

## Persistent Challenges in Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

### CSPPS Representatives Reflections on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 ([UNSCR 1325](#)) in October 2000, a result of joint efforts of many involved driven by the spirit of justice and equality in the context of peace and security, has been saluted by populations in fragile states, mostly those hosting many female victims of war atrocities and other form conflicts. The resolution was revolutionary in its sense that it did not only portray women as victims of war, but also emphasized the importance of women as crucial actors for sustainable peace. The resolution from 2000 does not stand on its own. In the past 17 years many other resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 & 2242) were added to improve the so-called **Women, Peace and Security** (WPS) agenda.

As we approach the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Resolution 1325, a review of current state of implementation of this Resolution is essential especially in fragile contexts. On the African continent, particularly in the Great Lakes region, the UNSCR 1325 has led to remarkable changes in the management of state institutions. Several countries in the region have established constitutions that incorporate principle of joint management; man-woman, in state-owned institutions. With support of civil society, almost all states in the African continent have adopted National Action Plans on 1325 to safeguard the eighteen goals of the Resolution in state policies and programs. Unfortunately, the implementation of these plans is hampered. Women are less associated and/or involved in decision-making process, usually they are overlooked in peace talks and political negotiations. On the occasion of the 17th anniversary of Resolution 1325, the **Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding** ([CSPPS](#)) solicited contributions of its [members](#) in Guinea Bissau, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and The Netherlands to take stock of current opportunities and obstacles in the advancement of 1325 agenda in their contexts. Following sections in this blog present perspectives collected from each context.

### Guinea Bissau

In Guinea Bissau, there have been several initiatives to implement women's peacebuilding structures such as bringing together active women in civic organizations, training them on conflict mediation in communities, etc. However, these initiatives are not yet operational in the field and are not sufficiently disseminated. Nonetheless, some women, either individually or in groups (e.g. Regional Dialogue Spaces (ERD) of [Voz di Paz](#), CSPPS member organization in Guinea Bissau), use their influence and identity to mediate and resolve conflicts (mainly family related conflicts) in their locality.

Representation of women in peace and statebuilding processes is limited and can be explained by low presence of women in decision-making structures (government and other) both at national and community levels. In fact, in traditional structures no women are in decision-making position, such as leaders of Tabanca (Villages), Régulos (leader/Kings) and religious representation. Yet, with the adoption of the UNSCR 1325, several women organizations consented, with support of United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau ([UNIOGBIS](#)), to create the Women's Political Platform (PPM). The Platform mission is to increase the presence of women in decision-making processes and adopt quota laws (40% of women in all structures) as its central priority. It is in this perspective that the UNIOGBIS has trained more than 70 women to become conflicts mediators.

To increase the presence of women in political decision-making as a way of correcting social inequalities that could disrupt social peace, and to address challenges of the UNSCR 1325, Voz di Paz with its partner organization [Interpeace](#) organized (10-11 October in Bissau) a national conference, with support of United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, on the obstacles, added-value and solutions towards women's enhanced participation in decision-making. The aim of the conference was to validate findings of a participatory research process that engaged over 600 people throughout the country, to promote women involvement in decision-making process.

Central question, what must be done to ensure success of these initiatives? Support is required to carry out awareness campaigns for the adoption of quota laws strongly contested by men and even some women who think that women must earn by performance and not by concession, said Ude Faty, CSPPS Focal Point in Guinea Bissau.

## Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the region signed in Addis Ababa failed to integrate a gender dimension while it is supposed to contribute to the advent of lasting peace and security in states of the region. Several women conducted advocacy actions that subsequently led to the adoption of complementary mechanisms mainstreaming gender in the implementation of this agreement.

In this context, the CSPPS Country Team in the DRC has developed some thinking on challenges that seems to undermine the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in order to suggest possible solutions that can potentially contribute to the improvement of the situation. In the set of challenges, the Country Team pinpoints the following:

- Persistent unawareness of the UNSCR 1325 at the level of the population in general and by state institutions in particular – who are expected to ensure its implementation.
- Regular emergence of concepts aimed at reducing gender inequalities. This mainly relates to concepts of women rights, gender and equality which, instead of contributing to the change of attitudes in favor of gender equality, often lead to confusing population understanding.
- Persistence of discriminatory customs and cultural practices against women.
- Poverty and illiteracy are very high for women and girls.

All these challenges find their bearings in the weak political will with regard to effective promotion of the UNSCR 1325. However, looking at progress made in terms of laws, policies and State programs recorded in the DRC, the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 should not be hampered. Hence, the crucial need to act via sensitization, advocacy and lobby to attain a real change in the situation.

Confronted with these challenges, the CSPPS Country Team has identified three opportunities that can help succeeding with the implement of the UNSCR 1325: (i) the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of which SDG 16 focuses on peace and security; (ii) the [New Deal](#) process which is an opportunity to advance the agenda of the UNSCR 1325 and finally (iii) the Agenda 2063 of the African Union which places African countries at the center on the issue of improving women conditions.

It is worth noting that these three opportunities are exploited in revision process of the National Action Plan on the UNSCR 1325 in DRC which aims to integrate them by focusing on inclusion and participation of women in decision-making processes.

This October 2017, the CSPPS Country Team in DR Congo calls upon various stakeholders involved in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 to work in ensuring that this Resolution are in sync with three development agendas mentioned above. In so doing, we can foresee improvement on issues related to peace and security both in the DRC and in the Great Lakes region.

## Burundi

Réseau Femmes et Paix ([RFP](#)), CSPPS Focal Point in Burundi, works on four pillars of UNSCR 1325 namely: Peace and Security; Prevention; Community Protection and Recovery. In this context, RFP conducts trainings on the role of women in peaceful management of community conflicts. One of the key achievement has been women leaders actively participating in peaceful Resolutions of conflicts in their communities. Initiatives undertaken by civil society organizations are hampered by the limitations of available funding to undertake community-based advocacy, protection, prevention and recovery activities for women.

Despite these shortcomings, significant progress has been made in favor of women in Burundi since 2016, including:

- Respect of equilibrium as guaranteed by the constitution, law n° 1/05 of 22 April 2009 on the reform of the penal code, law n° 1/10 of 3 April 2013 reforming the code of penal procedure, law on the Gender Based Violence (VBG) of 22/09/2016;
- Launch of a plan to implement UNSCR 1325, a national strategy to fight against gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming at national level and gender mainstreaming in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

Given the current context and current challenges in conflict prevention, women's equity and empowerment, it is highly relevant to strengthen the role of women and girls as key players in context of peace, security and equality, able to act together and propose solutions to problems. Strategy in this framework is to achieve change by inviting decision makers and individuals from across society to become agents of change and champions of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

RFP has taken the initiative to bring together women of all groups and different political backgrounds: women of different policies, rural women, women ambassadors, women parliamentarians, members of different religious denominations, administrative women. The purpose of this initiative was to bring women together to have a single voice on issues relating to conflict prevention and advocacy on women's rights. In addition, this initiative has been saluted by the government as evidenced by the official opening of this framework by the Minister in charge of gender. Within the context of the present process of Inter-Burundi dialogue process of inter-Burundi dialogue, it is hoped that gender aspects will be considered decisive by the mediator, so women can have an important role to play in the future dialogue and contribute to peacebuilding.

### **The Netherlands**

In 2000 The Netherlands was one of the countries who was member of the UN Security Council who established the start of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Ever since then there has been a strong commitment to the implementation of the resolution. The Netherlands was one of the first countries to create a National Action Plan (NAP) and is already upon its third National Action Plan. However, compared to some of the other countries mentioned above, the Netherlands has a different approach. The Dutch National Action Plan is a so called 'externally' National Action Plan. One of the struggles with the WPS agenda you can see worldwide is how to define 'Peace & Security'. The Netherlands strongly feels that the Netherlands does not qualify as a country where we are confronted with peace and security issues. Therefore, the focus is only on 8 countries (DRC, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan & Colombia) in which the NAP aims to create an enabling environment for organizations to work on Women, Peace & Security.

What is unique about the Dutch NAP is that it not solely a government instrument, but a partnership with civil society. Over 70 organizations (both government and civil society), including [Cordaid](#) (CSPPS member and host of the Platform) have committed themselves through the partnership to implement the WPS agenda. In this context, Cordaid co-organised a side-event on ['Impact of interventions on women, peace and security in Libya and Afghanistan'](#) in New York, reflecting on positive and negative impact based on a participatory research. Peace and security issues are not limited to specific countries, conflicts are worldwide, and they also have their impact in countries from 'the global north i.e. through migration or internal conflicts. Not acknowledging this and principle of inclusivity will minimize the impact of the WPS agenda. As gender advocates gather in New York this week, it is worth alerting that we cannot diminish the agenda to only focus on countries in conflict, if we want to increase the impact of the agenda, we need to acknowledge the worldwide responsibility to work on Women, Peace and Security.

In view of its members report on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) expresses its strong commitment to continue its advocacy efforts in this field and to continue work with its [Southern and Northern members](#) to strengthen conflict prevention, feminist peace efforts and overcome intransigent barriers to women's meaningful participation to conflict resolution for a lasting peace.

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