

# Road to 2020 - UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: @PKO Now! No.105

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“Turning a blind eye to this tragedy is being complicit. It’s not just perpetrators of violence who are responsible for their crimes, it is also those who choose to look the other way.” – Denise Mukwege

“Women must also be the key to solving many problems and must be involved in building lasting peace among communities. With the voice and participation of women, we can make fundamental changes in our communities.” – Nadia Murad

In 2018, Denise Mukwege and Nadia Murad received the Nobel Peace Prize “for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict”<sup>1</sup>. In his award speech<sup>2</sup>, Denise Mukwege, a surgeon who has treated thousands of rape victims – women, girls and toddlers as young as 18 months - depicted the brutality of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He also mentioned how men and boys are also not spared from such impunity. Nadia Murad, a survivor of sexual violence, recalled how men in her Yazidi community were subject to mass execution, while women were sold, enslaved and were targeted for sexual violence<sup>3</sup>. They both highlighted how the international community failed to prevent violence, protect the vulnerable, and prosecute the perpetrators. They also underlined the importance of including more women in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.

## **A brief history of UNSCR 1325**

The harrowing details of their life stories are sobering reminders of how violence, especially conflict-related sexual violence, is unfortunately still rampant in many parts of the world. It also signifies that the UN Security Resolution 1325<sup>4</sup>, which was unanimously adopted on October 31st, 2000, is still very much relevant in today's context. Resolution 1325, often referred to as the 'landmark' resolution, addresses the disproportional impact of war and conflict on women and girls. It also called for greater participation and representation of women in mediation, conflict resolution and prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, to better incorporate the needs of women and girls. The Resolution also highlighted the necessity to protect the rights of women and girls and to mainstream gender into relief and recovery processes. This Resolution was followed by nine more resolutions (UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467, and 2493)<sup>5</sup>. They shed light on the issues of conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of war, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding, reintegration of female-ex-combatants, gender-sensitive monitoring frameworks and budgeting, as well as the implementation of survivor-centred approach in coordinated prevention and response.

These resolutions are grouped together under the umbrella framework of Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS). The ten resolutions reiterate the fundamental principles of UN Charter, which reaffirms the importance of respecting human rights of both women and men. The resolutions also carry the legacy of prior agreements as reflected in the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1981), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action (2000).

The adoption of the Resolution also encouraged a number of academic institutions and think tanks to pursue research on gender, conflict and peace. Several research suggests that recognizing women's contributions and ensuring their involvement in peace processes and peacebuilding have positive association with lasting peace, dispute resolution, reduction of sexual violence and post-conflict recovery. For example, according to a study "an agreement is 35 per cent more likely to last for 15 years if women participate in its creation."<sup>6</sup>

## **So, where are we now?**

The UN Secretary-General has been updating the Security Council on the overall progress of the WPS. In 2015, the UN further revamped its effort and published a global study analysing the current status, challenges and policy implications. Additionally, the Secretary-General has been reporting annually on the fronts of preventing conflict-related sexual violence. These reports have highlighted progress – e.g., efforts by women societies and increase in the number of women in leadership roles. However, overall, the reports portray a rather mixed picture. The Global Study states that “[...] much of the progress toward the implementation of the Resolution 1325 continues to be measured in ‘firsts,’ rather than as standard practice”<sup>7</sup>.

In regards to participation of women in peacekeeping efforts, Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, stated that the extremely low percentage of uniformed female officers (four per cent in military, and ten per cent in police) is “[...] crippling to our credibility and protection capacity”<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, research suggests that among the 31 major peace processes that took place between 1992-2011, women made up only four per cent of signatories, 2.4 per cent of chief mediators, and 3.7 per cent of witnesses and nine per cent of negotiators<sup>9</sup>. Whilst the Secretary-General shared positive news on International Women’s Day in 2019 that the UN reached a gender parity in their Senior Management Group, he also acknowledged that more work needs to be done to encourage institutional change across the UN and its member-states<sup>10</sup>.

The 2019 report by the Secretary-General (covering the period between January to December 2018), presented a grave and dire situation in multiple epicentres of crisis and post-conflict countries in terms of conflict-related sexual violence<sup>11</sup>. During this period in DRC alone, UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), documented 1,049 cases of conflict-related sexual violence<sup>12</sup>. Though the scale and nature of atrocity may differ, such violence frequently befalls vulnerable populations in many parts of the world<sup>13</sup>.

In terms of rights protection, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women reported in 2016 the world has witnessed progress in legal prosecution of sexual violence in Guatemala, Senegal and by the International Criminal Court<sup>14</sup>. However, most recent updates by the Secretary-General<sup>15</sup> notes that, women continue to face discriminatory laws and practices, they are unequally represented in transitional justice and legal institutions and their access to justice remains poor and inconsistent.

As for engagement of women in relief and recovery efforts, the 2018 report by the Secretary General also paints a rather challenging reality. Whilst women's participation in projects on community-based projects on violence reduction continues to grow, they remain underrepresented in much of the ongoing disarmament efforts. For example, a case study by UN Women on reintegration of female ex-combatants in Nepal<sup>16</sup> suggests that, in spite of the large number of female combatants, they were hardly incorporated into reintegration programmes. Women face difficulties in accessing humanitarian relief for basic services due to security situations, risks of targeted sexual violence and gendered customary practices. Unequal statutory laws and customs that limit women's land ownership (e.g., female landholders account for as little as 11.5 per cent in conflict-affected countries) and hinder access to gainful employment also make women even more vulnerable in conflict countries<sup>17</sup>.

### **Towards the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325**

Few months prior to the adoption of the Resolution 1325, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, former President of the UN Security Council, stated "[...] peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men,"<sup>18</sup> and today the international community cannot agree more. The UN and the international community need to continuously and consistently act on enhancing women's participation and representation in peacebuilding, and galvanize action and resources to better address the issues highlighted in the Resolution. In doing so, interventions need to be contextualized to ensure the ever-more changing dynamics of gender is reflected. Only then can the international community realize the principles and objectives of the Resolution 1325 and report positive progress in 2020. As Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka quoted in 2015, "Anniversaries, after all, must count for more than the

passing of years. They must be the moment for us to turn words into action”<sup>19</sup>.

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> The Nobel Peace Prize 2018. (2019). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from The Nobel Prize (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/summary/>)
- <sup>2</sup> Mukwege, D. (2018, December 10). Speech presented at Nobel Lecture in Oslo City Hall, Oslo, Norway The Nobel Peace Prize 2018. (2019). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from The Nobel Prize (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/summary/>). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from The Nobel Prize (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/mukwege/lecture/>)
- <sup>3</sup> Murad, N. (2018, December 10). Speech presented at Nobel Lecture in Oslo City Hall, Oslo, Norway. Retrieved April 3, 2019, from The Nobel Prize (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/murad/facts/>)
- <sup>4</sup> For full text: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000))
- <sup>5</sup> For full texts of all resolutions: United Nations Security Council (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions>)
- <sup>6</sup> Unpublished work of Laurel Stone, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, cited in O'Reilly, M., O Suilleabhain, A., & Paffenholz, T. (2015, June). Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes (Rep.). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from International Peace Institute website: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Rep.). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from UN Women website: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (<https://wps.unwomen.org/>)
- <sup>8</sup> United Nations. (2018, October 25). More must be done in support of women's contributions to peace, Secretary-General Tells Security Council, Outlining Gender-Parity Initiatives for United Nations [Press release]. Retrieved April 3, 2019, from [United Nations Press release] (<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19316.doc.htm>)
- <sup>9</sup> UN WOMEN. (2012). Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: connection between Presence and Influence . Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/03AWomenPeaceNeg.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> United Nations. (2019, March 8). Remarks on International Women's Day 2019 [Press release]. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from Remarks on International Women's Day 2019 [Press Release] (<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2019-03-08/womens-day-2019-remarks>)
- <sup>11</sup> 19 countries covered in the report: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cote d'Ivoire, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burundi, and Nigeria.
- <sup>12</sup> United Nations. (2019). Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the United Nations Secretary-General . Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/report/s-2019-280/Annual-report-2018.pdf>
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>14</sup> UN Women. (2016, October 25). "Commitments must be not be simply plans on paper" - Executive Director [Press release]. Retrieved April 3, 2019, "Commitments must not be simply plans on paper"—Executive Director [Press Release] (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/10/speech-by-un-women-executive-director-at-un-security-council-open-debate-on-women-peace-and-security>)
- <sup>15</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (Rep.). (2018, October 9). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from United Nations website: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/900>
- <sup>16</sup> Goswami, R. (2015, October). UNSCR 1325 and Female Ex-Combatants - Case Study of the Maoist Women of Nepal (Tech.). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from UN Women website: UNSCR 1325 and female ex-combatants: Case study of the Maoist women of Nepal (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/5/uns-cr-1325-and-female-ex-combatants>)
- <sup>17</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (Rep.). (2018, October 9). Retrieved April 3, 2019, from United Nations website: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/900>
- <sup>18</sup> United Nations, Security Council. (2000, March 8). Peace inextricably linked with equality between women and men says Security Council, In International Women's Day Statement [Press release]. Retrieved April 3, 2019, from Peace inextricably linked with equality between women and men says Security Council, In International Women's Day Statement [Press release]. (<https://www.un.org/press/en/2000/20000308.sc6816.doc.html>)
- <sup>19</sup> Mlambo-Ngcuka, P. (2015, October 14). Turn words into action involving women for lasting peace [Op-ed]. Retrieved April 4, 2019, from Turn words into action involving women for lasting peace [Op-ed]. (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/ed-oped---turn-words-into-action-involving-women-for-lasting-peace>)