

# Champions of Change: Women in Peacebuilding

---

**Paper Presented at SACCPs Peacebuilding in Southern Africa Seminar  
22-22 September 2013, Lusaka, Zambia  
Elizabeth Rumbidzai Chidoori**

*"...women are not just victims of war, they are also protagonists of history, and makers of the peace"*

**Nobel Peace Laureate, Rigoberta Menchú Tum**

The nature of warfare has changed significantly since the end of the Cold War. The vast majority of conflicts today take place at intra-state level. According to UN statistics 90% of the victims in today's conflicts are civilians<sup>1</sup>. It is women who suffer the most during wartime- displacement, loss of family and property and wartime sexual abuse. In post-war situations it is women again who carry the burden of restoring the order, reviving local economies and rebuilding family livelihoods and social networks. Yet women's contributions to peace have long been underestimated. However in women's movements across the globe, there is a growing recognition of women as agents of change, skillfully reshaping and rebuilding communities affected by conflict.<sup>2</sup>

On October 31, 2000 the United Nations Security Council, in recognizing the particular effect conflict had on women and the need to include them as active stakeholders in conflict prevention and resolution, passed Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security thus emphasizing the inter-linkages across development, peace and security and human rights. Resolution 1325 is considered a historic breakthrough for the international women's peace movement because it is largely a culmination of decades of intense campaigns and lobbying by women and peace activists across the world. Now 13 years later, women's continued marginalisation from formal peace processes, as well as increasing levels of insecurity and violence against women and girls in conflict zones such as Darfur and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are evidence of the gaps in implementing the resolution. The conflicts in these particular areas have shown that it is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict. This paper will focus on highlighting the fundamental importance of Resolution 1325 and propose recommendations to ensure the full and effective implementation of this landmark instrument.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF Statistics, 2009

<sup>2</sup> Maximising the Impact of UN Security Council Resolution 1325: 10 Years On, Policy Brief No. 8, 2010, United Nations University.

Resolution 1325 is the first UN SCR to deal with gender-specific aspects of violent conflict. The UN SC acknowledges that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. A Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was set up in 2005 and its mandate is to integrate gender perspectives into the UN's capacities, experience in peacebuilding, respect for human rights, rule of law, and humanitarian assistance. The Commission represents a crucial opportunity for developing policy guidance and ensuring adequate resources for early recovery activities that both fully engage women in their design and implementation and redress structural inequalities that existed prior to and during the conflict and which may also have shaped the forms of violence used. Resolution 1325 also calls upon member states to implement its provisions through the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) or other national level strategies. To date, 43 countries have produced National Action Plans.

A set of 26 indicators were developed by the office of the UN Secretary General against which member states measure their performance in terms of implementing the resolution. These indicators are organized into the four (4) pillars mentioned below.

## The Four Pillars of Resolution 1325

Participation	Protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1325 calls for increased <b>participation</b> of women at all levels of decision making national, regional &amp; international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police, civilians and special representatives of UN Sec. General</li> </ul> <p>Indicators: women political representation, no of seats, ministerial positions, representation of women mediators, negotiators, experts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1325 calls specifically for <b>protection</b> of women and girls from sexual and gender based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations such as refugee camps</li> </ul> <p>Indicators: context analysis of security threats to women &amp; girls, types of measures taken</p>
Prevention	Relief & Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1325 calls for improving intervention strategies in the <b>prevention</b> of violence against women, including by prosecuting those responsible for violations of international law, strengthening women's rights under national law and supporting local women's peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes.</li> </ul> <p>Indicators: no of human rights violations/cases reported, investigated, accounts of action taken</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1325 calls for advancement of <b>relief and recovery</b> measures to address international crisis through gendered lens, including by respecting the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps and taking into account the particular needs of women and girls in the design of refugee camps and settlements.</li> </ul> <p>Indicators: TRCs and measures taken to redress violations &amp; participation of women &amp; girls in these processes; DDR programs –benefits received by women &amp; girls.</p>

There are four follow-up Resolutions that provide support for Resolution 1325 and concrete areas for implementation. These are: Resolution 1820 (2008), Resolution 1888 (2009), Resolution 1889 (2009), and Resolution 1960 (2010).

### *What is Resolution 1820?*

Passed in 2008, Resolution 1820 recognizes that conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare, and calls for the training of troops on preventing and responding to sexual violence, deployment of more women to peace operations, and enforcement of zero-tolerance policies for peacekeepers with regards to acts of sexual exploitation or abuse. Following 1325, this resolution is considered to be one of the most relevant documents in the development of a strategic framework for the promotion of women's contribution to peace and security and addressing gender-based violence.

### *What is Resolution 1888?*

Passed in 2009, Resolution 1888 strengthens the implementation of Resolution 1820 by calling for leadership to address conflict-related sexual violence, deployment of teams (military and gender experts) to critical conflict areas, and improved monitoring and reporting on conflict trends and perpetrators.

### *What is Resolution 1889?*

Passed in 2009, Resolution 1889 addresses obstacles to women's participation in peace processes and calls for development of global indicators to track the implementation of Resolution 1325, and improvement of international and national responses to the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings.

### *What is Resolution 1960?*

Passed in December 2010, Resolution 1960 calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly against women and girls, and provides measures aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, including through sanctions and reporting measures.

## **Critical Issues: Taking stock of Implementation of Resolution 1325**

### **FACT NOTES:**

- Only 1 in 13 participants in peace negotiations since 1992 has been a woman
- Women have served as only 6% of negotiators to formalized peace talks and have never been appointed as chief mediators in UN talks
- Only slightly more than 3% of total military personnel in peacekeeping operations are women
- 13 out of 34 peace-keeping and political missions have gender advisors

In his 2007 report to the Security Council the UN Secretary General identified the numerous challenges faced by the UN system in the area of women, peace and security that contribute toward the gap between implementation of resolution 1325 at country level and at global level- these include inadequate funding for gender related programs, fragmentation, insufficient institutional capacity for oversight. A major challenge for the PBC in effecting its mandate is the lack of adequate funding, the inadequacy within the UN's own gender architecture and capacity weaknesses at UN and country levels.

Resolution 1325 is essentially an enabling resolution, it 'urges' and 'encourages' and only in relation to the UN Secretary General does it 'request'. In this lies its weakness- 'a weak language'-that is suggestive and not commanding, no strong incentive for states to implement its provisions, no strong implementation mechanism, lack of a monitoring mechanism and its controversial legally binding status.

It is interesting to note that Resolution 1325 was passed under the chairmanship of an African country, Namibia, yet it is in Africa where women and girls continue to be raped and sexually assaulted in major conflict zones-DRC, Somalia, Central African Republic etc. According to Charles Abugre<sup>3</sup> The Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa is one of the legal frameworks that's most integrates resolution 1325 yet in most meetings popularizing the protocol hardly any link is made to 1325.

---

<sup>3</sup> Charles Abugre, Reviewing the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and UNR 1820: What will it take? Paper Presented at "Women in the Land of Conflict" Conference, Oslo, 23-25 November 2008

More equally challenging is the resistance to active participation of women, particularly in patriarchal societies. Abugre goes on further to state that;

“Gender power-shapes the dynamics of every site of human interaction, from the household to the international arena- economic, social and political. The intrusion of gender inequality throughout all aspects of human interaction thus creates the foundation for structural inequality.”

UNSCR 1325 also echoes the theory of change that when women gain access to knowledge and resources they can make lasting social change. Women who have gone through war can offer unique insights into effective-peace building solutions. However lack of political will to address gender inequality ensures that women remain oppressed, with lack of access to resources, knowledge or skills that enable them to achieve their full potential. This is evidenced by the fact that only 46 member states have produced NAPs while at global level the PBC has struggled with funding and capacity issues. Also, lack of effective reporting and monitoring structures to hold member states accountable has also enabled the implementation of the resolution and development of NAPs to remain weak.

Ambassador Anwarul K Chowdhury who was president of the Security Council when Resolution 1325 was passed, remarked;

“The main question is not to make war safe for women but to structure peace in a way that there is no recurrence of war and conflict”.

It is important to note that peacebuilding requires an awareness of how both men and women together can both contribute towards a sustainable peace. Gender equality brings to peacebuilding new degrees of democratic inclusiveness, faster and more durable economic growth and human and social capital recovery.<sup>4</sup>

## Recommendations

---

- Enhance civil society dialogue focused on gender and peacebuilding aimed at bridging the disconnect between local/grassroot organizations and the operational groups of international organizations.
- Renewed commitment by member states to fully and effectively implement UNSCR 1325.
- Establish best practice model for developing indicators for monitoring implementation of UNSCR 1325.

---

<sup>4</sup> Integrating Gender into the World Bank’s Work: A Strategy for Action, January 2002.

- Establish effective monitoring mechanism aimed at facilitating the implementation of Resolution 1325