

# WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

UN Photo by Evan Schneider



Women and girls endure untold suffering during armed conflicts, yet until recently they have been largely absent from the peace processes that follow. Awareness of this discrepancy was raised during the 1990s, when the number of such conflicts surged. As a result, the priorities of the international community shifted towards assisting women affected by conflict situations and integrating a gender perspective into policies and institutional mechanisms for building peace. These previously neglected issues gained even greater urgency following reports of massive crimes against women during the conflicts in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, as well as an increasing number of reports of abductions and forced slavery of girls during the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and elsewhere. International awareness solidified in early 2000, when the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court recognized rape as a war crime. This recognition strengthened calls for a systematic review of the impact of armed conflict on women and of their role in building peace.

The recognition from the Court and from the international community also meant that the time was ripe for the establishment of an institutional framework to address the concerns and roles of women in conflict environments. The breakthrough came about in October 2000 with the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which was the fruit of the combined efforts of women's organizations in conflict-affected areas and the UN system, as well as the firm support of some members of the Security Council.

## SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325: WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Security Council resolution 1325 provides the most important mandate for mainstreaming gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations. It recognizes the contribution of women to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, while acknowledging their specific needs and concerns in armed conflict and its aftermath. The resolution also reaffirms women's roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, and highlights the need to increase their role in decision-making regarding conflict prevention and resolution. At the heart of the resolution is the recognition that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, together with effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process, can contribute significantly to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. Among other mandates, Security Council resolution 1325 calls for:

- ◆ The appointment of more women Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in peacekeeping missions;
- ◆ An increase in the number of women serving in field operations, especially among military observers, civilian police, and human rights and humanitarian personnel;
- ◆ The inclusion of a gender component in field operations;
- ◆ The provision of training guidelines to Member States on the protection of women and gender mainstreaming;
- ◆ The incorporation of gender perspectives into peace negotiations and constitutional, electoral and judicial systems;
- ◆ The adoption of measures to protect women from gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual abuse;
- ◆ The mainstreaming of gender in the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council.



"The most significant progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has been made in the peacekeeping arena."

Kofi Annan  
Secretary-General

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