

# Exploring operationalisation of UNSCR 1325

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## **Introduction**

International security has long been seen as gender neutral despite the indisputable fact that women and men experience conflict differently. Men's experiences have been synonymous with "the human experience" while the voice of women has been omitted from peace negotiations and peace building processes. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is a milestone for a more inclusive perspective on international security. It constitutes an important political recognition of women's experiences in war and it validates women's knowledge in the peace building process. Importantly it recognises the various roles that women play in conflict situations: not only as victims but also as agents of war and agents of peace. To be able to better promote security worldwide, we cannot ignore the role of women as combatants and the important contribution of women's organisations to negotiating peace.

The political commitment to UNSCR 1325 now has to be translated into practice. The rewards for doing so are manifold; the ensuring of gender justice; the bridging of the security/development gap; and the inclusion of local knowledge and knowledge holders. The European Union has the capacity for being a global security actor of greatest importance through its position as the world's largest donor as well as its increasing capacity for crisis management. The opportunities are there to make significant progress in the field of security and development.

## **The imperative of implementation**

There are several reasons for why the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is of great importance to international security and development.

### **Ensuring gender justice**

Firstly, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 would be a big step towards **ensuring gender justice**. To move from conflict to sustainable peace, justice is an essential component. Adding a gender dimension to post-conflict justice would ensure that women as well as men can benefit from their rights as citizens of their country. Post-conflict justice can be defined in a number of ways. *Restorative* and *retributive justice* make up one commonly used set of definitions. Restorative justice refers to mechanisms such as truth commissions and reconciliation efforts. Rather than seeking to punish the wrongdoer it attempts to engage perpetrators and victims in a reconciliation process, often through the use of truth and reconciliation commissions and/or reparations. Retributive justice refers to the use of war tribunals and international courts to inflict

punishment on perpetrators and thereby providing justice to victims of war. Both restorative and retributive justice measures often go under the common heading *transitional justice* – a term used to denote the mechanisms used by a country that is transitioning from violent conflict to sustainable peace.<sup>1</sup> A gender dimension would then point to the right of women to take part in truth commissions, be beneficiaries of reparations, be treated on par with men as plaintiffs and defendants in war tribunals and have sexual violence addressed as war crimes.

*Distributive justice* refers to the fair distribution of resources within a society. Socio-economic inequities often need to be addressed as a country moves away from a conflict situation towards sustainable peace. Finally *legal justice* refers to the equal treatment of citizens under law. A gender dimension to distributive justice would address women's right to partake in the allocation of resources, including access to human capital investments such as education and health care. Legal justice could address inequities in the legal system concerning women's rights to own land and inheritance law.

*These approaches to justice are addressed in UNSCR 1325, point 8 a), b) and c).*

### **Bridging the gap between security and development**

Secondly, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 could enable us to **bridge the gap between security and development**. Security and development have long been separate fields in international institutions and academia alike. This compartmentalisation is counterproductive both for analysis and policy-making as international security is a multidimensional field, encompassing short-term as well as long-term threats and solutions. UNSCR 1325 includes the implicit recognition of how issues of security and development are interlinked and interdependent both in cause and consequence. The security and development aspects of the resolution are not divided into neat boxes but are rather grouped together in a manner more reflecting reality on the ground.

Security leads to development in a multitude of ways, most of which are evident in the absence of security. Without security there is little chance of economic growth and job creation. When conflict rages there is no investment in human capital, just the depletion of physical and financial resources and the waste of human lives. Oxfam International recently issued a briefing paper called "Africa's missing billions"<sup>2</sup> in which it is estimated that armed conflict costs Africa \$18 billion per year - money that could have gone towards developing countries in dire need of aid. Economic development and the allocation of resources depend on there being a certain order in society as lawlessness and physical insecurity is not conducive to productivity. It is rarely disputed that security is of intrinsic value to itself, as well as of instrumental value to development. The order between the two in reverse is often neglected. Few would argue against the intrinsic value

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the website of International Centre for Transitional Justice [www.itcj.org](http://www.itcj.org)

<sup>2</sup> IANSA, Oxfam and Saferworld, *Africa's missing billions – International arms flows and the cost of conflict*, October 2007. Accessed 15/10/07 at [http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp107\\_africas\\_missing\\_billions](http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp107_africas_missing_billions)

of development but the instrumental value of development in ensuring security is overlooked and in many cases completely ignored.

Poverty is traditionally not seen as a security issue but rather as a straight-forward development issue. A more comprehensive perspective on security would argue that poverty is a security issue, certainly for the impoverished individual but also for the state in which poverty is prevailing as it undermines its structure from within and therefore leaving it less capable to defend itself from outside influence. It could also be seen as a threat to international security affecting both the regional and global community as poverty-stricken countries are viewed as potential recruitment bases for terrorist groups and fundamentalists. It is clear that a state that cannot uphold its structural base due to poverty is vulnerable to increased levels of crime. When the monopoly on legal organized violence, i.e. the police and the army, is eroded, transnational criminal groups are attracted to the area. These “ungoverned areas”<sup>3</sup> are the consequence of the state’s inability, or unwillingness, to enforce governmental control over regions within the state. An upsurge of trafficking in people, drugs and illicit arms are some of the major sources of international insecurity. These activities are of course a threat to individuals, to the state itself and in no uncertain terms to the international community. Employment and other investments in human capital could be effective tools to strengthen security in that it removes “the incentive for alliances of convenience between sometimes lawless non-state actors and local communities”<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, it of course points to the necessity to strengthen political stability and the state security sector to come to terms with this phenomenon.

*UNSCR 1325 stresses the importance of women’s “equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution”. Security-development measures such as post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation are further highlighted in UNSCR 1325, point 8 a) while the strengthening of the security sector is included in point 8 b) and 8 c).*

### **Inclusion of local knowledge and knowledge holders**

Thirdly, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 would allow for the **inclusion of local knowledge and knowledge holders**. The participation of women, and more specifically - the inclusion of local women’s peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution – are held as important for the prevention and resolution of conflicts as well as for peace-building. It affirms the right of women, as well as men, to participate in decision-making which affects them, their families and the communities they live in.

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<sup>3</sup> Expression used in the United States National Security Strategy (NSS)2006, Accessed 151007 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Mazimhaka, Patrick and Iqbal Jhazbhay, 2006, “Security, Governance and Development: The Braided Strands of Future Prosperity in Africa” *African Security, Commodities and Development*, Whitehall Report 4-06, The Royal United Services Institute, p. 5, Accessed 171106 at <http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/WHR4.pdf>

A participative approach to conflict resolution and prevention would allow local knowledge to influence the formation of the security agenda. This would produce policies better reflecting reality and it could also facilitate the spread of locally produced knowledge that would otherwise remain in the periphery. Neat constellations such as the division between the First and the Third World or even the North and the South are misleading as security concerns know no boundaries. The question of how the particular relates to the universal is relevant to the policy-making process as well as for the simple sharing of knowledge. Through a participative approach we embrace the value of comparing experiences. 'In knowing differences and particularities, we can better see the connections and commonalities because no border or boundary is ever complete or rigidly determining'<sup>5</sup>. The wealth of knowledge produced locally around the world is not recognised in the scholarship and policy-making in other parts of the world. This is a loss on all sides.

*The inclusion of local knowledge and knowledge holders is addressed in UNSCR 1325, point 8 b).*

## **The opportunities for the European Union**

The European Union (EU) is the largest donor of international development aid in the world. The EU also aims to strengthen its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with crisis management, peacemaking and peacekeeping at its core.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that the EU now has a tremendous opportunity to make use of its capacity and become an important global security actor. The challenge lies in promoting intra and inter-institutional cooperation and policy coherence; especially important in view of the division of responsibilities within the European Institutions (the Commission coordinates development cooperation while the Council coordinates security and defence policy). Security and development issues cannot be viewed as separate spheres, nor can the other areas of international cooperation (such as trade, environment and the enlargement of the EU) be excluded from its security policy-making process. Furthermore, the EU needs to actively solicit input from local organisations if its policies and programmes are to meet with the needs of afflicted populations.

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<sup>5</sup> Mohanty, C. T., 2002, "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 2, p 505

<sup>6</sup> For more information on CFSP, please see [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)