

Peace & Security: Resolution 1325 Turns Up the Volume on Women's Voices

Women activists pushed for the passage of the resolution and continue to advocate for its full implementation

The United Nations Security Council, the primary decision-making body on international issues of peace and security, unanimously passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security on October 31, 2000 in an important victory for women worldwide. It is the first Security Council resolution to recognize that women are not only victims of war but also active agents in building peace. Women activists pushed for the passage of Resolution 1325 and are now working to make sure that 1325 becomes a living document by holding the Security Council accountable for including women's voices in the arena of global peace and security.

Resolution 1325 calls on the UN, member states and other parties to include women and women's organizations when they negotiate and implement peace agreements and reconstruction efforts, as well as protect the safety of women during conflict and post-conflict situations. The key provisions are:

Women's Participation in Decision-Making & Peace Processes

- More women in decision-making positions relating to peace and security issues at all levels including national governments, UN high-level positions, civilian police and humanitarian personnel

Women's Participation in Conflict Resolution & War Prevention

- UN Security Council and member states to consult with women's organizations and to include a gender perspective when negotiating peace agreements, reconstructing post-conflict areas and preventing further conflict situations

Peacekeeping Operations to include Gender Training

- UN Secretary-General to provide training on the protection of women, their rights and needs and their participation in post-conflict peacekeeping operations
- Member states to increase funding to the UN for gender-sensitive training

Women Receive Protection

- Member states to treat sexual and gender-based crimes against women as war crimes
- All groups involved in peace negotiations to protect the rights of women when making post-conflict decisions about the constitution, electoral system, the police and judiciary
- Give special attention to the effects of gender-based sexual violence on women during conflict and to the unique impacts of disarmament, sanctions, and refugee camp conditions on women

UN Reporting & Implementation Mechanisms Incorporate Gender

- UN Secretary-General to study and report on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building, and gender in peace processes and conflict resolution
- UN Secretary-General to report regularly on the implementation of gender in peacekeeping missions

For full text of UN Security resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security go to:
<http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325.html>



CENTER FOR WOMEN POLICY STUDIES
www.centerwomenpolicy.org

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
www.lwv.org

**WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT &
DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**
www.wedo.org

From creation to implementation, women use the inter

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan women constitute approximately 60 percent of the population. Under the former Taliban regime women in Afghanistan had few basic human rights including the right to work, travel, access health care, or to free speech. Public beatings, rape, abduction, murder, and trafficking of women were commonplace. Advocates have used UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to promote women's participation, rights and equality within the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The Bonn Agreement of 2001 laid out a framework for the transitional government of Afghanistan and called for a gender-sensitive government and the creation of a Ministry of Women's Affairs under the new administration. This was followed by the Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy in December 2001, which brought together 40 Afghan women leaders to discuss women's involvement in the social, economic and political reconstruction of Afghanistan.

During the transitional government the principles set forth in Resolution 1325 were reflected in the joint advocacy efforts of the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs working with women's organizations. Advocates ensured that refugee and displaced women were able to participate in a 2002 national Women's Consultation in Kabul, and they pushed for legal and constitutional changes seen as fundamental first steps for protecting the rights of women in Afghanistan. For example the 2004 Afghan Constitution recognizes the equal rights of women and men and establishes quotas for women's representation in government. In addition, Afghanistan has now signed CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, also characterized as the women's international bill of rights) and the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court.

Afghan advocates are now channeling their efforts towards implementation of these gains, a serious challenge

since so many women remain unaware of their legal rights and there are still so few female judges and police officers. The severe intimidation faced by women during the recent elections—including the killing of three Afghan women who were registering women to vote, over 30 girls' schools burned, and routine threats against women's rights activists—served to underline the extent of the challenges facing women.

Looking ahead to the 2005 parliamentary and local elections planned for Afghanistan, advocates view the implementation of Resolution 1325 and CEDAW as critical to ensure that female candidates and women voters are able to exercise their right to participate without fear for their safety.

Sources: www.amnestyusa.org, www.peacewomen.org, www.feminist.org, www.rauwa.org

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Africa has a population of over 58 million people, 55 percent of whom are women. After gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, Congo was ruled by one man, Colonel Mobutu Sesse Seko, from 1965 until 1997. War broke out in 1998, when Congolese rebels, supported by neighboring Uganda and Rwanda attempted to overthrow the new president. Some three million people died due to the brutal effects of the war and the ensuing famine and disease.

Congolese women were most severely affected by the devastation. But women's organizations advocating for peace and actively pursuing a place within formal negotiations were often excluded from peace talks at the highest level. Resolution 1325 gave Congolese women the power of international authority to demand participation. To raise public awareness, a coalition of local groups, with support from UN country and regional offices, translated Resolution 1325 into the four national languages

and organized forums on women's participation in the peace process. In February 2002, they hosted a meeting of members of the warring factions, government and civil society in Nairobi, Kenya. The resulting Nairobi Declaration reflects the influence of Resolution 1325 in its call for an immediate ceasefire, the inclusion of women in all aspects of the peace process, the formation of the Congolese Women's Caucus and the adoption of a 30 percent quota for women at all levels of government. The advocates used the Nairobi Declaration as a lobbying tool to win substantial involvement for women (23 percent of the 340 total delegates) at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, a forum for diplomatic negotiations in April 2002.

The result of women's participation in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue was an article in the country's Transitional Constitution calling on the government to ensure women's involvement and representation in decision-making institutions.

In other key gains made by women, the UN peace-keeping mission to the DRC includes a gender component, a Gender Advisor to the government has been appointed and the new Constitution, adopted in April 2003, includes a guarantee of women's full participation in the peace process.

Sources: www.drc.org, www.peacewomen.org, www.unifem.org, www.undp/governance/gender.htm

IRAQ

Iraqi women have a strong history of civic engagement going back to the beginning of the last century. Women's organizations, like the Iraqi Women's League formed in 1952, successfully lobbied for laws that granted women the right to employment, education, and inheritance. Women and men were also equal under the law according to the 1970 Constitution enacted after the Socialist Ba'ath Party seized control of Iraq in a 1968 coup.

In the Ba'ath Party's socialist plan, women were considered a key compo-

International power of 1325 to push for participation

ment of society with the right to work outside the home and to vote. Education was mandatory for girls and university and vocational education were encouraged for women. Women, most often from the upper economic class, held jobs in all sectors of society, including the military. In political life, women held just over 10 percent of National Assembly seats in 1989.

Reversals in the status of Iraqi women began with Saddam Hussein's takeover of the Ba'ath Party in 1979 and continued through the subsequent destruction of civil society organizations and the stripping of individual rights. The Gulf War of 1991 furthered the erosion of women's rights; now they faced arrest, torture, including rape and execution if suspected of political opposition to Hussein's regime or in connection to male relatives wanted by Iraqi authorities.

Women's literacy, education and employment rates plummeted. Kurdish women in Northern Iraq have been able to draw from their history of civic engagement to actively participate in the reconstruction of their government and society. Presently, women hold eight of 100 seats in the Kurdish National Assembly and three of 20 ministerial positions in the high levels of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Women's Network of 25 women's organizations of differing political parties promotes women's inclusion in all levels of political life.

Since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the formation of an interim Iraqi government and the on-going violence, women in Iraq have struggled to ensure their voices are heard and that resolution 1325 is integral to the country's reconstruction. But they are both under-represented and without adequate security—only three of the 25 original members of the Iraqi Governing Council were women; one was assassinated in September 2003, and another survived a recent assassination attack. Violence against women and girls has increased dramatically since 2003 and many women fear harassment, beatings, abduction, rape, and murder on a daily basis. In order for women to participate

fully in the rebuilding of Iraq, they must first feel safe.

The international community must redouble its efforts to ensure women's human security as a necessary precondition to women's equality in Iraq. To empower local women to participate in the political processes of their country, Iraqi women organized meetings between local women's groups and UN workers to share women's perspectives on a transitional government. In these meetings, 90 women from various Iraqi organizations used the language of 1325 to call for the creation of an Iraqi Women's Higher Council in the transitional government, nominated 50 women for higher-level positions in the new government, and recommended that the new Vice-President be a woman.

Women in the Iraqi Women's Network and the Advisory Council for Women's Affairs encouraged other Iraqi women to nominate political leaders and run for political office. Largely due to these efforts, on June 1, 2004 six women were named to the 30-member Iraq Interim Government and two women to the nine-member Election Commission. Iraqi women were also successful in having gender equality included in the laws of the transitional government and a quota of 25 percent representation by women in the Iraqi legislature.

Sources: www.amnestyusa.org, www.unifem.org, <http://wwwics.si.edu/events/docs/ACF34.pdf>

RWANDA

Social tension between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority of Rwanda escalated throughout the 1980s and 1990s culminating in 1994 in a 100-day slaughter in which more than 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed. Tutsi women were subjected to sexual assault and torture as a means of destroying the Tutsi community. So many men were killed that women are now 70 percent of the population and have taken over leadership roles in the community and in the home in keep-

ing with cultural beliefs that women are better suited to forgive, reconcile, and build peace.

Rwanda now stands as a model of women's participation in political and peace processes and the transition to democracy. Through their sustained efforts for equality, Rwandan women constitute the world's largest representation of women in government with 48 percent of seats in Parliament. Rwanda's Constitution of 2003 references CEDAW by incorporating gender equality as a key principle, calling for the establishment of a Gender Commission and a Gender Observatory, and reserving at least 30 percent of decision-making positions at all levels and in all sectors for women.

In 1994 following the genocide, the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development established Women's Councils, which are elected by women to represent the concerns of women at various levels and include female representatives for legal affairs, civic education, health, and finance. Women's Councils also provide skills training and rights education. The head of the Women's Council holds a seat on the local council.

In the 2001 elections, Rwanda instituted a new and successful electoral system at the local level that aimed to include women in governance. The Rwandan government has shown its commitment to women by appointing them to visible high-level positions at the national level. In the elections for the President, Senate and Parliament held in March 2004, one woman ran for President and women won 48 percent of the seats in Parliament and 30 percent of the Senate seats. Women were also appointed to 32 percent of Cabinet positions. Many women were involved in the peace process and nation building directly after the genocide of 1994, and their experiences of conflict were crucial in the formulation of 1325. Rwandan women continue to dedicate themselves to a platform of peace today.

Sources: www.peacewomen.org, www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/

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Get Involved

The **UN-Interagency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security** is comprised of UN agencies and NGO observers including the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and works within the UN to ensure that women's voices are heard in conflict and post-conflict areas.

For more information on the UN groups involved in the Task Force and activities planned for 2004-2005, go to www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/activities/tfwpsecurity.htm

The **NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security** was formed in May 2000 to call for Resolution 1325 and now works with the UN Task Force for its full implementation. The group includes the following non-governmental organizations:

Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org

Femmes Africa Solidarité: www.fasngo.org

Hague Appeal for Peace: www.haguepeace.org

International Alert: www.international-alert.org

International Women's Tribune: www.iwtc.org

Women's Action for New Directions: www.wand.org

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children: www.womenscommission.org

Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church: <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw>

Women's Environment and Development Organization: www.wedo.org

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: www.wilpf.int.ch

For more information on these groups, go to <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/wg.html>.



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