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UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

years



Women...
Men...
Peace....
Security...

There will be no real peace until violence against women ends

Wars provoke terrible suffering to those who are trapped in them, not only to men but also to women, boys and girls. Women, however, experience conflict in several ways, ways that are generally different to the experience of their male counterparts. Amidst hostilities, women can be soldiers, or refugees, or victims of sexual violence. For this reason, all action taken to alleviate the threat against security should be mindful of the relations, as well as differences, between the sexes.



Despite the fact that women also suffer the same violence, they are usually left out when peace negotiations are initiated, as well as in the decision-making processes in general. Six years ago, the Security Council of the United Nations wanted to end this type of discrimination and for that purpose approved **Resolution 1325**. For the first time this United Nations body adopted an official position with regards to women's role in the context of armed conflict and peace making.

The United Nations does not, however, forget the women and girls that are abused and who do not live in countries devastated by war. There is not one country in the world that has freed itself from gender violence, which affects millions of women within their own homes.

To combat all forms of aggression against women in conflict zones as well as in peaceful zones, it is necessary to join forces and to coordinate initiatives. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with other United Nations institutions continues to mobilize its efforts.

Through its research studies, its training programmes and its communication tools, INSTRAW gives support to the full implementation of Resolution 1325 in the field and encourages institutional reform, of institutions, such as the army and the police, so they can guarantee the security of the civilian population and move towards greater respect of women's rights.

<http://www.un-instraw.org>

Women in time of war

During armed conflict

From combatants to peace initiators

During the course of an armed conflict, women are frequently victims of all types of violence, particularly of a sexual nature. Nevertheless, it must also be remembered that women can play important roles during the conflicts and experience war in many different ways of ways.

Women soldiers

There are women who, once the war starts, serve as combatants and take an active part in the conflict. Their lives as soldiers can be very difficult and the fact that they are women, in an environment generally relegated to men, makes it even more challenging. They often suffer sexual violence and discrimination from their male partners.

33% of the combatant forces of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka are women.

Dexter Filkins, "Sri Lanka women at war", Herald Tribune, 13 March 2000.

Refugee and displaced women

As a result of wars, millions of people are forced to leave their homes, give up their possessions and move to refugee camps. Given that in general terms the men are the ones who combat in war, most of the displaced people are women, who usually move with their children. In refugee camps hygiene conditions are typically precarious, food is scarce and violence against women is common in these settlement.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, registers 5,34 million refugee women, at the end of 2005. Nevertheless, UNHCR only has available data by gender of half of the refugees in the world.

(Refugee Trends 2005. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Women victims of sexual violence

In many conflicts, rape is used as a war tactic to intimidate and control women and the communities where they live, as well as to spread fear, obtain information and inflict punishment. Many women who have suffered sexual violence, not only do they run the risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS, but they also risk being rejected by their own families due to the "dishonour" that accompanies rape. There are many types of sexual violence and they change according to the situations. Sexual violence encompasses rapes, human trafficking, forced prostitution and forced marriage, among others.

Between 20,000 and 50,000 women were raped during the war in Bosnia.

(International Labour Organization, ILO)

In 1994, between 250,000 and 500,000 women and girls suffered from torture, physical abuse and rape in Rwanda.

(ILO)





Women heads of family and widows

During times of war women usually become head of the family, they take care of the children and elderly. They are also responsible for food and hygiene and the education of their brood.

However women are not only responsible for household duties but must also enter the labor market in order to provide economically for their family.

Armed conflicts have always left a great number of widows but generally there are a higher number of male casualties. Women then continue to be at the head of the household after the conflict having lost there spouses to the war.

In some societies the survival of women with young children without male partners is very difficult economically and socially. In these communities the men are solely responsible for providing for their family and their income can bring a certain social status to their wife. After a war women not only suffer the lost of their husbands, but the lost of their social and economic position hence losing home and land.

After the war in Rwanda about 50, 000 widows took charge of 300,000 children.
(Widows of the Genocide Association, AVEGA)

Women as instigators of peace

While men are absent during war times, women maintain social networks in the community they live in, and through these networks are informed on social reality. This way they are the ones who organize the initial contacts to end the armed conflict. Many women work with NGOs and combine forces to obtain reconciliation after the war.

In 1992 Congolese women locked up their male partners in the Assembly for the "Inter-Congolese Dialogue"and asserted that they would not let them out until they signed a peace agreement.

(African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes ACCORD)

At the focal point of the crisis in Liberia the women of the Mano river region (Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone) united to form Mano River Women of Peace Network (MARWOPNET). The voice of MARWOPNET was so powerful that the network was invited to peace talks on Liberia sponsored for the West African States (ECOWA), which were held in Akosombo, Ghana. The women were later asked to sign the peace agreement.

After armed conflict

Educators, soldiers, civil victims, refugees, or peace promoters; women play diverse and active roles during a war. However, when the conflict ends, their voices are rarely heard. Their contribution and experiences during the war are not usually recognized. As a routine, during the process of peace negotiations, women are kept aside.

Less than 17% of Parliament seats in the World are occupied by women.
(INTER PARLAMENTARY UNION, April 2006)

Only one of the 20 delegations attending the six conferences of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review was headed by a woman.
(United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, UNIDIR 2003)

No more than 3 women have served as permanent judges in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.
(UNIFEM)

Stepping forward against gender discrimination Resolution 1325 and its implementation six years later

The United Nations aspired to end this marginalization and consequently, the UN Security Council, adopted **Resolution 1325** in October 2000.

This decree places women in a prominent position when planning refugee camps, in the negotiations for peace agreements, in peacekeeping operations and in the reconstruction of countries destroyed by war.

By adopting this Resolution the United Nations recognized the different roles and experiences of women during wars, as well as the necessity for women to be present during peace negotiations. This legal instrument seeks to integrate the gender perspective in the activities related to peace and security, to protect women from violence, and increase their participation in decision-making processes.

The first decisive step to change the perception of women in *countries at war*, and to promote a greater participation by women in the construction of peace, has thereby been taken. However, the most difficult road is still to be traveled. Resolution 1325 exists already, but it has to be fully implemented.

Almost six years after its adoption, initiatives for the implementation of the resolution have been undertaken in many parts of the world, mainly within the civil society. However, only a few of the UN Member States have adopted concrete action plans. In particular in places experiencing armed conflict, women are not adequately represented in negotiations, in cabinets or in conferences.



Resolution 1325: Some improvements

Six years after this innovative decree was made, some advances achieved through its implementation can be observed. :

- In September 2005, 10 out of 18 peacekeeping operations included personnel who worked on gender issues. (United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM)
- In the parliamentary elections in Rwanda held in September 2003, 49% of the seats were occupied by women (UN 2004)
- In June 2004, 27,5% of the international civil personnel serving in peace operations were women. (Peacewomen)
- The representation of women in the European Parliament has increased from 26.8% in 1995 to a 30,3% in 2004. (Womenlobby)
- 27 UN Member States formed an informal alliance group called "Friends of 1325" that advocates for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

Women in times of peace

There are many women who do not live in an environment of war, but who also experience situations of violence because they are women. Peace does not guarantee the absence of aggression.

Violence against women is often hidden as a result of a culture of silence. For this reason, it is very difficult to obtain reliable statistics, since most of the attacks are not denounced due to shame, stigma and fear of vengeance. It is even common to blame women for the rape that they suffer and for causing dishonour to their families.

One in five women in the world will be victim of rape or of attempted rape in their lifetime.

(Millennium Project, United Nations 2005a. *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. Task Group on Education and Equality Between Men and Women. Londres and Sterling, Virginia: *Earthscan*)

One in three women in the world is beaten, forced to have sexual relations by coercion or abused in some other way, usually by a member of her family or a known person.

(Heise, L., M. Ellsberg y M. Gottemoeller 1999. *Ending Violence against Women*. Population Reports. Series L. No. 11. Baltimore, Maryland: Population Information Program, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.)

Violence kills and (incapacitates disables) so many women who are between 15 and 44 years, as cancer does

UN Millennium Project 2005a, pp. 15 and 110

25% of women suffer sexual abuse from their partners in their lifetime

Amnesty International

<http://www.un-instraw.org>

What does INSTRAW do in the area of gender, peace and security?

Research, strengthen capacities and disseminate information

Being the only United Nations institute specialized in themes related to women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Promotion of Women (INSTRAW) works on several issues relevant to gender, peace and security. These include the reform of the institutions responsible for the security, violence against women and the application of Security Council Resolution 1325. Several general initiatives have been promoted by INSTRAW, such as a world directory relevant to research organizations and the online publication of the research series "New Voices, New Perspectives". INSTRAW has completed the following projects:

To promote the security sector reform

So that the institutions in charge of security, such as the military and the police, will exhibit increased awareness of gender equity and take women into consideration to a greater extent.

- A conceptual framework on Gender and the Security Sector Reform;
- Resources on the Internet, including fact sheets, annotated bibliography, events...
- A case study on gender and the security sector in Dominican Republic.

To contribute to the eradication of violence against women

So that men as well as women will know how to react when confronting these aggressions

- A tool to (react in front of, to respond to) violence against women in the reform and plans of the public security sector;
- A training module based on such a tool;
- A project with the young to eliminate violence against women;
- A book on how to involve women to end gender violence.

To promote the application of Security Council Resolution 1325

So that this Resolution will be implemented and there may be more security for women

- A guide for the preparation of national action plans based on Resolution 1325

To work in coordination with other United Nations agencies

To join forces in favor of a greater security for women

With the objective of establishing networks amongst the different actors, in 2005 INSTRAW joined the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security that assembles all United Nations agencies interested in this issue.

For more information: www.un-instraw.org



Glossary

Some key words

· **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:** is "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result, in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

(Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 1994. A/RES/48/104. 23rd February 1994).

· **SECURITY:** Personal and community situations derived from being safe from a wide specter of grave and profound character threats. These threats include, but are not limited to, all forms of violence, injustice and violations of human rights. The struggle for the human security of women, men, girls and boys is a potentially emancipatory process that bears in its own nucleus the elimination of unequal and oppressive gender relations.

(Definition of security according to INSTRAW).

· **MILITARIZED GENDER ROLES:** These are the roles that are assigned to men and women through a socialization process, specific to a certain culture and a certain era. Gender roles are militarized through a process in which "military values, ideology and conduct norms have acquire a dominant influence on political, social, economic and governmental foreign relation matters, and as a consequence structural, ideological patterns as well as those of society's and of government become "militarized". (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Liga Internacional de Mujeres para la Paz y la Libertad-WILPF)

¿Do you wish to have more information?

Some references to links of interest

- UN- INSTRAW: <http://www.un-instraw.org>
- WOMENWATCH: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>
- WOMEN WAR PEACE: <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/>
- UNFPA: <http://www.unfpa.org/>
- UNHCR: <http://www.acnur.org/>
- Widows of Genocide Association AVEGA: <http://www.avega.org.rw/>
- Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org/>
- International Committee of the Red Cross : <http://www.icrc.org/>
- UNIFEM: <http://unifem.org>

“Women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it. For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls.”

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (October 2000)

<http://www.un-instraw.org>

