



KOFI ANNAN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TRAINING CENTRE POLICY BRIEF 5/ 2013

Taking up a Place at the Table: Analysing the Importance of UNSCR 2122 for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The UN Security Council, regional organisations and Member States must focus on translating commitments into real actions.
- Obstacles to women's participation in peace and security must be re-examined in a much broader context beyond the issues of sexual violence.
- Strengthening women's leadership roles requires genuine commitment. National governments must commit resources to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

Introduction

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 was significant in many ways. It served as the first ever UNSC resolution to link women's experiences in conflict to the international peace and security agenda (WPS). Specifically, it drew attention to the disproportionate impact that armed conflicts have on women, and called for measures to strengthen women's engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. On 18 October 2013, the UNSC once again demonstrated renewed commitment towards women's participation in global peace and security. By adopting Resolution 2122, the UN and the international community, committed to stronger measures to promote women's participation in peace and security. UNSCR 2122 represents one of seven documents

adopted by the Security Council which specifically focus on increasing women's participation in all aspects of peace and security. Similar to the groundbreaking UNSC Resolution 1325, UNSCR 2122 also aims at reinforcing women's leadership in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Thirteen years after the adoption of Resolution 1325 and other related frameworks such as UNSC resolutions 1888, 1889 and 1960, the international community continues to explore ways to operationalize commitments to women's participation in peace and security. This policy paper examines questions relating to the importance of UNSCR 2122. How does it complement the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and how can the UN, regional organisations and Member States reinforce commitments to existing frameworks on women, peace and security (WPS)?

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UNSC Resolution 1325 and Women's participation in the Peace and Security Agenda

The early 1990s brought to the fore a global awareness of the changing nature of warfare, with armed conflicts targeting more civilians, particularly, women and children. One innovation of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 was to identify “women in armed conflicts” as a priority area and to address the impact of war on women. Five years later, UNSC Resolution 1325 became the blueprint for women’s participation in peace processes. It recognised the inordinate impact of war on women and the important role women play in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It also called for increased protection for women and children in violent conflict situations and set the tone for mainstreaming gender perspectives into peace and security matters. Resolution 1325 called on Member States to, among other things, guarantee women’s full and equal participation in decision making on all matters of peace and security at all levels. It also encouraged the adoption of a gender perspective in peace negotiations and in the implementation of peace agreements. These principles have been found to be very relevant in many countries, especially, in post-conflict contexts. Over a decade after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, there have been remarkable changes in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding with regard to women’s participation in peace processes. For instance, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Resolution 1325 served as the foundation for changes in national legislations which enabled women to assert their claims and make demands for a place in peace and security-related decision-making processes.¹

Despite these achievements, several obstacles still hinder women’s full participation in peace and security. Conflict-related sexual violence and other

gender-based violence continue to be perpetrated against women. Social, economic and political inequalities between men and women also contribute to retarding progress on the WPS agenda. In this light, beginning in 2008, four other resolutions were adopted by the UNSC to further reinforce mechanisms for improving the status of women in conflict situations. UNSCR 1820, for instance, identified conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of warfare and called for stringent measures to address it. It also called for the enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers within UN peacekeeping missions.² In 2009, UNSCR 1888 and UNSCR 1889 relating to women, conflict and peace were also adopted. While Resolution 1888 called for improvements in the monitoring and reporting of conflict-related sexual violence, Resolution 1889 drew attention to improvements in international and national responses to the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings. Additionally, in December 2010, UNSCR 1960 reiterated the persistent sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls in armed conflicts and established measures aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators through the publication of an annual list of armed groups that target women for sexual abuse.

All these resolutions have contributed immensely to providing protection for women and enhancing women’s participation in peace and security. With the exception of UNSCR 1889, resolutions adopted after UNSCR 1325 (including UNSCR 2106 of June 2013) have primarily emphasized the issue of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict. Consequently, there are global efforts to combat conflict-related sexual violence and to make perpetrators accountable. However, while addressing sexual violence against women in conflict is an important human rights issue, the focus on SGBV alone, to the exclusion of other matters relating to women, peace and security, risks

¹ See United Nations Security Council, S/RES/1820 (2008), available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

² See United Nations Security Council, S/RES/1820 (2008) available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>

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reinforcing stereotypes of women as victims and undermines women's role as agents of change.³ And while Resolution 1325 provides the framework for women's participation in all aspects of peace and security, the focus on women and conflict-related sexual violence crowds out other aspects of women's participation in peace and security. For example, women's participation in peace negotiations still remains a challenge on the WPS agenda. According to a study by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), analysis of 24 major peace agreements since 1992 shows that women have been absent from lead mediation roles in UN-brokered peace talks. Besides, less than 3 percent of women have actually been signatories to peace agreements. This implies that when it comes to negotiations, where crucial post-conflict recovery and governance issues are discussed, women are un-represented or under-represented.⁴ Meanwhile examples abound of women's involvement in community-based peacebuilding initiatives, but there continues to be a dearth in the number of women participating in high-level mediation or even occupying senior peacemaking positions.⁵ It is, however, important to highlight the point that women engaged in peace negotiations even before UNSCR 1325 was adopted. Nonetheless, very little progress has been achieved in this regard since the passage of Resolution 1325 and other related resolutions on women, peace and security.

Why is UNSC Resolution 2122 Important to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda?

Similar to other resolutions on WPS, Resolution 2122 represents the renewed commitment of the international community to women's participation in all phases of conflict prevention, conflict

resolution and peacebuilding.⁶ More importantly, it emphasizes women's leadership roles in efforts to resolve conflict and promote peace. It recognizes the important contributions of women and women's organizations to peacebuilding and urges the UN and Member States to commit resources to women's leadership initiatives for peace and security. UNSCR 2122 also strongly encourages women's leadership in mediation and peace talks. Specifically, it requests the appointment of women at senior levels as UN mediators and as members of UN mediation teams. It also calls on all parties to peace talks to facilitate the equal and full participation of women at decision-making levels.⁷ It is worth noting that the UN Secretary General's annual report on *Women, Peace and Security 2013* reports appreciable progress in this regard. In March 2013, Mary Robinson, former Irish president and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was appointed as the UN's first woman lead mediator, in the role of Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region.⁸ Nine other women currently serve in the positions of senior UN mediators, including Aïchatou Mindaoudou Souleymane, Head of Mission and UN Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Despite these significant achievements, the proportions are still low and greater effort is required. It is, therefore, necessary for the UN, regional organisations, Member States and relevant stakeholders to prioritize capacity building and training which equips women with the technical skills to lead mediation efforts, and also create the platform for women to fully participate in peace and security.

³ International Civil Society Action Network (2010). 'What the Women Say: Participation and UNSCR 1325.' Cambridge: Centre for International Studies.

⁴ UNIFEM Op.cit

⁵ O'Reilly, M. & Osuilleabhain, A. (2013). 'Women in Conflict Mediation: Why Women Matter?' *IPI Issue brief*.

⁶ See UN Women, Press Release: "UN Security Council adopts new resolution, urges women's full inclusion in peace talks and transitional justice" 18 October, 2013, available at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories>

⁷ United Nations Security Council, S/RES/2122 (2013) available at <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2122>.

⁸ UN Women, "Michelle Bachelet Welcomes the Appointment of Mary Robinson as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa," March 26, 2013, available at www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/3/un-women-welcomes-appointment-of-mary-robinson.

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How Does UNSCR 2122 Complement Earlier Commitments to Women's Participation in Peace and Security?

The adoption of Security Council Resolution 2122 indicates renewed international determination to refocus the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In comparison to earlier resolutions following UNSCR 1325, UNSC 2122 establishes a more systematic approach to implementing earlier commitments on women's leadership in peace and security. Some of these measures include: the appointment of women as UN mediators and at senior levels in UN mediation teams; and strengthened commitment to consult as well as include women directly in peace talks.⁹ Furthermore, it sets timelines for a holistic assessment of progress on the implementation of Resolution 1325 at the global, regional and national levels. It is envisaged that this review will provide direction for new strategies on the WPS agenda. To this end, the Security Council has for the first time since the adoption of Resolution 1325 expressed its intention to commission a global study on the implementation of 1325. The aim is to highlight good practices and identify gaps and challenges for a High-Level Review in 2015. Hopefully, this will build further political will and assist civil society to push national governments and key stakeholders to develop action plans to increase women's leadership roles in the implementation of Resolution 1325.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The adoption of UNSCR 2122 re-emphasizes international commitment to women's participation in peace and security. It further broadens the aims set forth in its forerunner Resolution 1325 to strengthen women's leadership roles in peace and security matters. Since Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000, six other resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council, making Resolution 2122 the seventh. In spite of the many

positive issues raised in Resolution 2122, it has become urgent for the words of the Security Council to be translated into real actions. This, therefore, brings to the forefront the question of whether adopting new resolutions is really the way forward in terms of commitment to the WPS agenda, when to some extent, existing resolutions have not yet been fully implemented? In view of the above discussions I make the following recommendations:

- UNSCR 2122 represents yet another framework for demanding accountability on commitments to women, peace and security. Despite the positive aspects of adopting a new resolution, the Security Council, regional organizations and Member States should focus on translating the outlined commitments into real actions.
- The emphasis of UNSCR 2122 on facilitating an increase in women's leadership roles, and especially on strengthening commitments to consult and include women directly in peace efforts, is laudable. However, it is important that the UN, Member States and relevant stakeholders re-examine obstacles to women's participation in a broader context beyond conflict related-sexual violence, as evidenced in other resolutions on women, peace and security, and develop strategies aimed at building women's capacities in this regard.
- Strengthening women's leadership roles and participation in peace processes requires genuine commitment. Therefore, Member States should be encouraged to develop national action plans and commit resources to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda as it applies in their various contexts.

⁹ UN Women Press Release Op. cit

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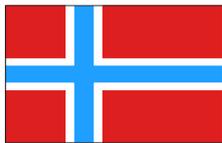
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