distinct recruitment methods and narratives to target women. They also identify gaps in state security measures—typically resulting from the inadequate recruitment and retention of women to state security forces—and exploit those weakness in operational planning. Take, for example, the lack of female security officers to handle body searches at border crossings and checkpoints. Sending in women operatives (or male operatives dressed as women) increases the likelihood that a VEO might gain access to restricted spaces. It is security actors' lack of attention to gender—coupled with stereotypes of women

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7   Verwijk, M. (ed.), Developing the Security Sector: security for whom? By whom? (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).

as victims or as passive peacemakers—that allows for discrete vulnerabilities and hampers the efficacy of state security operations.

Understanding the roles women play within VEOs is, therefore, necessary to effectively counter terrorism and violent extremism. Nations must possess a full contextual understanding of all that drives and mitigates the threat. Blind to the various roles women play on both sides, their response is handicapped. That said, mapping women's roles is not synonymous with gender analysis. Insofar as gender is relational and defined by power dynamics between men and women, an analysis must include the review of how norms of what makes for a 'good man' or 'good woman' factor into narratives, interpersonal interactions, and organizational behaviour. Local, national, and transnational gendered narratives that define what honour and integrity mean for men and women (through norms of masculinity and femininity) bear importance in the construction of these narratives.

The harsh realities of gendered and sexualized violence contribute to a dominant conception of women as victims of terrorism, often shrouding the wide spectrum of roles women play in supporting violent extremism, as well as in preventing and countering it. While women continue to play active roles in sustaining VEOs, a far larger percentage of women are at the forefront of moderating violent extremist influence. Most commonly, women's roles in countering violent extremism are identified as centred in their homes, as mothers and caregivers. While true, women's roles in CVE processes are far more expansive. Relegating them to the domestic sphere alone is missing the broader picture of roles they can and do play—roles that make them allies in this effort.

For instance, women-led civil society organizations can be critical interlocutors between government institutions, law enforcement, and communities. They can identify the security concerns and needs of communities and play a key advocacy and accountability role, forcing needed institutional reforms and ensuring that actions by state and security institutions that create grievances are addressed.

Women also play influential roles in the public sector. So often only factored in as *recipients* of local, provincial, and national security provisions, the role women play as providers of that security is missed almost entirely. Women in the security sector (particularly in law enforcement) and within security decision-making positions are fighting battles against terrorism daily. A critical mass of women in policy- and law-making positions shifts the way those policies and laws are made and, typically, the extent to which they address core drivers of instability rather than just symptoms. Evidence shows that when women are included in political peace negotiations, for example, agreements reached are more likely to last.[8] Civil society in many terrorism-affected countries have identified negative experiences with law enforcement as driving the corrosion of state legitimacy and generating grievances that create conditions conducive to violent extremism. Incorporating police forces that are representative of the population they are tasked to protect will help

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8   O'Reilly, M., Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies (Washington DC: Inclusive Security, 2015).

to address these grievances. Research has found that policewomen are critical to enhancing the operational effectiveness of police forces and building trust with local communities. Women are more likely to reduce human rights abuses, access marginalized communities, limit the use excessive force, and more efficiently de-escalate tension.

If preventative initiatives aimed at addressing the push and pull factors that drive both men and women into violent extremism are to be effective, they must account for this diversity in their construction—as well as the gendered differences that drive women and men to play those roles. CVE approaches aimed at addressing the underlying causes of violence must be gender sensitive and prioritize the meaningful inclusion of key stakeholders, particularly women, in their development and implementation. Without utilizing gendered analysis and ensuring the inclusion of women, particularly from civil society and the security sector, CVE initiatives are likely to overlook the distinction in factors that have driven men and women into violent extremism. And subsequent CVE policies are unlikely to yield success in addressing those factors.

The Gender Analysis – a Cross-Cutting Capability

By Rebecca Blum

The International Agenda on Women, Peace, and Security and its Resolutions

The adoption of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) constitutes the first time the UN Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. The resolution was adopted in the year 2000 and has been followed by seven other resolutions addressing areas relevant for establishing positive drivers for sustainable peace and security. Together, the eight resolutions form the International Agenda on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). UNSCR 1325 recognises the under-valued and under-utilised contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and peace-building. In addition, it also stresses the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in establishing and maintaining peace and security.

The political and military arena and its agents needed a set of methods and tools to implement the International Agenda on Women Peace and Security. These UN resolutions call for an urgent response and provide the guidance for setting up these mechanisms.

UNSCR 2242 recognises Gender Perspective as a way of assessing gender-based differences in the social roles of women, men, girls and boys, and in the activities, they perform. Gender perspective can be applied in operational environments – at home and abroad – and is a tool to better understand any given context. The collection of sex-disaggregated data and the application of a gender perspective lays the ground for a gender analysis. UNSCR 2122 identifies the need of Gender Analysis and how the lack of quality information can hamper our abilities to carry out successful activities and operations. The collection of data broken down by sex and age will assist us in securing that our analysis considers the social relationships of a population and displays differences based on gender. Gender Analysis, as a tool, will clarify roles within societal structures and formal or informal organisations. The gender analysis will include and identify the distribution of, and access to, power and resources. Assessing identified gender-based differences will assist in formulating plans of action for activities and operations.

The resolutions (UNSCR 2122 and 2242) provide further guidance in identifying the need for expert personnel trained in performing the analyses. Gender personnel, such as Gender Advisors, are responsible for conducting the analyses and advising leadership on recommendations based on identified gender dimensions. These tasks require knowledge and expertise, and to remain competent gender personnel will need adequate training.

Human-Centric Activities and Operations

To secure that our activities, operations, and ambitions will have the intended outcomes and effects, we need to identify the specifics of the landscapes in which we operate. The gender analysis will serve to produce enhanced knowledge on how planned activities and operations can affect, intentionally or unintentionally, the people within the area of operation and, as such, identify specific threats or vulnerabilities. The people in an area will also affect – intentionally or unintentionally – the operations and activities carried out by us. A gender analysis will also support the

identification of the strengths and the support the population can provide towards our activities as well as risks posed.

Military protection activities can include civilians, specific vulnerable groups and children. There are specific requirements to address and mitigate harm and contribute to the establishment of a safe and secure environment. Under the WPS agenda, the occurrence of conflict-related sexual violence is identified as a threat to the civilian population. Sexual violence in conflict can be a weapon and tactic of war and can constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide. UNSCR 1820, therefore, requires us to give special attention to sexual violence in conflict and to secure that our troops have training in both preventing and responding to such atrocities. The focus must be on using the positive drivers in our area of operation to work with preventing, stopping or deterring actions which can cause harm to the civilian population.

Challenges and Opportunities

To address the security challenges of today, and to respond to the requirements as set forward by the WPS agenda, we need to secure that we have robust analyses available. Access to reliable and sex-disaggregated data is an essential component as the lack of reliable data, will result in a flawed analysis and will hamper or negatively impact our activities. Nations need expert personnel to analyse the data and to advise the leaders and commanders on sound navigational strategies which will enhance the effects of the activities and operations that are carried out. The analyses will call on the different military capabilities available and ensure that the right actors are involved and support the overall mandated tasks. These analyses will assist in addressing sexual violence, protection activities, responding to threats of terrorism and supporting countering violent extremism activities by identifying where our activities will gain the most traction, where we can get support or when and how an operation should be planned to achieve our goals.

UNSCR 2122 identifies equality and the empowerment of women as essential to international peace and security. Therefore, we must adopt strategies for achieving gender equality by determining the implication for women, men, girls and boys for any action or operation we carry out. Gender Analysis will assist in clarifying the underlying drivers of conflict and support the planning of activities to mitigate the risk of conflict escalation or support the de-escalation of current conflicts. By better understanding the underlying drivers of conflict and by identifying humans as agents can we control and support the establishment stability and sustainable peace.

NATO Needs More Women of Mass Destruction

By Matt Korda

On the second day of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, after learning the dramatic extent On the second day of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, after learning the dramatic extent of the Israeli losses from the previous day's fighting, Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan proposed the unthinkable. As nuclear historian Avner Cohen recounts, "Mr. Dayan, casually leaning against the door and talking as if he were raising only a minor point, asked the prime minister to authorize […] the necessary preparations for a 'demonstration option'—that is, a demonstration of Israel's nuclear weapons capability."

In response, Golda Meir, Israel's first and only female prime minister, told him to "forget it."

Although Meir's was the only female voice in the room, it was also the only one that mattered. This remains one of the only instances of absolute female authority over critical nuclear policy decisions—and therefore represents a highly illuminating case study.

During an interview, months before the war, Meir acknowledged, "It's no accident many accuse me of conducting public affairs with my heart instead of my head." This type of gendered critique—often always aimed at women—is not uncommon, especially in military circles. As Polina Sinovets notes, "In the world of nuclear policy, men see their own supposed rationality as more important than women's supposed sensitivity." It is certainly no coincidence that at high-level nuclear negotiations only twenty-five percent of delegates are female—and most countries send no women at all.

This author argues that *empowering female voices at every level of the policymaking process is the most crucial and most effective form of establishing feminist non-proliferation and disarmament policies*. Not only will this help establish inclusivity, diversity, and subsequent improvements in policymaking, but doing so will ultimately contribute to a gradual change in nuclear discourse, shifting from the masculine-coded "pragmatism" —which underpins the current nuclear order—to the feminine-coded "sensitivity" which would underpin a future disarmament regime.

Firstly, it is critical to note the difference between *representation* and *empowerment*. The former might imply satisfaction with a "tick-box" inclusivity: representation merely for its own sake, or for the sake of meeting a set of token criteria. The latter, by contrast, envisions representation to an end, as a method of challenging the status quo. This means not only including more women in nuclear policy delegations but putting them in charge of those delegations. It means not only adding more spaces for women in policy discussions but having them lead those discussions. It means not only giving women the floor to speak but letting them finish without being interrupted.

Allied governments should encourage and incentivize more women to enter nuclear-related academic fields like military planning, security studies, physics, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament. Attention should be paid to research emphasizing the "softer" human realities of nuclear weapons, as well as research on gendered nuclear theory to challenge prevailing conceptions of security. When

awarding project grants, priority should be given to teams that include gender diversity in both composition and perspective. Additionally, governments should publicly encourage academic institutions and conference organizers to contribute to the demise of "manels" (all-male panels) and "marticles" (articles with male-only sources).

Allied governments, as well as NATO's IS and IMS, should also tailor their recruitment policies towards female outreach. Jenny Nielsen notes that the International Atomic Energy Agency is a good role model in this regard, as it offers hiring preference to qualified female candidates over comparable male candidates, and has established points of contact for female recruitment within its member states. However, this feminist policy must also extend towards treatment of women within organizations: there must be a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and sexual assault; all claims must be taken seriously and investigated fully.

Allied governments should engage with the positions of feminist nuclear NGOs like Reaching Critical Will and Article 36, and should acknowledge the fact that nuclear detonations have a disproportionate impact on women and girls concerning gender-specific social and stigmatic consequences, in addition to the biological consequences associated with ionizing radiation. Ireland noted this in a statement at this year's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee, and Allies should follow by pushing for this sort of language to be reflected in the outcome document of the 2020 NPT Review Conference, on the occasion of the NPT's 50th anniversary.

These feminist policy priorities will contribute to a gradual and necessary shift in nuclear discourse. Carol Cohn has introduced the term "technostrategic discourse" to describe the uniquely abstract way in which the male-dominated nuclear policy community tends to sexualize, infantilize, and deify nuclear weapons.

Technostrategic language is often tinged with masculine-coded words like "rationalism," "realism," and "pragmatism," and terms like these contribute to the intractable nature of the nuclear problem. If retaining nuclear weapons is the "rational" thing to do, then it follows that disarmament is naturally "irrational," "unrealistic," and "emotional"—all terms that are typically coded as feminine.

Not only are these abstract masculine terms utilized for grand nuclear strategy, but they also typically extend to descriptions of nuclear detonations themselves. Sanitized depictions of civilians as "collateral damage" are intended to excise all humanity from the devastating effects of nuclear explosions. Consider the following technostrategic description of nuclear employment by a "rational defence intellectual:"

"The principal collateral effects [of a nuclear detonation on hard and soft targets] arise from thermal fluence (or surface heat), initial radiation and fallout."

Now consider the following description of the same event, from a Hiroshima survivor:

"Parts of their bodies were missing, and some were carrying their own eyeballs in their hands. And as they collapsed, their stomach burst open. Everybody was slowly shuffling. Nobody was running and shouting for help. Nobody had that kind of physical and psychological strength left."

Clearly, the actual effect of a nuclear explosion is not "rational." It is chaotic, emotional, nauseating. Yet between these two descriptions, the former is ironically considered to be more "realistic" in male-dominated nuclear policy circles. Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick highlight an example of a male physicist who was tasked with modelling fatalities from counterforce nuclear attacks. Aghast at the cavalier way in which his other male colleagues had just killed 30 million human beings on paper, he recounts his peers' disdainful reactions to his empathetic outburst: "'Silence fell upon the room. Nobody said a word. They didn't even look at me. It was awful. I felt like a woman.' […] [T]he physicist added that he was careful to never blurt out anything indicating that he was thinking about the victims again." Until the human realities of nuclear weapons are considered as a matter of course—rather than as a symptom of emasculating weakness—disarmament will remain but a faint possibility.

By encouraging and empowering female voices in its nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policies, NATO Allies would play a leading and necessary role in changing the nuclear discourse. After all, to quote Tibor Tóth—Former Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization—"Security is too important to be left just to men."

This piece was adapted from an article originally published on the Canadian International Council's Signal Board on 2 March 2018.

Hiding in Plain Sight: How National Human Rights Institutions can Strengthen the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

By Tara Sarathy[9]

Introduction

Despite theoretical discussion of National Human Rights Institutions' (NHRIs) importance in the context of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, there has been a limited exploration of NHRIs' potential contributions to the security sector.[10] The Global Study on Security Council resolution 1325 states that NHRIs are 'uniquely placed…to lead on implementation of recommendations from all international and regional human rights mechanisms'[11]. The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has identified support to NHRIs in conflict and post-conflict situations as one of its key thematic issues for the 2017-2019 biennium.[12] Although the international community understands the opportunities, there is little guidance on how NHRIs can be more involved in peace and security efforts.

NHRIs are permanent institutions funded by the state but operationally and politically independent. NHRIs are 'thus positioned between civil society and the state, between the national, regional and international level'.[13] Such a unique position between these political and security actors offers NHRIs an exceptional opportunity to bridge the two.

To be sure, the agenda should exercise caution in determining the role and extent to which NHRIs should be involved in the WPS agenda. Burdening an NHRI that does not have adequate legal standing, expertise, capacity or independence from the State could pose additional risks. The ability of an NHRI to contribute to the WPS agenda must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, failure to utilise NHRIs that do have the relevant expertise and independence in a state's WPS implementation is a missed opportunity.

Determining how precisely to involve NHRIs depends upon their distinct mandates, structures, and capacity.[14] The following, nevertheless, are suggestions for how NHRIs can strengthen the implementation of the WPS agenda:

Incorporating WPS in human rights reporting obligations

State parties submit reports as part of their obligations under international human rights treaties. Presently, these reports tend not to address issues arising under the WPS agenda. To better integrate the human rights and WPS frameworks, the CEDAW Committee has urged States to ensure that their programmes, policies and interventions in conflict and post-conflict situations are compliant with the CEDAW

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10 Luka Glušac, National Human Rights Institutions and Oversight of the Security Services. Journal of Human Rights Practice, (2018) Vol 10, pp. 58-62.

11 Ibid.

12 Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, Strategic Plan 2017- 2019. See: https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/ICC/.../2017/.../11_ENG_Draft_StrategicPlan_2017-2019.doc

13 Andrea Breslin, Anna Würth, National Human Rights Institutions in Post-Conflict Situations: mandates, experiences and challenges. German Institute for Human Rights (2017).

14 According to the Alliance of Human Rights Institutions, there are currently 120 NHRIs internationally, 77 of which are in full compliance with the Paris Principles. See here for full list of NHRI accreditation: https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Documents/Status%20Accreditation%20Chart%20(21%20February%202018.pdf.

Convention,[15] effectively aligning the WPS agenda within the broader context of human rights.

Alongside state party reports, most treaty bodies encourage submissions from NHRIs and civil society to gain a well-rounded perspective of pervasive human rights issues. In this sense, NHRIs can 'play an integral role in monitoring violations of women's rights', particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings.[16] The capacity of NHRIs should, therefore, be built to monitor, evaluate and report on WPS in their submissions to international human rights bodies.

Leveraging the human rights expertise of NHRIs

In addition to providing critical policy advice, monitoring, and evaluation skills, NHRIs often can handle complaints, carry out investigations and conduct public consultations. The ability to deal with individual allegations is particularly important in post-conflict and transitional justice contexts.[17]

Some NHRIs have also developed specialised expertise and relationships with security institutions. Below are two examples of how NHRIs have developed partnerships and drawn upon their human rights expertise to support the work of security partners. The benefits of such collaboration are mutual: these NHRIs have in turn gained valuable knowledge of how security sector institutions function.

Adopting human security approaches to WPS

One opportune way for NHRIs to become more involved with the WPS agenda is in their support of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Security Council resolution 1325.[18] NAPs are voluntary, flexible strategies that help Governments strategically align their activities with WPS objectives. NAPs vary widely in their scope and purpose.

Enforcing a human rights perspective in NAP development would necessitate a broadening of the narrow, traditional concept of militarised national security that is currently enshrined in most NAPs. NHRIs can effectively support a more balanced human security approach that prioritises the differing needs of individuals and tailor's security to their needs.[19] Two examples are highlighted below.

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15 CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation 30; women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. CEDAW/C/GC/30 (18 October, 2013).
16 Yvette Dzakpasu, An Analysis of Chapter Twelve of the Global Study: Human Rights Mechanisms. http://www.peacewomen.org/e-news/article/analysis-chapter-twelve-global-study-human-rights-mechanisms (accessed 29 May, 2018).
17 Above at n9.
18 At present, 74 states have adopted NAPs on resolution 1325.
19 Summary Report, Informal EU Taskforce on UNSCR 1325, Workshop on UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans, March 7, 2016.

NHRIs' comparative advantage on monitoring and evaluation

Most examples of NAP evaluation are quantitative, and therefore fail to clarify in qualitative terms '[how] NAPs are a real added value to local women and communities'.[20] States have the freedom to develop benchmarks and indicators under NAPs. Such freedom offers governments an opportunity to do more than simply develop rigid quantitative indicators of success and failure. Rather than emphasising the number or scope of activities implemented by the state, impact-focused, qualitative indicators refocus attention on whether state initiatives are improving the lives of women in conflict-affected situations.

States can refine and strengthen this focus on impact even further by treating NAP evaluations as opportunities for dialogue with implementing agencies. One of the lessons that emerged from the European Union's Workshop on NAPs is that M&E should not aim merely to provide a snapshot, but rather should be treated as an ongoing engagement process between implementing agencies and stakeholders.[21] Through such interactions, states can equip agencies with the information they need to adjust and augment their activities, particularly in the light of unpredictable realities in conflict and post-conflict settings.[22]

By leveraging the independent status, expertise, and knowledge of government activities, NHRIs could be employed to conduct more robust monitoring and evaluation of NAPs, capitalising on their institutional relationship to the state and engaging their government in ongoing dialogue. NHRIs develop an understanding of governments during public consultations, legislative analysis, and independent

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20   Ibid.
21   Ibid.
22   Ibid.

reporting: an understanding that is invaluable for illuminating how gender equality impacts security dynamics.

Conclusion

An increasingly unpredictable global security context makes the WPS agenda more urgent and challenging. In such a context, NATO members and partners should take advantage of their NHRIs' expertise and institutional positioning to advance inclusive security approaches. The Women Peace and Security agenda, in the final analysis, is about the rights, dignity, and needs of actual women. NHRIs can help us to reach those women, and to offer an indispensable bridge between our international principles and their daily lives.

The role of women
in Counter-Terrorism

By Laura Quadarella Sanfelice di Monteforte[23]

We are approaching the 18th anniversary of the approval of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325, a landmark in the legal and political framework, for the International Community as well as for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which has several gender advisors and female personnel on the ground and in its Headquarters, something which helps ensure a strong gender perspective.

Since the day when the international community understood that women could be powerful actors in supporting peace in their communities and nations, and understood that achieving gender equality helps to counteract conflicts, many goals have been achieved. However, there is much to be done; actions for women's protection and inclusion remain inadequate, especially in some sectors and in several geographical areas.

In particular, as a counter-terrorism professor, I would like to stress that the role of women is underestimated in the fight against terrorism, one of the most serious "threats to international peace and security", as the UN Security Council states since decades, that "poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly", according to 2010 NATO Strategic Concept.

Although the influence of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peacebuilding and governance is growing, in the counter-terrorism sector we must work to include women in decision-making processes. Little attention has been paid, in fact, by international counter-terrorism actors and national policymakers to a gender dimension addressing terrorism and violent extremism.

UN Security Council Resolution 2242, unanimously adopted in October 2015, made the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda a central component in addressing the challenges of the new global peace and security context, including terrorism and violent extremism; notwithstanding that, in these fields women are not yet active actors in these processes.

Women are often more than mere victims of terrorism, sometimes they are terrorists, but they rarely are they included in negotiation or decision-making processes against terrorism, or actively involved in prevention or reconciliation initiatives.

This situation must change, also because the role that women can play in the fight against terrorism is truly unique, as they are able to identify the very first signs of radicalisation within their domestic environment: they are wives and mothers, they have numerous connections in their neighbourhood, and can detect from the very beginning any sign of radicalisation.

Moreover, thanks to their role in families and communities and to their influence on youth, women could de-escalate tensions and disseminate anti-terrorism and anti-radicalization messages.

Finally, we cannot forget that women are often the first target of fundamentalism and

terrorism, they are victims under several points of views. First, the rise of extremist groups is frequently characterized by significant restrictions on women's rights, from the right to choose how to dress up to the right to study or work or to decide whom to marry. Moreover, women are abducted, physically and psychologically abused, constrained into forced marriages, raped, even sold as sex slaves, and sometimes forced to commit suicide attacks. Finally, women find themselves living in war zones, without homes, food and any assistance, they often remain widowers or orphans, or mothers mourning the loss of their children, without anyone taking care of them, in societies where the life of a woman is almost worthless.

So, terrorism still has a disproportionate impact on women in several areas, as current events show us at length. We can mention the cases of Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, Iraq or Mali, just to provide some examples. In all these areas women are the first victims of fundamentalist and extremist organizations, and their role in preventing and countering extremist ideologies and terrorist groups is unfortunately still almost irrelevant.

On the contrary, women are sometimes considered terrorists themselves, even when they are exploited by terrorist organizations, as people ignore the violent actions committed are often the result of physical or psychological constraints. How can we include among the terrorists an adolescent woman setting off a bomb in a market in north-eastern Nigeria after being abducted, indoctrinated, and raped for years by Boko Haram's fighters? Even when these girls have been forced to blow themselves up and sometimes they consider this action as the end of their sufferings, in a society that would hardly reintegrate them, as if being physically abused were their fault.

However, it cannot be ignored that after the advent of the Islamic State (IS) things have somehow changed, as the attitude of the Al Baghdadi group towards women is different. Unlike Al Qaeda, in fact, IS both made the body of non-Sunni women a real object (which can be sold on the market) and promoted the active participation of women in violent actions, involving them also in the preparation and execution of some attacks in the West. This attitude, openly and strongly criticized by the leadership of Al Qaeda and its main branches (especially by AQAP), has further worsened the situation of women, making their active involvement in counter-terrorism even more essential.

The international community has achieved very important goals and several countries approved national plans to implement Resolution 1325, but more needs to be done. Above all in some specific geographic areas involved in terrorism and violent extremism, where there is a lack of women's participation in conflict resolution and reconciliation, as well as in preventing the rise of violent extremism, in the contrast of radicalisation, in protection and furtherance of women's rights and, in general, in women's specific role in conflict and post-conflict negotiation.

Today the international counter-terrorism actors and national policymakers must understand that women are fundamental in peace building and democratic consolidation after the end of territorial control by terrorist groups, as their role and influence within their family can stop terrorism and violent extremism among future

generations, as lessons learned in other fields teach us. Moreover, an increase in the number of women within police and security forces would encourage women victims of crimes to speak out and thus incriminate those responsible.

Even in societies where women appear less empowered, their family role allows them to shape familiar and social rules and to promote nonviolent values, as well as to facilitate de-radicalisation and disengagement of the youngster.

In conclusion, much work must be done to engage women in all peace and security efforts against terrorism and violent extremism. NATO must play a crucial role in its training activities and overseas operations, reinforcing its gender policy and enhancing anti-terrorism education programs for women.
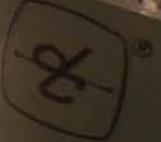
Women, Peace, and Security: What it Takes to Achieve Relevant Impacts

By Jamila Seftaoui

The resolution and debates regarding the implementation of the agenda on Women, Peace, and Security are now nearly two decades old. What are the lessons learned?

It is a fact that the world understands that women and men experience conflict differently and conceive peace differently, and therefore both need to be thought of and need to be involved in peace and security efforts. However, the practice shows that this understanding did not translate into tangible corrections and impacts for women's and girls' security and women's participation in governance and political processes.

Why? From a practitioner's perspective, there are at least five aspects that stand in the way of impacts:

False assumptions. Most WPS stakeholders, from Governments to NGOs, UN programmes and entities, to bi-and multilateral organizations and donors, all work under the premise that if we "sensitize" men, they will act as perfect gender and WPS champions! If we "advocate" for the implementation of the WPS agenda with national authorities, they will create a budget line and an implementation framework for it and lead works to results... etc. The reality is: Many billions have been spent and are being spent on "educating" men to gender equality and waiting for them to change and "advocating" with patriarchal-led institutions with little results.

False approach. Most WPS programmes are shaped primarily by the doctrine that 'Women as victims of sexual violence' as the centre-piece element driving conceptions and programmes. Of course, for the prevention and protection pillars, victims/survivors are central. But the predominance of this approach undermines greatly the perceptions of women as change agents, as actors who, if properly participating in WPS would change the rules of the game, make laws, politics, economy, education work for them, their security and peace.

Neglecting the share of toxic masculinities obstructing WPS implementation has a tremendous effect in most WPS policies and programmes. Women machineries focus primarily on informing women of their rights hoping that this will be sufficient for them to act effectively on arbitrary rules, laws, norms, attitudes, and behaviours which marginalize and discriminate them since centuries. This particular gender-blindness ends up curtailing WPS policies and actions from a central game-changer: Deconstructing masculinities and acting on negative manhood's behaviours systematically as a piece and parcel of WPS programmes.

One of the weakest links in the WPS chain is the lack of individual accountability for concrete deliverables on the side of main managers and teams involved in running the WPS programmes. For example, in the UNs Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), it is only when the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Mission introduced gender markers to measure and report on its gender responsiveness, that the Mission is now able to track, monitor and subsequently improve the way peacekeeping operations are delivering on WPS mandates. The broad National Action Plans (NAPs) have blurred away the individual responsibility of managers, teams and organizations in bringing

concrete results. The use of tools such as gender markers and score cards shall be the norm to bring traction to WPS programmes and commit individuals and organizational units to be accountable.

The priorities set by member states in major decisional circles condition heavily the effectiveness of WPS programmes. It is not rare that representatives of member states do not master details of WPS principles and programmatic realities and may edict one direction or the other which ends up diminishing the effectiveness of WPS programmes. For example: Understanding that WPS is about combating sexual violence (and nothing else) or lumping gender responsiveness of programmes with gender parity leads member states to release funds and agree on decisions only in these directions, which distort the outputs and weakens the effectiveness. Member states re a significant part of any WPS implementation process because they are the ones who shape political debates and position priorities. Most comments and positions in decisive debates are not context sensitive and are not instructed by thematic experts. The representation of MS being itself heavily masculine, there is a tendency in the security council to favour a doctrine looking at women as primarily 'victims of sexual violence" instead of calling overtly for measures to guarantee for them a real share in power structures and governance processes in all countries.

In conclusion, the future of WPS will depend on a paradigm change involving a deep reform of what constitutes WPS policies and programmes, two decades after the launch of UNSCR 1325. This shift will have to change conceptions and considers women as equal partners of men, when it comes to power sharing and shaping laws, politics and economic redistribution to benefit women and girls as well. The underlying assumptions for WPS practitioners must be reviewed, the accountability of men as responsible partners and citizens must be clearly defined and enforced and the gender-blindness consisting in over-looking toxic masculinities and centring programmes on women must be lifted and corrected. Programmatic accountability of individuals and teams must be at the heart of any WPS programme.

States and their representatives must make decisions, allocate budgets and edict mandates and priorities based on solid experts' views and not on long standing comfort zone definitions or patriarchal assumptions.

Advancing WPS effectively is a top-down matter and is to be rooted in clearly feminist and voluntarist vision, policy and practice, the way it has been driven in countries such as Sweden and Canada during these last years.

Making WPS a Reality in 2020: Transparency, Bold Leadership and Resources

By Dr Katharine A. M. Wright

The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda is more than the sum of the eight United Nation (UN) Security Council Resolutions. It is shaped by the engagement and practice of actors at the local, national, regional, and global level. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) plays an important role here demonstrating its relevance to security and defence. The WPS agenda is comprehensive and for NATO is highly relevant to cooperative security, crisis response and collective defence. The focus must now firmly move towards its implementation. Looking towards 2020, NATO must ensure that rhetorical commitment to WPS is backed up with both sufficient resources and bold leadership. The 20th anniversary of WPS should mark the point where the agenda becomes a prominent mainstay of NATO's approach to international security.

In 2020, NATO needs to ensure it has not only maintained but further institutionalised its commitment to WPS both at an organizational level and across its core tasks. The Alliance has provided global leadership in identifying best practice for the integration of WPS and gender concerns at an institutional level.[24] The SGSR position is testament to this, but it also goes beyond the political structure. For example, the International Military Staff (IMS) Gender Advisor's support to the Military Committee, the high-level Gender Advisors at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and the place of Gender Advisors with a direct line to commanders in operations. This has provided NATO leaders with the necessary support and expertise to remain informed on WPS and a gender perspective. The benefits of this are particularly evident in the value provided from a gender perspective in crisis response operations where it is necessary to take in the views of the whole population. In addition to direct access to leadership, positions with responsibility for WPS and gender must also have the necessary resources at their disposal to ensure they can fulfil their mandate. It is imperative that this commitment is not rolled back on. To do so would put NATO at a disadvantage in an increasingly complex word. The result would separate WPS from NATO's core tasks, which it up until now supported. Gender and WPS experts must have direct access to leadership, and leadership must have direct access to gender and WPS experts.

At an organisational level, NATO and NATO member states also need to take bold leadership on the representation of women in NATO HQ, command structures and in delegations. NATO has already sought to address this in the way it presents itself externally but more needs to be done to realise this internally at an organizational level.[25] The participation of women internally has been a sticking point not just for NATO but for other states and organisations committed to WPS. To prepare for 2020, NATO needs to take bold steps and lead the way in challenging the underrepresentation of women. This means moving beyond rhetorical commitments to recruiting more women, to taking concrete steps, including examining recruitment practices and existing organizational structures from a gender perspective. This is not easy work, but it is the necessary work.

24 Wright, K. A. M. (2016) 'NATO's Adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Making the Agenda a Reality', International Political Science Review, 37(3), pp. 350–361.
25 Wright, K. A. M. (2017) 'Telling NATO's Story of Afghanistan: gender and the alliance's digital diplomacy', Media, War & Conflict.

Bold leadership externally is also necessary. NATO's engagement with WPS has enabled the alliance to strengthen its commitment to cooperative security, bringing in a wider pool of partner states and regional organisations, including the EU, OSCE and AU, to share lessons on best practice in relation to WPS. Looking towards 2020, NATO must draw attention to the value of having gender expertise at the top level of organisational and operational structures and encourage partners to follow NATO's best practice in respect of this. To facilitate this, NATO must ensure its leadership integrates WPS into these relationships at the highest level. WPS considerations must be at the heart of NATO's external relations. At the same time, NATO should continue to engage constructively and in an open and transparent way with civil society actors, who hold considerable expertise and knowledge on WPS. This can only strengthen NATO's own work on WPS, particularly as NATO moves towards integrating WPS into collective defence tasks. NATO should therefore provide sufficient resources to support regular exchanges with civil society on WPS.[26]

In an increasingly challenging world and as NATO reprioritises collective defence, the alliance's engagement with WPS remains as important as ever. NATO should commit resources to fully integrate WPS into collective defence tasks. The integration of gender into early warning indicators is a good example of this but more can be done. By 2020, WPS should be integrated from the outset, and NATO training exercises provide an important point for NATO and member states to take leadership on this. Cyber security is another area on which NATO should act to ensure the integration of WPS priorities, in understanding how cyber security is deeply gendered, underscoring the increased vulnerability of women online.

Only with bold leadership at an institutional level and across NATO's core tasks can NATO realise a vision for 2020 in which WPS becomes a mainstay from the top levels down. In an increasingly uncertain world, engagement with WPS has become not just the right thing to do, but a clever thing to do. This means ensuring gender expertise at the highest levels and taking the steps necessary to ensure women's better representation. To do so will set NATO apart and support NATO's role as a global leader on WPS moving towards 2020.

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26 Guerrina, R. and Wright, K. A. M. (2016) 'Gendering normative power Europe: lessons of the Women, Peace and Security agenda', International Affairs, 92(2), pp. 293–312.

From 'Invisible' to 'Invited' to 'Invincible' - Women Build Peace

By Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam

Wars and conflicts are generated to shift the balance of power at every level. Men are engaged in times of war and afterward when deals are being made, holding power and control of the assets of war. For millennia, women have been excluded from the arenas moderating conflict and post-conflict scenarios because it is believed they have no power and control no assets. What has been little understood until recent decades is that women often control unquantifiable assets for peacebuilding.

Almost two decades have passed since United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted. Since then several other resolutions have been adopted to ensure that women are included in processes that effect and determine their life conditions both present and future. Great strides have been made and milestones have been passed but a long and challenging road lies ahead, not only in implementing what has already been promised but also in facing new threats such as mass displacement and violent extremism.

For this entire period, I have worked with women and men in war-torn countries to ensure that women participate in decision-making, that they control assets, that their voice is heard and that they make the best choices as they survive conflict or as their countries emerge from conflict. Change has been slow and the lessons I write below must be repeated until they are learned.

Shifts in gender relations occur as security deteriorates and similar changes are required as peace and security are restored. Sustainable peace is untenable without (re)building equitable gender relations. All conflicts involve dramatic and frequently negative shifts in gender relations as the fabric of society is altered. Interventions may address gender relations in contexts ready for development but rarely consider the shifts in gender relations as security fractures and wars begin. There is also little attention to reworking gender relations once a conflict has ended and the mending work of peace building begins. Shifts in gender relations are not limited to the populations which are or have been affected by conflict. They also apply to those who come to observe, assist, mediate and rebuild – at every level. Renegotiating gender relations must be the domain of men as well as women.

Women's participation is not an option, it is a given. Women still need permission to stop being invisible. Extensive research justifies the inclusion of women. And yet, as far forward we are in the twenty-first century, we must still argue for the benefits of including women to rebuild societies and to help communities heal and grow again after conflict. Women are the invisible workers, the incredibly strong yet subtle bond holding families, communities, and societies together. That is why they are most at risk during conflict.

Women need more than just presence in institutions and processes for building peace and security. To generate change, women need to have information, skills, access, assets, and voice to negotiate new positions and to effect changes which will benefit their societies. Too often women are grudgingly included and placed in isolated enclaves as silent witnesses to their own disempowerment. They are brought into male-dominated structures and networks with no opportunities to engage, and often blamed for lack of results. Too often people have come to understand that deploying a small number of silent women allows them to tick gender boxes without initiating real change.

In any post-conflict setting, the quality of women's participation in institutions and processes is critical. Time and money are often lacking so the focus is on quantity of women participating rather than quality. The complex capacity building required to ensure that women feel confident to engage is forfeited in exchange for quick gains which ultimately bear little fruit. The unspoken message is still that women should be grateful to be let in the door and allowed to sit in because participation is not always a given.

Strategic communications on the role of women at this critical juncture are of paramount importance. Media and social media have a powerful role in how we engage with the different facets of a shattered post-conflict environment, especially as those affected start to think about their options beyond war. The participation, power, and strength of women in these scenarios needs to be highlighted in a sensitive manner. Women CAN and DO achieve results not despite what has happened but because of what has happened. Women need to see themselves as an essential part of any post-conflict process, not as bystanders who are only given access at moments chosen by men.

Women often attempt to become invisible to stay safe in spaces of war. Women must be part of peace and security building processes to feel safe enough to become visible again once conflicts come to an end. Women-only spaces in institutions and processes are important as entry points but should not be the place where women permanently reside only to be forgotten. Isolating women does not help them gain experience in altering inequitable gender relations or recalibrate thee balance of power.

In the past women were placed in narrow enclaves depicted as the helpless victims of war, anonymous faces on posters wailing as death, destruction, disease, and famine engulfed their communities, token figures reminding us of faraway disasters. Increasingly, we are seeing a welcome change and new possibilities, where women are articulating a strong desire to be empowered actors in conflict and post-conflict settings. More and more women are standing forward as advocates, activists, and fighters in across the world.

Even if we ignore women's roles as leaders, activists, advocates, and professionals in every field, we cannot ignore women as mothers. It is futile to consider and plan for a future without thinking first about the children who are becoming that future. The main architects of every moment of future for those children are their mothers. Without the meaningful involvement of women in peace-keeping and peace-building, the future after any conflict will not be fit for the children, our citizens of tomorrow.

Count on Women: Witness a Substantial Change through Women Participation in Peace and Security at all Levels

By Hasina Safi[27]

"Women, Peace, and Security means to get my sick child to a health clinic at 10 o'clock at night." "Women Peace and Security means to be trained and educated (civic or academic with full respect, human dignity and confidence to become the safeguard of womanity (a word to show my commitment and support towards majority of women and as someone observing, what they go through, most of the times everywhere in the world) and humanity (supportive men). Thus, to further iterate the very firm and fundamental basis of future sustainable development and stability of the human world is the participation of women in peace and security at all levels starting from the smallest community of their homes to the largest community of our world. It can be envisioned through the below explanatories connecting the grassroots to the policies and interventions developed for the sustenance of the women peace and security agenda at all levels (National, Regional, and International), which unfortunately, has not been yet implemented the way it needed to be.

Considering the issue of a mother taking a sick child to a clinic at 10 o'clock at night or getting anything needed from outside at that time of the night, itself defines the role of women resolving the issue within the smaller community of home, considering the facilitating environment(protection) outside the home in the bigger community of the society, which can only be possible if there is security. Security doesn't mean armed people around, security means a simple and particle easy environment, where there is respect and importance to your view as a mother(woman) from the officer standing in the lane, to the guard standing in the entrance of the clinic, to the nurse taking the history of the child or first aide, to the doctor checking for your child, to the pharmacy giving you, your prescription, and finally to the cashier taking your money. This is the definition of women peace and security for a mother, which is relevantly based on the social aspect.

Taking Women, Peace, and Security, out to the largest community of our world, where women participate and lead the processes within their communities and societies locally, nationally and internationally. Here comes, the very defined roles of all the relevant stakeholder around women, starting from their direct boss to business partner and to the boss of the boss. From the space women are trained, from the space women are employed, from the space women are promoted, from the space women can speak up, it all happens with confidence, human dignity and respect to women, only that provides them the facilitating environment to take the leadership. Which have all been developed under the basis of gender equality through various tools such as quotas in legal documents, statements, declarations, conventions, resolutions etc. through the past many decades with the support of male committed members of the societies. It without any doubts lacks no challenges, throughout women's career of social and political peace and security arena. It is very basic and simple, the way women contribute and lead their houses through various convenient, peaceful and their own initiated approaches, they can firmly have very effective role through participating and leading the peace and security sectors of their nations. A vital point to be noted is their safety, which is mostly indicated as assigning bodyguards and armoured vehicles.

There are basically two main approaches of advancing women, peace and security agenda social and political. To stabilize it a sustainable approach is to consult

women, let them plan for themselves, implement their programs through themselves, follow up and monitor the measures to lead starting from the policy level to the local level based on one's own living context and circumstances.

Meanwhile, experiences have shown that there is hidden talent which is polished based on the provision of opportunities at various levels, which is visible once they get in the system, which has again two aspects: the first one is their promotion in getting the power structures and the second one is occupying the space within power structures, which may not be owed to the women, and consequently enhances challenges for women.

In conclusion, seeking knowledge about peace and security, towards participation, symbolic participation and now meaningful participation has been a very long and rebellious move by women around the world. This is one of the factors of women's involvement in peace and security, as they struggled from the primary stages to the presently existing levels. Attainment to this certain level is itself an indicator of moving forward for a sustainable and stable process of women, peace, and security. And the way forward is recognition, transformation and rise.

Through recognition, the pioneers shall be honoured as the front liners and role models, to get into the second stage of transformation by sharing experiences and finally get to the third stage of rise which is young and dedicated women to move ahead. The most efficient approach for this would be the implementation of localized existing international and national tools signed, ratified, or approved, coordination, networking, follow up and frequent look backs and lesson learned initiatives to further plan and move forward. Success models to be shared, and programs shall be planned based on the learning through women circulating through all the steps starting from prevention, to participation, protection and promotion with the very contextual definitions to be effective within their roles with authority and of course, responsibility within their occupation systems. Stating about systems, it is worth mentioning to say that, systemization has been one of the key basis of the success for women to be integrated in women, peace and security agenda throughout the recent years in some countries and for some, more and more is to be done to provide women as equal rights and platforms to a sustainable, prosperous and peaceful world.

About the Authors

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