



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
*Institute for Women, Peace and Security*

# International Commitments to Women and Girls

At the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in 1995, the adopted Platform for Action included an entire chapter on women in armed conflict.

However, it was not until October 2000 that the UN Security Council formally acknowledged, through the passage of Resolution 1325, that women are disproportionately affected by armed conflict and are also critical agents of conflict prevention and resolution. The three pillars of UNSCR 1325—protection, participation, and prevention—laid the groundwork for six related UN Security Council Resolutions:

- ▶ UNSCR 1820 in 2008, which recognized rape as a weapon of war;
- ▶ UNSCR 1888 and 1889 in 2009, which collectively called for the increased participation of women in peace and security governance at all levels; the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict, and the creation of global indicators to map implementation of 1325;
- ▶ UNSCR 1960 in 2010, which encouraged improved monitoring and reporting mechanisms;
- ▶ UNSCR 2106 in 2013, which addressed impunity and accountability for SGBV; and
- ▶ UNSCR 2122 in 2013, which refocused the international community's attention on protection and participation, and the need to close the "implementation deficit."

Moreover, a series of national and regional commitments have been issued, including the creation of more than forty National Action Plans (NAPs) that issue specific policies on implementing 1325's three pillars. These NAPs established measures such as the United States Global Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence. Despite this build up in international momentum to prevent and address violence against women and girls in crisis, particularly in armed conflict, there remains a stark, persistent gap in implementation. The 2015 High-level Review of 1325's implementation efforts, as announced by UNSCR 2122, will help identify obstacles and areas for improvement. However, where the international community currently stands, the many legal and policy tools available have made little difference in the day-to-day lives of Syrian women and girls.

## National Commitments

### United States of America

The U.S. is committed to increasing women's participation in peace processes and decision-making, working towards national integration and institutionalization, protecting women from violence, conflict prevention, and providing women with access to relief and recovery.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. holds a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual violence against women and strives to end the use of rape as a weapon of war, to build foreign governments' capacities to bring perpetrators of sexual violence to justice, and to help restore the dignity of survivors.<sup>2</sup> In June 2014, the U.S. doubled its commitment to the Gender-Based Violence Emergency Response and Protection Initiative, which seeks to assist women vulnerable to gender-based violence like early and forced marriage, honor killings, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. has invested \$10 million in the Safe from the Start Initiative, designed to help prevent and respond to gender-based violence at the onset of natural disasters or conflicts.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, in accordance with the U.S.'s National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, the U.S. has created projects in Yemen, Nepal, and the Philippines through the U.S. Agency for International Development.<sup>5</sup>

1 U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/email-files/US\\_National\\_Action\\_Plan\\_on\\_Women\\_Peace\\_and\\_Security.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/email-files/US_National_Action_Plan_on_Women_Peace_and_Security.pdf)

2 See John Kerry's Remarks at The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 13, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/227553.htm>

3 See John Kerry's Remarks at The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 13, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/227553.htm>

4 <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/09/214552.htm>

5 <http://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/usaid-implementation-united-states-national-action-plan-women-peace>

## United Kingdom

The UK is committed to promoting women's full participation in political, security, and governance structures as well as decision-making processes and peace negotiations.<sup>6</sup> The UK seeks to build foreign government's capacity to hold perpetrators accountable for gender-based crimes and end the use of sexual violence and rape in warfare.<sup>7</sup> The Department for International Development has invested £25 million in research into which policies and programs are effective at reducing violence against women.<sup>8</sup> The UK is also committed to ensuring that sexual violence prevention and response efforts become prioritized and that survivors of sexual violence receive timely and comprehensive assistance and care, both for their physical and mental health.<sup>9</sup> The UK encourages the safe collection of data and evidence relating to sexual violence in conflict and supports the development of an international protocol to document and investigate sexual

6 See UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security [http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/component/docman/doc\\_details/45-uk-government-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-security.html?Itemid=230](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/component/docman/doc_details/45-uk-government-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-security.html?Itemid=230)

7 See UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security [http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/component/docman/doc\\_details/45-uk-government-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-security.html?Itemid=230](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/component/docman/doc_details/45-uk-government-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-security.html?Itemid=230)

8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-lives-of-girls-and-women-in-the-worlds-poorest-countries>

9 See UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security [http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/component/docman/doc\\_details/45-uk-government-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-security.html?Itemid=230](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/component/docman/doc_details/45-uk-government-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-security.html?Itemid=230)

violence in conflict.<sup>10</sup> The UK remains committed to helping end early and forced marriage and has developed a program in Ethiopia seeking to delay marriage for 200,000 girls. Similar programs are being developed in Yemen, the DRC, Zambia, Nigeria, and Kenya.<sup>11</sup>

## Other

As of August 2014, 46 countries have produced National Action Plans (NAP) related to women, peace and security and implementation of UNSCR 1325 principles. These include countries from Europe, North America, Central and South America, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Australia. There are also several additional countries that are currently drafting their own plans that are soon to be released. While NAPs vary from country to country, there are some dominant, common themes reflective of the 1325 vision including promoting women's participating and ensuring women's protection. Moreover, the European Union, NATO and African Union have also created frameworks and issued commitments to better address violence against women and girls in conflict and to enable their political and economic participation within and beyond conflict zones. Despite this important development, there is a significant gap in implementation.

10 See Foreign Secretary William Hague Remarks on UK Initiative on prevention Sexual Violence in Conflict, May 29, 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-launches-new-government-initiative-to-prevent-sexual-violence-in-conflict>

11 <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-lives-of-girls-and-women-in-the-worlds-poorest-countries/supporting-pages/helping-to-end-early-and-forced-marriage>



This summary was prepared to complement the International Rescue Committee Report, *Are We Listening? Acting on Our Commitments to Women and Girls Affected by the Syrian Conflict*.

	Participation	Protection	Prevention
<b>UNSCR 1325</b>  31 October 2000	UNSCR 1325 (2000) was the first UN Security Council Resolution that acknowledges how conflict uniquely affects women, and the important role that women play in conflict resolution. Three pillars form the focal point of UNSCR 1325: <b>participation, protection and prevention.</b>		
	▶ Calls for women's representation "at all decision-making levels": participation in local peace processes, UN operations, military and civilian forces, and appointment as special representatives and envoys.	▶ Ensure women and girls are safe from gender-based violence in conflict zones.  ▶ Adopt a "gender perspective" when negotiating peace agreements and in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts.	▶ Strengthen rule of law on SGBV, and actively prosecute those responsible for such crimes.  ▶ Exclude gender-based crimes in amnesty provisions.  ▶ Provide gender sensitive training for peacekeeping troops and personnel.
<b>UNSCR 1820</b>  19 June 2008	▶ Consult with women and women-led NGOs.  ▶ Deploy higher percentage of women peacekeepers and police.	▶ Enforce appropriate military discipline measures.  ▶ Train troops and debunk myths that fuel sexual violence.  ▶ Vet security forces to account for past actions of sexual violence.  ▶ Evacuate women and children under imminent threat.	▶ Collect timely, objective, accurate and reliable information on use of sexual violence in armed conflict.  ▶ Train peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel deployed by the UN.  ▶ Fully implement zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuses by peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.  ▶ Acknowledges rape and sexual violence can constitute: 1) A war crime; 2) A crime against humanity; or 3) Genocide.
<b>UNSCR 1888</b>  30 September 2009	▶ Include women in peace negotiations and PKOs.  ▶ Encourage local women's participation in national security forces.	▶ Highlights concern regarding "lack of progress on the issue of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict."  ▶ Ensure victims can access justice safely.  ▶ Actively engage traditional leaders.  ▶ Increase access to health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and socioeconomic reintegration services for SGBV victims.	▶ Hold states responsible for fighting impunity.  ▶ Acknowledges prosecution of violators not only promotes "individual responsibility" but also "peace, truth, reconciliation, and the rights of the victims."  ▶ Notes sexual violence "may impede the restoration of international peace and security."  ▶ Build judicial capacity; conform to international legal standards.  ▶ Requests "more systematic reporting on incidents of trends, emerging patterns of attack, and early warning indicators of the use of SGBV."  ▶ Appoint Special Representative by SG.

	Participation	Protection	Prevention
<b>UNSCR 1889</b>  5 October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Encourages member states to prioritize women's participation.</li> <li>➤ Women are excluded through "violence and intimidation, lack of security and lack of rule of law" and discrimination.</li> <li>➤ Appoint more women Special Representatives and Special Envoys, and increase women's participation in UN missions.</li> <li>➤ Importance of funding WPSA to increase women's empowerment.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Role of Peacebuilding Commission to "promot[e] inclusive gender-based approaches to reducing instability in post-conflict situations."</li> <li>➤ Requests "SG to ensure more systematic reporting on incidents of trends, emerging patterns of attack, and early warning indicators of the use of sexual violence in armed conflict."</li> <li>➤ Increase implementation of 1325.</li> </ul>
<b>UNSCR 1960</b>  16 December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Call for increase in women's participation.</li> <li>➤ Increase the recruitment of female military and police personnel for UN PKOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fight impunity for crimes of SGBV.</li> <li>➤ Improve access to health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and socio-economic reintegration services for victims with an emphasis on victims in rural areas and persons with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve monitoring and reporting mechanisms.</li> <li>➤ Make "specific and time-bound commitments" to end sexual violence, "including timely investigations of alleged abuses."</li> <li>➤ Scenario-based training for peacekeepers.</li> <li>➤ Commitment to UN zero tolerance policy on sexual abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>UNSCR 2106</b>  24 June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continued deployment of Women Protection Advisors and trained Gender Advisors to UN peacekeeping missions and humanitarian operations.</li> <li>➤ Underscores "important roles that [women's organizations] can play in enhancing community-level protection against sexual violence ... and supporting survivors in accessing justice and reparations."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Need for expanded delivery of medical and psychological support to victims, and justice sector reforms that would increase accountability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognizes sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict zones is not inevitable.</li> <li>➤ Encourage and recruit support of men and boys.</li> <li>➤ Improve monitoring and documentation of SGBV.</li> <li>➤ Strengthen UN's zero-tolerance policy.</li> <li>➤ Implement concrete "time-bound commitments to combat sexual violence."</li> </ul>
<b>UNSCR 2122</b>  18 October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Emphasis on UNSCR 1325 participation pillar: women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.</li> <li>➤ Increase number of women delegates in peace negotiations, militaries, and PKOs.</li> <li>➤ Electoral and constitutional reforms to ensure women's civic participation.</li> <li>➤ Consult women and women's organizations in conflict and post-conflict zones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Acknowledges "implementation deficit" regarding women's protection and access to leadership in conflict and post-conflict settings.</li> <li>➤ Reminds international community that States "bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of all persons within their territory" and that "the parties to armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to ensure the protection of civilians."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Calls for more briefings and research on WPSA implementation efforts and gaps.</li> <li>➤ UNSC High-level Review in 2015 "to assess progress at the global, regional and national levels in implementing Resolution 1325."</li> <li>➤ Role of rule of law in conflict prevention and conflict resolution.</li> <li>➤ Draws attention to women's economic empowerment as key to "stabilization of societies emerging from armed conflict."</li> </ul>

This Annex was prepared by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.