

FIDH Position Paper on the High-Level Review of UNSC resolution 1325

(New-York) On 31 October 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 which acknowledges the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It called for a gender perspective to recognize the special needs of women and girls during conflict situations and urged member states to ensure greater representation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict. On 13 October 2015, the Security Council will convene a High-Level dialogue to assess progress at the global and national levels in implementing the resolution. The Secretary-General has commissioned a global study on the implementation of resolution 1325, which will highlight examples of good practice, implementation gaps, and challenges and priorities for action.

The logo for FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) is displayed in white lowercase letters on a dark purple rectangular background.

While there has been some progress towards reaching the goals of UNSC 1325 since its adoption fifteen years ago, overall, the assessment is that implementation has been extremely weak. Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of conflict and little has changed in order to increase the role of women in peacemaking and conflict prevention.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) urges member states to strengthen implementation of 1325 through the following actions:

1. Strengthen UN's capacity to deliver on Women's Peace and Security

(WPS) issues: Too often, the WPS agenda in peace missions depends on the buy-in of the particular personalities of senior UN leadership. This leads to an uneven and often ad-hoc approach. In order to strengthen implementation of resolution 1325, reforms are needed in the gender architecture of the UN system.

- **Establish an Informal Expert Group on WPS within the Security Council:** In order to strengthen the WPS agenda in the Security Council as a cross-cutting issue in all areas of its work, the Global Study recommends the establishment of an Informal Expert Group working on WPS issues within the Security Council. The Informal Expert Group would allow the Security Council to ensure that WPS briefings are part of all briefings and reports to the Council. In this regard, it would also be important for members of the Informal Expert Group to meet with women civil society organizations and women affected by conflict in order better address their concerns.
- **Ensure all Security Council mandates include specific language related to WPS issues:** Each Security Council mandate for peacekeeping missions should include specific language requiring that all Secretary General reports contain analysis regarding the differentiated impact of conflict on women and include objectives to increase their participation in all levels of decision-making.
- **Appointment of a senior gender adviser located in the Office of the Special Representative for the Secretary General (SRSG) in each peace mission:** Gender expertise should be integrated within all mission functional components that require gender knowledge and experience. The senior gender adviser should be located in the Office of the SRSG and report directly to the SRSG (with access to senior leaders), which would allow WPS issues to be given more prominence. The senior gender adviser should in turn promote the advancement of women in peace negotiations and the achievement of gender specific outcomes of the mission.
- **Include 1325 objectives in the terms of reference (TORs) of senior UN leaders:** In order to strengthen accountability for implementation of the WPS agenda, the TOR of heads of missions should include three gender-related indicators: (i) commitment to promote gender mainstreaming across all mandated tasks; (ii) commitment to encourage national leaders to take ownership of the WPS agenda; and (iii) commitment to increase gender parity amongst staff. Meaningful work on WPS objectives should be part of the criteria of evaluating the job performance of heads of missions. Additionally, SRSGs and special envoys should routinely include in their briefings and reports to the Security Council the differentiated impact of conflict on women and girls, as well as analysis on successes, challenges, failures and recommendations to address implementation deficits of Security Council resolution 1325.

2. Ensure accountability for sexual violence: Member states must hold state and non-state actors accountable for grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, especially crimes of sexual violence. Sexual violence in conflict remains an epidemic due to various factors which must be tackled: inadequate legislation to protect victims and prosecute perpetrators; obstacles for women

in access to justice; and lack of political will on the part of judicial authorities who fail to bring charges and prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence. When violence against women is not punished, it contributes to a culture of impunity which in turn contributes to the repetition of such crimes. In order to combat impunity for sexual violence, FIDH urges states to:

- Ensure that actors in the justice system at all levels (police, social workers, prosecutors, judiciary, forensic officers) receive training on effectively preventing, investigating and prosecuting crimes of sexual violence.
- Ensure survivors of rape and other other forms of sexual violence have access to immediate forensic examination, conducted with full respect for the dignity and physical integrity of the survivor and ban all “virginity tests.”Train staff on how to deal with survivors of sexual assault and rape in order to not subject them to additional psychological trauma.
- Take measures to ensure that women and girls who are survivors of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection, including protection orders, safe shelters, counseling, medical care, including abortions, and legal aid. States must also ensure victims access to adequate, effective and prompt reparation for harm suffered.
- Ratify, without reservation, women's rights protection instruments including CEDAW and its Optional Protocol.
- Conduct awareness-raising action on a national scale to combat discrimination against women in all spheres of life;
- Reform legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, marital rape and sexual harassment, in accordance with international standards.

3. Ensure national ownership and accountability for implementing resolution 1325: The High-Level Review Panel of Peace Operations noted that the biggest obstacle to the implementation of 1325 is lack of national leadership. To this end, the Global Study urges member states to establish National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of resolution 1325. To date, only 43 States have adopted a NAP. NAPs with measurable targets and monitoring and evaluation systems ensure greater monitoring and accountability for 1325. NAPs can include quotas or other mechanisms to pave the way for women's increased participation in decision-making in all areas, especially in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This will require strong results-based monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that offer clear indicators and outline specific time frames for meeting each objective.

4. Make peace missions more accessible to women: Women are vastly under-represented in UN peace operations, especially among uniformed personnel. In 2014, women constituted only 3% of military personnel and 10% of police personnel in peace missions. Women in peacekeeping help make the force approachable to women in the host community. This is especially important when working with victims of sexual violence. UN military bases remain largely a male-dominated atmosphere and in many countries such as South Sudan, DRC, and CAR, it is simply unthinkable and culturally inappropriate for a woman to report her abuse to another man, much less one who does not speak her language. Rape continues to be used as a weapon of war in many of these conflicts and peacekeeping missions are missing access to the full extent of the reality on the ground when it comes to sexual violence. UN Member States should address the severe gap of female peacekeepers by providing financial incentives for female UN troops. The presence of female peacekeepers may also help reduce the possibility of sexual abuse and exploitation and abuse by male peacekeepers. At the minimum, UN military bases should hire local women as Community Liaison Assistants in order to serve as a link to the women in the community.

5. Focus on 2-3 country-situations: FIDH calls on the Security Council and member states to tackle particular egregious country-cases of non-compliance with resolution 1325. In this regard, FIDH would like to highlight the dire state of women's rights in Afghanistan. After hard-fought gains in women's rights in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 (such as improvements in girls' access to education), Afghanistan is now seeing an erosion of women's rights by some of the main power players. So far, Afghan women activists say that they have seen women's rights being used as a bargaining chip in the peace negotiations. Afghan women wish to reiterate to their government and to the international community that women's rights are not negotiable. Recently, President Ashraf Ghani stated that he would only "bother" women to participate in talks "at the right time." This is an alarming indication of the exclusion of women in any potential Afghan peace process. The Security Council should send a strong message to the Afghan government on this point. Furthermore, if peace talks do move forward in Afghanistan, the Security Council should urge the government to ensure that women have a meaningful presence on the negotiating teams. Other cases of severe non-compliance with resolution 1325, include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan where rape continues to be used as a weapon of war by parties to the conflict. The Security Council should thus also focus on these country-situations and require MONUSCO and UNMISS to step-up its 1325 agenda.

FIDH is an international human rights NGO federating 178 organizations from close to 120 countries. Since 1922, FIDH has been defending all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as set out in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights. FIDH's headquarters are in Paris and the organization has offices in Abidjan, Bamako, Brussels, Conakry, Geneva, The Hague, New-York, Pretoria and Tunis.