



Women, Peace and Security: Rebalancing from Protection to Participation

WILPF Australia submission to the UN Global Study on Women, Peace and Security

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In this, the fifteenth year since the passing of Security Council Resolution 1325, the Global Study on Women Peace and Security (WPS) needs to consider how to rebalance efforts at enhancing protection to participation. Member States and the international community as a whole cannot effectively address the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict without enhancing women's participation. The concern about rebalancing the pillars of WPS was raised by a number of participants in the 2014 Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security in Australia. In addition to helping organise this Dialogue, WILPF Australia is also represented on the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security. We know that women bring a range of gendered priorities to peace negotiations. This submission has two parts. In the first part it will provide examples of how, in fragile states, women's participation in politics and decision making, justice and security, and peace processes is crucial to addressing sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). In the second part, the submission will outline some ongoing barriers to women's participation in international and local peace processes. We will conclude with some key recommendations for the Global Study.

Protection and participation

In recent years, the international community has drawn increasing attention to sexual violence in armed conflict. The Stop Rape Now Campaign saw more coordinated efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict. But the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict exponentially raised the profile of the issues. The International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict is an incredibly worthwhile document. We hope that national institutions and UN organisations will work to integrate the document into their own policies and operating procedures.

However, none of the pillars of the WPS agenda has higher importance than the others. Protection and participation are often described as though one must come before the other. This is a fallacy equivalent to asking what came first, the chicken or the egg. Addressing issues of SGBV is inextricably linked to women's participation. We know that sexual violence is not about war, it's about power.¹ Enhanced participation leads to enhanced protection. Women's equal participation in all aspects of public life is a key indicator of the required behaviours and attitudes that not only stop SGBV from happening in the first place, but also address impunity.

Politics and decision making

Countries in which women participate in political, legislative and decision making processes are more likely to have laws and policies on protection issues such as violence against women, SGBV and WPS. To date, 50 countries have dedicated national action plans (NAP) on WPS. An additional 27 countries

¹ World Health Organisation, *Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence*, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 2003.

have NAPs on preventing sexual and/or gender based violence.² These plans vary in scope and effectiveness, yet they all have two key challenges: insufficient monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms; and targeted funds or gender sensitive budgets. The most effective NAPs are those that engage civil society, women's groups in particular, early in the development, and throughout the implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Although the existence of laws and policies does not in itself necessarily lead to a decrease in rates of violence, they are an important contributing factor. Effective investigation, conviction, punishment and compensation as well as public awareness and sensitisation are critical to improving women's protection from violence.

Justice and security

Women's presence in justice and security sector institutions can increase trust in, and access to, the institutions responsible for responding to SGBV. It can encourage women to report sexual and gender based violence.³ Data from 39 countries shows a positive correlation between the presence of women police officers and sexual assault reporting.⁴ An increase in reporting can lead to greater enforcement and prosecution rates, redress for victims, and restoration of trust in a judicial system.

In recent years there have been significant efforts to increase the gender responsiveness of the justice system in Afghanistan. One Afghan woman affected by gender based violence explained "a policewoman would have been good for me. If there are policewomen we can easily say everything to them - she understands how women feel."⁵ In recent years, the number of women in the Afghan National Police has increased to 1551. Their presence, as well as a broader increase in awareness of the issues, has led to a significant increase in the reporting of violence against women. In 2013, 5,406 cases of gender based violence were registered by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, an increase of 16% on the cases registered in 2012.⁶

Women's presence in justice and security institutions is also key to SGBV related convictions. For example, in Sierra Leone, there were 0 convictions of gender based violence before 2009. In order to address issues of impunity, a particular day each week was allocated for courts to only hear gender-related cases. Of the cases heard on this day, 70% now end in convictions.⁷ In the international justice system, one study of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) shows that panels with female judges imposed more severe sanctions in incidents involving female victims. However, only 3 out of 23 current permanent and *ad litem* ICTY judges are women.⁸

Peace processes

There is a direct correlation between women's participation in peace processes and addressing impunity for SGBV. The conclusion of a conflict should bring an end to all conflict-related violence, including sexual violence. Yet "parties to conflict rarely raise, let alone prioritize, sexual violence in peace negotiations."⁹ This was the case in the Balkans where the international community knew sexual violence was being used as a weapon of war. The Dayton Accords were negotiated by armed

² UN Women, *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women*, UN Women, New York, 2012

³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010)

⁴ Laura Turquet, *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice*, 2011, UN Women, New York.

⁵ Oxfam International, *For Afghan women, police should protect, not abuse*

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/countries/afghan-women-police-should-protect-not-abuse> (accessed 14 April 2015)

⁶ Wazhma Samandary, *Shame and Impunity: Is violence against women becoming more brutal?* Afghan Analysts Network, 30 November 2014

⁷ IRIN News, *Fighting gender-based violence in Sierra Leone*, 6 November 2013

<http://www.irinnews.org/report/99070/fighting-gender-based-violence-in-sierra-leone> (accessed 14 April 2015)

⁸ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, *Judges*, <http://www.icty.org/sid/151> (accessed 14 April 2015)

⁹ Robert Jenkins & Anne-Marie Goetz, 'Addressing Sexual Violence in Internationally Mediated Peace Negotiations', *International Peacekeeping*, Volume 17, Issue 2, 2010, p263.

groups, to the exclusion of civil society organisations. No women participated in the negotiations. At the time of the accords, the gender neutrality was esteemed by its drafters. But this 'neutrality' proved problematic. For example, the annex on human rights completely ignores gross violations such as war sexual violence against women. Women who were victims of sexual violence during the war are still waiting on reparations for these atrocities. Current UN guidance to mediators requires "that any ceasefire and peace agreement brokered by the United Nations include sexual violence as a prohibited act in the definition of ceasefire and in provisions for monitoring, including within relevant annexes."¹⁰ However this usually only occurs when women have actually participated in the peace processes.

Participation is not just about protection

Women's participation is not just important for addressing SGBV. Recent research indicates that women's participation in a peace processes increases the probability of violence ending within a year by 24%.¹¹ More needs to be done to increase women's general participation conflict prevention (and prevention of escalation), conflict management and mitigation, and peace processes. "Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved."¹² Women's participation can be considered within the United Nations system, in peacekeeping operations and in the peace processes of their own communities.

Women's participation in peace processes involves a spectrum of activities. The inclusion of women in the United Nations system sits at one end of that spectrum. For instance, the number of women who sit on the Security Council is one of these measures, as are women who are peace envoys. In 2014, a record six of the fifteen seats on the Security Council were held by women. Women's participation at the international level is not just important for its own sake; women's issues need to be brought to the table and acted upon at global and local levels. With the unprecedented number of women on the Security Council, we have seen increasing attention given to gender issues. For example, Jordan's Ambassador Dina Kavar will be the first Arab woman to be the President of the Security Council. Under her leadership, Jordan has developed a strongly gendered program of work for the Council. The agenda covers the role of women and young people in peace and security. However, women are still underrepresented as peace envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary General. For example, of the 121 Special and Personal Representatives, Envoys and Advisors of the Secretary General, only 25 are currently women.¹³ Notably, some of those appointments are to conflict affected regions, such as the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, Ellen Margrethe Løj. However many other UN missions to conflict affected areas do not include women in senior leadership.

It is also important to increase women's participation in peace operations. As of December 2014, just 9.5% of police in UN peace operations were women.¹⁴ Increasing women's participation requires the employment and promotion of female personnel within their respective domestic institutions and their deployment on international peace operations. Progress on this matter has varied across Member States, but the largest police and troop contributing countries to peace operations have made the least progress. The lack of data on the percentage of women who make up the military and

¹⁰ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Key Initiatives of the United Nations to address conflict related sexual violence*, United Nations, New York.

¹¹ Laurel Stone, 'Creating space for women as transformers of conflict', *The Peace Direct Blog*, 10 June 2014.

¹² *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing 2-15 September 1995*, United Nations, New York, 1996, paragraph 181.

¹³ Based on figures from Secretary General's website <http://www.un.org/sg/srsg/africa.shtml> (accessed 9 April 2015)

¹⁴ Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Gender statistics*, January 2015, United Nations, New York.

police forces in these countries hampers any potential research and capacity building on increasing women's participation in peacekeeping, as well as work on improving the strategic outcomes of that participation. Women who are deployed are often employed in more menial roles, not into positions of significant leadership and influence.¹⁵

At the other end of the spectrum is local women's involvement in the peace processes of their own country. International support at this end of the spectrum may be a matter of providing support to certain women's organisations, but always requires listening to women's views on peace and security. All too often local women's individual and collective views on peace and security issues are excluded from formal, internationally endorsed peace processes. "UNSCR 1325's principles provide important guidance for broadening political participation to include women's and civil society organisations, from the very beginning of mediation and conflict resolution processes, as well as through all subsequent stages of the transition out of violent conflict, including peace agreements, and post-conflict financing and reconstruction."¹⁶

Capacity and financial resources are two key barriers to local women's participation in peace processes. The proposed Global Acceleration Instrument on WPS provides an exciting opportunity to ensure local women's participation in the peace processes of their own communities. For the acceleration instrument to be a success, it must first be suitably funded. WILPF Australia is very glad the government of Australia has committed \$4 million dollars. However, the fund will need to be administered in a way that makes it flexible and responsive enough to small scale funding requirements for local women's access and participation in peace processes. The instrument can be used to demarcate a space for women in local, national and international peace processes. It will then need to be used to finance the participation of women from local, grassroots civil society organisations into those processes. If the acceleration instrument can be managed to achieve this, it will be most useful indeed.

No pillar of the WPS agenda has greater importance than another but women's participation is at the core of the agenda and is vital to addressing conflict related SGBV. We need to continue working to improve women's participation in politics and decision making, justice and security and peace processes.

Recommendations:

1. Integrate the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict to all relevant United Nations agencies and national agencies responding to international crisis.
2. Gather more data to demonstrate the link between participation and protection.
3. Increase the number of women employed as Special and Personal Representatives, Envoys and Advisors of the Secretary General.
4. Increase the number of female police deploying on peace operations.
5. Ensure the Acceleration Instrument is responsive to local needs, and ensures the participation of women from grassroots civil society organisations in local, national and international peace process of their own community.

¹⁵ Allyn Gaestel & Allison Shelley, 'Female UN peacekeepers: an all-too-rare sight' in *The Guardian*, London, 22 January 2015.

¹⁶ Laura Mitchell, *Women in Peacebuilding (Conference Report)*, Wilton Park, London, 2013 p2