

Women In International Security

POLICYbrief

WIIS POLICYbrief July 2, 2020

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Washington, D.C.

1325 And Beyond – Essay Contest

FOURTH PRIZE

1325 and Beyond: Ways Forward for the United Nations

Esther Luigi

“We see a shadow pandemic growing, of violence against women,” said UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in an official statement on 6 April.¹ As domestic violence rises with each new country going into lockdown due to COVID-19, it is clear that we are still a long way from achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, gender equality.² The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in October 2000 constituted a landmark moment in this journey. Despite notable progress, especially in terms of visibility and discourse, the implementation of the resolution has been uneven, and many of the issues pertaining to women’s participation, protection, conflict prevention and relief it sought to address remain unresolved.

The UN Women Global Study (2015) evaluating the impact of UNSCR 1325 highlighted that most of the Security Council’s work in this domain had focused on protection of women rather than on prevention or political participation.³ It also identified lack of sufficient funding as the single largest obstacle to the implementation of the resolution’s commitments.⁴ As such, those three issues have been given particular consideration when formulating proposals on how to move forward the objectives of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda in the next decade. Most of the recommendations are for the United Nations, though selected ones also target state governments and civil society actors.

Linking gender sensitivity to Security Council nonpermanent membership

The successes of the past 20 years make it clear that the Security Council holds much power in bringing forward the WPS agenda. However, its capacity to act and the scope of the actions it can undertake are always conditional on the voices of the member states, especially the 5 permanent members (P5) and the 10 nonpermanent members. WPS issues are and remain a hotly contested political topic, which does not sit easily with the state-based structure of the council.⁵ Indeed, most progress has been made when given countries decided to take ownership of the issue: Namibia played a key role in the adoption of UNSCR 1325, while Germany used its council presidency in April 2019 to provide all council members with language on WPS to guide briefings and deliberations.⁶

Giving countries that champion the WPS agenda a voice in the council is thus crucial to move the agenda forward. Making a country’s track record on gender equality and WPS issues a factor of consideration in the election of the nonpermanent Security Council members could ensure that the WPS agenda becomes a reality.

This idea is likely to encounter pushback from some member states. Currently, the main concern over the election of nonpermanent members by the General Assembly is appropriate geographical representation. But representation

could be maintained while WPS champions within each region are given first consideration. The existence and advancement of a National Action Plan could be used as a baseline criterion for evaluating governments' domestic engagement with the WPS agenda. The combination of gender and geography would ensure better representation of the great variety of gendered experiences of peace and conflict across the world.

A first step toward the realization of this proposal could be the creation of a working group, on the model of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, established by A/RES/48/26 in December 1993. Alternatively, the focus of the existing group could be shifted to include both geographical and gender-based representation. In this new or modified group, the emphasis should be firmly placed on *gender*, and not simply on women: This emphasis will not only help bring reluctant countries on board but also give weight to rights-based arguments for gender equality by highlighting the way in which patriarchy affects both women and men in conflict and peace.

A working group could significantly advance the WPS agenda in two ways. First, it would create a strong incentive for states to make progress on WPS issues. In rewarding progress, it would create a sense of accountability that is currently lacking and build up normative pressure for change.⁷ Second and most important, having more support for the WPS agenda within the council would allow for substantial progress. For instance, mentioning gendered provisions in a peacekeeping mission mandate could be made compulsory, which in turn would mean that it has to be budgeted for.⁸ Increased access to the UNSC for briefings could also be granted to relevant civil society actors such as local women's organizations. This access would improve council members' understanding of WPS issues and help move away from a state-centric focus, which limits what UNSCR 1325 can achieve.⁹

A new sustainable and targeted funding model for the WPS agenda

Funds for the WPS agenda are not only insufficient, they often fail to come at crucial moments (such as in the period of immediate post-conflict recovery) and to reach the actors who need it the most: only 0.2 percent of the bilateral aid to fragile and conflict-affected situations over the period 2016–17, for example, went directly to women's organizations.¹⁰

1. Making WPS funding sustainable by overcoming short-term commitments and reducing donor reliance

When funding is available, it is too often project based and donor driven.¹¹ Consequently, funding is often lacking for long-term thinking and activities, while priorities remain driven by donors' agendas. A further consequence is that women's organizations spend disproportionate time and resources reporting on their activities and progress.

To turn this around is not easy. In order to increase long-term funding for WPS issues, a concerted effort is required:

- a. Create a UN Women Banking initiative, on the model of and in partnership with the UNEP Finance Initiative, to encourage banks to make investments that do not have a detrimental impact on women's lives around the globe, with divestment from the arms industry as a key principle;
- b. Integrate the existing Global Acceleration Instrument (GAI) for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarianism into this new initiative, with the double aim to strengthen it and improve its visibility;
- c. Apply state-of-the-art financing methods to the WPS field, for example, by developing microcredit mechanisms;
- d. Promote, wherever possible, the interlinkage of security, peacebuilding, development and humanitarian budgets within a flexible common framework. This fiscal focus should allow for targeting specific needs and issues, create continuity in funding, and ensure that complex problems—and their gendered dimensions—are targeted as a whole. Strengthened cooperation between relevant UN agencies (and missions, where appropriate) would be key.

The first two points tackle the structure of the existing financial system, which causes and sustains gender inequality and conflict in the first place. The effort to diminish investments in the arms industry is also in keeping with the original purpose and spirit of the WPS agenda, which was a pacifist movement.

As a whole, this proposal would reduce the reliance of WPS funding on donors and increase long-term funding possibilities while keeping priority-setting independent. The increase of long-term funding would significantly expand the progress that can be made on peacebuilding and conflict prevention, the two areas that most often fall victim to the availability of only short-term funding, fueling conflict relapses.

2. Directing sustainable funding the right way

Of course, an essential consideration about funding, beyond sheer numbers, is identifying beneficiaries. First, the GAI has already made a step in the right direction by increasing the amount of funding directly available to local, grassroots women's organizations. These organizations should be the primary beneficiaries of all funding earmarked for gender, peace and security, as they would benefit from funding in a concrete, immediate way. Wherever appropriate, the United Nations should also consider funding protection for women's rights advocates who may need it.

Second, more funding should be directed toward supporting the efforts of women engaged in track 2 diplomacy and informal peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities. Funding these efforts would not only help realize the objectives of UNSCR 1325 but would give visibility to women already engaged in such efforts.

Third, more funding should be directed toward *qualitative* research into women, peace and security, and this research should be given full consideration as scientific evidence in Security Council briefings. Currently, quantitative evidence receives the greatest emphasis in most research on WPS issues and the most attention from UN agencies, the Security Council and national governments.¹² While quantitative research provides important insights and gives weight to "use-value" arguments used to promote the WPS agenda (to donors in particular), it cannot alone create a full understanding of the gendered dimensions of peace, conflict and security. Although UN and civil society actors with the required financial capacity could participate in this effort, the key actors to realize this proposal are national governments, which could integrate this recommendation into the latest (or in some case, first) version of their National Action Plans.

A new landmark resolution connecting the WPS agenda with environmental concerns

Thinking about how to move the WPS agenda forward in the next decade also means anticipating the new challenges that lie ahead for women's peace and security around the world. There is consensus among experts that the devastating effects of climate change will increase in the coming years, disproportionately affecting women.¹³ What has often been missing is the links between gender, climate change and peace and security: to name but one example, climate-change induced and gendered environmental displacement can also serve as a trigger to new conflicts.¹⁴

This essay's final recommendation is thus for the preparation and adoption of a Security Council Resolution modeled on UNSCR 1325 to address the negative impact of climate change on peace and security and highlight its highly gendered dimension.

This recommendation acknowledges the achievements that have come about as a result of UNSCR 1325, such as the creation of UN Women, as well as the importance of establishing a legal framework for the UN to be able to meaningfully (and financially) act on this threat. It aims to mainstream environmental issues into the WPS agenda in the same way that women's organizations are trying to mainstream these issues into the peace and security agenda at large. Such an integrated, intersectional approach may avoid the fragmentation that the WPS agenda has often fallen victim to and that has held back its progress.

In practical terms, the realization of this recommendation could profit from the lessons learned in the process of adopting UNSCR 1325. Notably, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security played an instrumental role in drafting and advocating for the resolution.¹⁵ A network of NGOs working on women and climate justice already exists and could form the basis for one with access to the Security Council, which should highlight the interconnectedness among gender, climate change and peace and security.¹⁶ It will also be able to build on the expertise of the Joint Program on Women, Natural Resources and Peace established in 2016 by a group of UN agencies and put to good use the platform they have created.¹⁷

Though the occasion for writing this essay and thinking about how to move the objectives of the WPS agenda forward in the next decade was meant to honor the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, this year has unfortunately brought a much more pressing reason to do so: the coronavirus pandemic. With the majority of the global health care workforce made up of women and with domestic violence on the rise, it is already clear that the pandemic is not gender blind.¹⁸ Politically, it has also made the need for international cooperation in the face of global threats plain for all to see. More than ever, the WPS agenda is needed. And if the current global political system is to be rethought, women should play a central role in doing so.

References

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- 4 UN Women, "Global Study," chap. 13, 372.
- 5 Sarah Taylor and Gretchen Baldwin, *Focus on 2020: Opportunities for the Twentieth Anniversary of Resolution 1325* (New York: International Peace Institute Issue Brief, October 2019), p. 4. "As a result, analyses of power dynamics are often stripped out of the agenda, with policymakers either avoiding or explicitly pushing back on the political nature of the issue."
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1325AndBeyond – Essay Contest

In the run up to the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325 (2000)) Women In International Security (WIIS) and the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Washington, DC launched an international essay competition **1325AndBeyond**.

WIIS and the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Washington, DC are proud to announce and publish the winning essays. The essays highlight innovative and imaginative ideas and strategies to achieve the objectives of UNSCR 1325 in the 2020s.

FIRST PRIZE

ANA LAURA VELASCO UGALDE (MEXICO)

UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda: A Feminist Response to Authoritarianism

SECOND PRIZE

AGATHE CHRISTIEN (FRANCE)

Enhancing WPS in the 2020s: Lessons Learned and Strategies for Transformative Change

ANNINA CLAESSEN (SWEDEN)

Mobilizing a Forgotten Sector: A Case for a New Media Code of Ethics on Gender and Conflict

THIRD PRIZE

PAULA DRUMMOND & TAMYA REBELO (BRAZIL)

1325 and Beyond: Moving Forward the WPS Agenda in Latin America

MUHAMMAD AMMAR HIDAYAHTULLOH (INDONESIA)

WPS in ASEAN: Progress, Gaps and Way Forward

FOURTH PRIZE

ESTHER LUIGI (FRANCE)

1325 and Beyond

HONORABLE MENTIONS

CHELSEA COHEN (ZIMBABWE)

The Third Awakening: The Decade of SHE Politics

KARLA DRPIĆ (CROATIA)

How the Private Sector Can Advance UNSCR 1325 in the 2020s

TABITHA MWANGI (KENYA)

UNSCR1325 and Beyond: Engagement of Women in Dialogue with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups

GUDLAUG OLAFSDOTTIR (SWEDEN)

Promoting Women's Rights: Creating Conditions for Post-Conflict Peace

ANTHONY ITODO SAMUEL (NIGERIA)

Dismantling the Structural Prejudices that Promote Gender Inequality

ANDREA TUENMLER (UNITED STATES)

Escaping the Closet: Women, Peace and Security was Already Queer



WIIS and the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Washington, DC would like to thank the members of the jury: Fauziya Abdi Ali; Joanna Barelkowska; Chantel Cole; Jessie Evans; Chantal de Jonge Oudraat; Karma Ekmekji; Jessica Grün; Layla Hashemi; Karin L. Johnston; Miriam Laux; Maxinne Rhea Leighton; Kayla McGill; Hannah Neumann; Chiedo Nwankor; Hannah Proctor; Liane Schalatek; Donald Steinberg; Dominik Tolksdorf; Anna Von Gall; Roksana Verahrami; Karin Warner; Ursula Knudsen Latta. Special thanks to Kayla McGill and the members of the WIIS team for organizing the competition and to the Mobilizing Men as Partners for WPS (Our Secure Future) for contributing to the Honorable Mention awards.

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Women In International Security (WIIS) is the premier organization in the world dedicated to advancing the leadership and professional development of women in the field of international peace and security. WIIS (pronounced “wise”) sponsors leadership training, mentoring, and networking programs as well as substantive events focused on current policy problems. WIIS also supports research projects and policy engagement initiatives on critical international security issues, including the nexus between gender and security.

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WIIS Policy Roundtables and Policybriefs are supported by the Embassy of Liechtenstein in Washington, DC.

WIIS Next Generation efforts are supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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