

This Policy Brief is based on discussions held during the Global Consultation “*Gender & Militarism: Analyzing the Links to Strategize for Peace*”, organized by the Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) from July 2-4, 2014, in Cape Town, South Africa. The Global Consultation brought together over 70 women and men activists and academics, representing over 25 countries from all over the world, to discuss the multi-layered connections between gender and militarism.

The WPP Global Consultation took place in the Cape Town City Hall, where Nelson Mandela held his first official speech a few hours after his release from prison on February 11, 1990. In his spirit of peace and reconciliation, the WPP Global Consultation called attention to the importance of investing in gender-sensitive conflict prevention and nonviolent conflict resolution to advance the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

With the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 around the corner (October 2015), this brief draws upon the discussions held during the WPP Global Consultation about current trends and challenges in advancing implementation of UNSCR 1325. For 2,5 days consultation participants analyzed, from a holistic gender perspective, UNSCR 1325 in connection with militarism and the current global security framework. This analysis exposes the negative impact of current trends to militarize security for the Women, Peace & Security agenda; it also provides an alternative nonviolent framework for creating sustainable peace for both women and men. WPP has included recommendations to advance gender-sensitive peace and security in the brief, addressing a wide variety of stakeholders, from international (UN) to the local level, from governmental officials to (women) peace organizations.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), the first-ever Women, Peace & Security Resolution. This Resolution called for the recognition of women as agents of change in conflict prevention and resolution; acknowledgment of the different impacts of conflict on men and women and the necessity of appropriate protection measures; and underlined the need to include women in all aspects of peace processes as a prerequisite to the attainment of sustainable peace.

Following UNSCR 1325, over the years six additional Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security were passed: 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013).

UNSCR 1325 was a direct result of women’s lobbying and advocacy efforts in the aftermath of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). The BPfA underlined that gender equality and women’s participation are inseparable from peace and development. Positive processes to achieve peace were identified in the BPfA as complete disarmament; the prevention of policies of aggression; diverting excessive military expenditures to social development and recognizing the role of women - whose leadership is crucial - for advancing a culture of peace. It also included a goal of promoting “*non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.*”¹

“UNSCR 1325 helps to make the case that women have a role to play in peacebuilding; however it remains difficult to translate the language into transformative actions, bridge implementation gaps, and go beyond measuring impact solely by numbers.”
Participant WPP Global Consultation



¹ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

The conclusion: “There is a need to reclaim UNSCR 1325.”

During the 14 years UNSCR 1325 has existed, more than 40 National Actions Plans (NAPs) have been developed for national implementation of the Resolution. UNSCR 1325 has contributed to increased awareness of the need to address sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflict, increased women’s participation in peace processes, and investment in gender training for the security sector.

Many gaps, challenges and obstacles persist in moving from rhetoric to implementation of UNSCR 1325. The majority of peace processes remain exclusive, with either limited or no space for civil society engagement, let alone women’s groups and organizations. Despite the adoption of UNSCR 1325, negotiation processes prioritize those who do the fighting, leaving out many others. Among these excluded actors are civil lead groups working for peace and nonviolent conflict resolution on the ground, as well as those, especially women and girls, forced to perform various non-combatant roles, including sexual slavery. Critical actors during peace negotiations, such as mediators, government representatives and UN officials, as well as peace organizations, often lack full understanding of how to practically implement UNSCR 1325, and most often they fail to consult with women and women’s organizations for guidance.



Participants of the WPP Consultation described how many UNSCR 1325 initiatives in their countries take place in an ad hoc manner, without long-term structural implementation. They tend to only “scratch the surface”; failing to address the patriarchal roots of conflict, such as exploitative neo-liberal socio-economic policies and States’ investment in the military-industrial complex rather than in an inclusive labor market, education and healthcare systems that directly address insecurities the majority of their populations face. Lack of political will was also mentioned as a severe obstacle, as well as the absence of effective accountability mechanisms to demand adherence to UNSCR 1325.

“We need to distinguish more clearly the different actors working on Women, Peace, and Security: women in peacemaking; women in peacekeeping; women in militaries; women in disarmament campaigns and women in anti-war campaigns.”

Participant WPP Global Consultation

Participants highlighted that current UNSCR 1325 implementation does not provide sufficient space for achieving transformational change. Much of the current peace and security paradigm still draws heavily on militarism and militarization - a socio-political process normalizing the use of violence and armed force to address conflict. They expressed concern that UNSCR 1325 implementation is limited to an “add women and stir” approach, instead of redefining the dominant peace and security framework from a gender-aware perspective. A transformative framework would prioritize human security issues², and invest in conflict prevention, disarmament and nonviolent conflict resolution mechanisms - key elements of a culture of peace advocated by women peace activists around the world, and manifested in the BPfA. Participants called for the need to “reclaim UNSCR 1325” from a feminist perspective, so that it can become a tool to redefine society’s peace and security paradigm.

² Human security, from a gender perspective, has been defined by Betty Reardon as a life-sustaining environment, the meeting of essential physical needs, respect for the identity and dignity of persons and groups, protection from avoidable harm and expectations of remedy from them. Reardon, B & Hans, A, (2010) *The Gender Imperative: Human Security Vs State Security*. Routledge India

Recommendations:

Recognize that advancing the women, peace and security agenda is a multi-faceted process, which involves a diversity of actors (state, non-state, civil society, (women) peace activists), approaches and interventions - existing inside as well as outside the current peace and security systems.

UNSCR 1325 implementation requires redefining peace and security from a holistic gender perspective and going beyond “adding women and stir”. This requires concrete actions such as investing in disarmament and arms control, with effective women’s participation, conflict prevention and nonviolent conflict resolution.

Go beyond solely looking at numbers only in evaluating UNSCR 1325 implementation and effectiveness. Shifts in norms, values and overall culture need to be taken into account as well.

Militarism and militarization: Implications for UNSCR 1325 advancement and civil society

“We should realize that militarism comes with different faces, both open and disguised.”
Participant WPP Global Consultation

During the Consultation, participants discussed the ways in which militarism is entrenched in daily life, and what this implies in terms of implementing UNSCR 1325. Militarization normalizes and legitimizes violence as a way to address conflict and threats. It is a multi-layered process that goes beyond the institution of the military, covering the individual level (interpersonal violence, intimate partner violence), communities (organized crime, gangs) as well as national and international norms (state military, peacekeeping forces, non-state armed groups, privatized armed security groups).

Moreover, militarization permeates multiple aspects of everyday life, such as our information and communication technologies (ICT), the financial sector, as well as everyday socialization processes. Participants discussed and shared stories of the dangers that militarization of civil society poses to the right to life and liberty. This encompasses the shrinking space for peace organizations to operate in, having severe personal consequences for women peace activists.

Defining militarism and militarization

In her article “Demilitarization - or more of the same? Feminist questions to ask in postwar moment” (2002), Cynthia Enloe defines militarism as a package of ideas, assumptions, values and beliefs.

“Among those distinctively militaristic core beliefs are: a) that armed force is the ultimate resolver of tensions; b) that human nature is prone to conflict; c) that having enemies is a natural condition; d) that hierarchical relations produce effective actions; e) that a state without an army is naïve, scarcely modern and barely legitimate; f) that in times of crisis those who are feminine need armed protection; and g) that in times of crisis any man who refuses to engage in armed violent action is jeopardizing his own status as a manly man.”

According to Enloe, militarization is a socio-political process rooting the ideas and assumptions of militarism within society.

ICT, safety and surveillance

ICT provides women peace activists with many opportunities for international and fast communication exchange: making available and disseminating alternative sources of information to a broad audience; and opportunities for online nonviolent mobilizing. Examples include the ability to connect with civil society activists and policy makers from all over the world, online campaigning, and the setting up of online monitoring systems, such as violence mapping.

In a world that is becoming rapidly digitalized, new challenges have emerged - with cyber security taking up prominence in the peace and security domain. ICT brings particular risks to activists, as digital surveillance of their work threatens the privacy of their communication. An upcoming report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, states that mass surveillance threatens freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association.³

ICTs create new risks for women peace activists. Under the banner of protecting state security, their digital footprint (Internet use, electronic communication (e-mail) and mobile phone data) can be used for data collection purposes and surveillance. Hacking of sensitive data, online abuse and defamation campaigns, by both government agencies as well as other parties who oppose their work, are new challenges civil society has to navigate. Women human rights defender and women peace activists face particular risks, since they often do not have the time, resources and capacity to secure their digital safety, as this requires expert knowledge on protection measures, which is often time and resource consuming.

In addition, patriarchal norms and practices regarding violence are copied within the ICT domain, translating into digital stalking and online harassment of women human rights defenders, as well as women in general.

Experiences from participants:

Military actions against communities are preceded by electricity and communication black-outs, to prevent activists from using Internet and mobile phones to exchange information about violent actions.

Activists are arrested after calling for online mobilization to address injustice. Often these activists are not aware that they were being tracked online by security services.

The current trend of mobilizing people for nonviolent actions via ICTs is feeding into 'slacktivism', which they described as a decreasing sense of the need to mobilize offline - outside the digital space - for social change.

Securitization of the finance sector and finance regulations

Recent developments in banking regulations, stemming from counterterrorism measures, are increasingly limiting the work for peace and gender justice of consultation participants. Since 9/11, counterterrorism measures introduced in the financial sector tighten the regulations and control on financial transfers, particularly those involving nongovernmental organizations. For peace and women's organizations working in conflict areas, these measures result in difficulties to open bank accounts or to wire and receive (foreign) funding, since money transfers to countries that are blacklisted are prohibited and/or governments restrain civil society organizations receiving foreign funds. In addition, these regulations have increased the administrative and bureaucratic burdens on nongovernmental organizations.

³ News Release by United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 16 July 2014. Report to be presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2014.

Women peace activists and their organizations are hit particularly hard by these developments. Since women's peace organizations are relatively small, they do not have the leverage to negotiate a solution with their banks. In addition, if they speak out openly about their problems to open a bank account or receive/wire funds, they face the risk of being discredited by larger society as "probably doing something wrong with their finances". In addition, these regulations in turn impact on donor organizations, who are rapidly changing their policies, putting higher transparency and information sharing requirements on their grantees. Increasingly, donors are also sharing detailed information about their grantees online. This puts grantees in a difficult situation, as they need to resolve how to balance transparency requirements with the need to guarantee the safety and security of their beneficiaries, with whom they are often working on sensitive topics in high-risk settings.



Experiences from participants:

A women's peace organization working with women's organizations in conflict-affected areas was denied a bank account. Though the organization received government funds to support women's peace work in conflict areas - in the framework of UNSCR 1325 - the bank found it a too high liability to process funds to NGO partners in conflict-affected areas, and subsequently denied the women's organization a bank account.

The director of a women's funding organization working in a post-conflict region, shared how she increasingly faces challenges to provide grants to women's peace groups, since the bureaucratic burden to release the funds has greatly increased. It is putting a strain on the staff capacities of the organization. She also noted that unregistered women's peace initiatives and groups can no longer receive financial support.

One activist shared how her bank is asking her to provide increasing amounts of paperwork - requesting very detailed project information - in order for her to be able to access the donor funds wired to her organization.

Several women peace activists shared that funds wired to them by donors/partner organizations have either never arrived in their bank accounts, or were severely delayed.

Militarization of everyday life

In many societies, being part of the military or armed groups, especially for men, is reinforced through socio-cultural norms. The education system, advertising, entertainment industry (such as gaming) and popular culture are some sites that reflect and create ideas that link the military, masculinity and violence. The use of armed violence is being inextricably link to becoming and being a real man. Similarly, women are often socialized into taking on a supportive role, which is framed as being a dedicated and encouraging mother or girlfriend of a soldier/fighter/martyr. Participants expressed their concerns about the glorification of everyday-militarization, as it firmly embeds militarist norms into every level of society, leaving little space to provide an alternative narrative of peace and nonviolence as viable options.

Experiences from participants:

In many countries, militarization expresses itself in the legalization of gun ownership and proliferation of guns, which severely impacts on the lives of women and girls, and adds to the escalation of gender-based violence in society. In some countries it contributed to mass shootings, usually committed by young men who felt estranged from social institutions.

One participant, working in a post-conflict country, shared how ex-combatants refused to hand in their weapons, holding on to them as they see gun ownership as a visible proof of their masculinity.

One participant shared how the military lifestyle permeates every aspect of society - such as culture, education, and employment opportunities. For example, refusing to serve in the army at a young age impacts negatively on career options later in life.

All over the world, children play with “militarized” toys. It is considered normal for boys to play with toy guns. In addition, many computer games involve military simulations and killing enemies. Several women peace activists shared the challenge of raising their children in a society where armed violence is persistently normalized and made to look “cool” through toys and computer games.

Recommendations:

Gain knowledge and create awareness about security risks related to ICT use, such as surveillance of women’s peace organizations and increased vulnerability of women activists, (stalking, defamation campaigns, attacks, legal prosecutions) and invest in developing feminist alternatives for safe use of ICT.

Document the impact of financial sector counterterrorism regulations on women’s peace work and UNSCR 1325 implementation. Civil society needs to work together to create greater awareness, engage in collective actions, and provide much-needed support and solidarity - especially since smaller civil society organizations, such as women’s peace groups, tend to bear the brunt of these measures.

Raise awareness on the multi-layered features and gendered manifestations of militarization in everyday society, in order to highlight how these systematically undermine the creation of a discourse and culture of peace.

UNSCR 1325 & a holistic gender analysis: Going beyond women!

“We cannot have a full understanding of armed conflict and peace without a feminist perspective, as this exposes the gendered dynamics of militarization, such as the prioritization of armed violence to solve conflict” Participant WPP Global Consultation

Women (peace) activists and women human rights defenders have a long history of exposing militarization and calling for the prevention of armed conflict, nonviolent conflict resolution, and human security. This is not due to the ‘more peaceful’ nature of women, it is related to the fact that their positions within society has often left - and still leaves - them excluded from political decision-making processes that have a bearing on war and peace. Women, thus, have the least to gain from armed conflict - however they most often bear the brunt from violence and destruction of social structures, norms and values.



Applying a feminist lens to the root causes of war and the current peace and security paradigm means moving from just looking at how war impacts on women's lives, to analyzing the ways in which power relations between women and men in the household, in communities, and national and international institutions either inhibits or promotes women's substantive participation in conflict resolution and peace processes. A feminist lens, aiming at challenging patriarchy and incorporating a critical masculinities perspective, uncovers patriarchal socialization processes, and exposes how gender operates on the level of norms and values in peace interventions.

"To advance UNSCR 1325 implementation, we need to employ an analysis of existing power relations, which includes incorporating a masculinities lens into the work, to expose how men are socialized with violence" Participant WPP Global Consultation

Participants underlined that men have a stake in challenging militarization and the associated violence - since men are not only perpetrating much of the violence, they also its victim and witness. To connect men to UNSCR 1325 implementation, it is important to address their specific gendered experiences of violence and war. Apart from looking at male privilege during peace as well as war times, it is important to highlight that men are under tremendous pressure to adopt the values and norms of a dominant hegemonic masculinity, almost always linked to the practice of violence.

It is WPP's experience that bringing the concept of masculinities into the focus of UNSCR 1325, not only contributes to increasing men's understanding of, support for, and involvement in, addressing peace and gender justice issues, it also serves to expose the deeply gendered nature of armed conflict.⁴ It provides a stake for men to seek alternative ways of being men, even in times of conflict.

Several statistical analyses show that there is a correlation between the occurrence of violent conflict and the level of gender equality in societies.⁵ Other studies point at economic and social rights violations as part of the root causes of armed conflict.⁶ In regards to gender equality, depending on the levels inequalities in society, men are taught that their masculinity is linked to an entitlement to power, with the use of dominance, control and violence (structural/systemic, economic, physical, sexual, domestic) justified as a means to gain or maintain power. Militarism draws upon the normalization of male violence to create an ideology of dominance, combat and the annihilation of the enemy/other.

Addressing militarism starts by exposing its gendered dimensions and related human costs, as well as investing in alternatives to address conflict.⁷ According to participants, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 - and the creation of sustainable peace and security cannot succeed without deconstructing the connections between masculinities, power, and violence.

Recommendations:

Integrate a masculinities perspective in the Women, Peace and Security agenda to uncover the gendered roots of armed conflict and highlight the need to develop responses and interventions accordingly.

Involving gender-sensitive and nonviolent men as partners in discussions on Women, Peace and Security helps to move the issue beyond one for women-only to an issue of concern for all, broadening the support for its implementation.

⁴ Read about the results of WPP's trainings and work on incorporating a masculinities lens into peacebuilding in WPP's May 24 pack 2010 and 2013: www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/resources/

⁵ Ekvall, Åsa (2013) *Norms on Gender Equality and Violent Conflict*.

⁶ See for example report OHCHR (2014) *Transitional Justice and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-13-05.pdf>

⁷ More information in the 2014 WPP May 24 Pack, with 23 articles on covering multiple dimensions of Gender & Militarism www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/assets/CMS/May-24-gender-/May-Pack-2014-web.pdf

Advancing UNSCR 1325: investing in gender-sensitive nonviolent alternatives

“If violence is a way of life, then nonviolence has to become a way of life too.”
Participant WPP Global Consultation

Overcoming the obstacles and challenges hindering UNSCR 1325 advancement requires investing in alternative understandings, approaches and solutions to security.

With the understanding that violence serves a political purpose, participants discussed the political purpose of nonviolence. Nonviolence challenges current power hierarchies that deploy violence as an organizing principle and focuses on achieving peace and social justice by drawing upon collectives based on ideas of equity and equality.

Research shows that violent interventions are not bringing about the desired impact. In their publication “Gender, Conflict and Peace”⁸, Dyan Mazurana and Keith Proctor state: *“Contrary to popular belief, the academic literature increasingly argues that a strategy of nonviolence is more effective than violence in achieving policy goals. According to data analyzed by Stephan and Chenoweth, between 1900 to 2006 nonviolent campaigns were successful in achieving their policy goals 53 % of the time, whereas violent campaigns only had a success rate of 26 %. According to the authors, nonviolence is successful political strategy because i) nonviolent methods enhance domestic and international legitimacy resulting in broader support and participation, and ii) regime violence against nonviolent movement is more likely to backfire on the regime, particularly where this results in loyalty shifts from the regime (e.g., by bureaucrats and security personnel) towards the nonviolent movement.”*

There are many examples of nonviolent mobilizing and conflict resolution started by women and men activists⁹ - at different levels, around the globe - which build upon the notion of human security and contribute to creating sustainable peace.

Examples of gender-sensitive nonviolent actions and campaigns shared by participants included:

Working with youth in impoverished communities - where they are easily manipulated by political elites to engage in violent acts. By training them in UNSCR 1325, nonviolent principles and mobilizing, they become less vulnerable to political manipulation. They know how to express their concerns and demand their rights without resorting to the use of violence.

Capacitating women in post-conflict situations on disarmament, arms control, early warning and early response, conflict resolution and mediation in order for them to be effective agents in gender-sensitive peacebuilding and the return to normalization.

Women activists invested in a long-term process of dialogue between conflicting parties in their communities (including militaries and armed groups) as a conflict prevention mechanism.

Women’s successful international campaigning to address militarism - 16 Days Campaign - and to integrate a gender perspective in the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This includes engagement with multiple actors on multiple levels through community mobilizing, media campaigns, national and international lobby and advocacy.

⁸ Mazurana, D. & Proctor K. (2013) *Gender, Conflict and Peace*. World Peace Foundation

⁹ In his book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action (part 2)*, Gene Sharp identified 198 methods of nonviolent action. The different techniques are listed here: <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/resources/nonviolent/methods.php>

Recommendations:

There is no single blueprint for successful nonviolent organizing. Nonviolent strategies require creativity and need to be culturally and context-specific, inclusive, and supportive of women's substantive participation and leadership.

Document examples and results of women's nonviolent organizing and conflict resolution to capture the direct impact of nonviolent activism, and highlight the importance of investing in alternative conflict resolution mechanisms for sustainable peacebuilding.

Develop clear principles for cooperation among civil society organizations as well as for when civil society organizations engage with the military/armed actors to better address issues such as instrumentalization and cooptation.

Build bridges between different movements and fields of work - women's peace activism, masculinities, UNSCR 1325 lobby and advocacy, disarmament campaigns, economic and social rights, faith based peacebuilding - to broaden linkages, analyses and impact, and ensure the linking of local perspectives to global actions and campaigns.



WPP thanks all who supported and contributed to the successful Global Consultation, especially for the rich sharing of insights and experiences on Women, Peace and Security among participants. The analysis and examples of gender-sensitive nonviolent actions, aiming to challenge militarism and creating sustainable peace, inspire our activism. WPP will continue working in partnership as well as supporting ongoing and innovative work to advance gender-sensitive peace.

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