

INTERNATIONAL ALERT
Women Waging Peace

INCLUSIVE SECURITY,
SUSTAINABLE PEACE:
*A Toolkit for
Advocacy and Action*

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Conflict Prevention

SANAM NARAGHI ANDERLINI AND VICTORIA STANSKI

Conflict exists in all countries and in every level of society. **Conflict** per se is by no means a negative force, rather it is a natural expression of social difference and of humanity's perpetual struggle for justice and self-determination. If managed non-violently, it can be positive, a source of immense creativity and progress.

The challenge, however, is to avoid the violent expression of conflict without suppressing the root causes completely. On a small scale, how do members of a community, faced with competing interests or concerns, address them without resorting to violence or a breakdown of trust? On a larger scale, in the case of nations and states, how can ethnic, economic, territorial or political rivalry between sectors of society or groups be managed so that no side resorts to violence and all agree to channel and resolve their differences more constructively?

No matter how poor or oppressed a society is, or how provocative and manipulative political leaders may be, communal violence does not erupt suddenly. Inevitably, it is the manifestation of accumulated aggression and hostility. In order to *prevent* violence, it is necessary to address the hostile mistrust and belligerence before it reaches a point where each side believes that violence is their only recourse. The goal of **prevention** is to create a situation in which differences and conflicts can be addressed in a non-violent and constructive manner. This chapter provides an overview of developments in conflict prevention with a gender perspective.

1. WHAT IS CONFLICT PREVENTION?

Preventing conflict between states has been a central aim of the **United Nations (UN)** since the end of World War II. The UN Charter, however, does not extend deeply into situations of civil war. With the end of the Cold War, and in the light of the war in the **Balkans**, the genocide in **Rwanda** and other intrastate conflicts, the international community has become increasingly involved in addressing internal conflicts.

While no one suggests that preventing war or promoting peace is easy, there is nonetheless a growing consensus that violent conflict is not and should not be considered inevitable. The challenge, however, is not a lack of information or knowledge about a brewing conflict. It is the lack of political will on the part of national leaders and the international community to proactively seek to diffuse and resolve a situation before it escalates into

violence. A major study by the **Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict** published in 1999 focused heavily on international actions and identified **conflict prevention** as including actions or policies to:

- prevent the emergence of violent conflict and identify non-violent means of resolving the tensions;
- stop ongoing conflicts from spreading; and
- deter the re-emergence of violence.¹

The report categorises international approaches to prevention as:

- **operational prevention (or direct prevention)**—measures to address immediate crises (e.g. sending high-level diplomatic missions to mediate between parties, using economic tools such as sanctions, inducements, or collecting weapons and

demobilising fighting units), and employing forceful measures such as deploying peacekeepers to a region; and

- **structural prevention (or root causes prevention)**—addressing root causes such as poverty, political repression and uneven distribution of resources, which can, if left unattended, escalate into violence. Long-term prevention includes efforts to reduce poverty and achieve broad-based economic growth. Preventive strategies should also promote human rights, protect minority rights and institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented (e.g. promoting democratic government so that opposing parties can state their views, resolving differences through dialogue and cooperation or ensuring that legislation does not discriminate against one sector of society).

Although the goals are the same, operational versus structural prevention are radically different, with one focusing on short-term and targeted approaches, while the other requires a longer-term and more comprehensive approach. Women and civil society in general have been more active in structural prevention, typically through promoting development, the rule of law, human rights and poverty alleviation. However, at the local level such groups can and are increasingly becoming more involved in taking non-violent action in response to crises, and are themselves engaging in mediation efforts (see below and chapter on peace negotiations).

FROM THEORY TO ACTION: INITIAL STEPS

In practice, the international community has focused its work on conflict prevention at two points in a typical conflict's life cycle:

1. where violence has already erupted, but there is a possibility of preventing its escalation. For example, in 2004 following strong condemnation from the media, NGOs and human rights groups, the US and UN have taken steps warning the **Sudanese** government to stop genocide in the **Darfur** region; and
2. where conflict has recently ended, but peace is still fragile and thus the re-emergence of violence is a distinct possibility. In such cases the international community often sends peacekeepers to bring some security and enable

the political structures to gain strength, such as deployments of UN peacekeeping forces to **Haiti** and **Liberia** in 2004.

There have been fewer “observable” instances of conflict prevention before the outbreak of conflict, as it is difficult to trace why war or violence *did not* occur. Moreover, often the measures taken are diplomatic and confidential in nature. A noted example of preventive action was taken in 1992 when the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** sent a “spillover mission” to **Macedonia** with the goal of preventing the spreading of conflict from **Serbia**. In the same year the UN undertook its first preventive deployment mission with a dual military and civilian mandate. UN peacekeepers patrolled the **Macedonia–Serbia** borders and the civilian unit monitoring early signs of conflict, used its “good offices” in the form of preventive diplomacy to address tensions rising among ethnic groups within the country. A number of civil society efforts were also initiated including inter-community dialogues, promoting tolerance through radio and television programmes and democratising the media.²

In addition, to improve humanitarian and development efforts so that they are more sensitive to conflict issues, progress is being made through:

- efforts to understand the root causes and ongoing dynamics of conflict; and
- improving international interventions in order to alleviate existing tensions and establish mechanisms for addressing conflict non-violently.³

In general, however, preventing armed hostility and promoting the non-violent resolution of internal conflicts remains a key challenge for the international community. In part this is because states affected by conflict are often reluctant to accept international intervention. Despite violence in **Nepal** since the 1990s, the government has been unwilling to invite international peacekeepers. Similarly in the **Middle East**, although Palestinians have asked for international forces and observers, the Israeli government has rejected the notion. Intervention is regarded as a violation of state sovereignty. In addition, many policy-makers and scholars are hesitant to adopt conflict prevention strategies for fear of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Predicting

an escalation to violence is complex and can lead to false alarms. By directing attention to a potential conflict, there is apprehension that deliberate awareness could influence and increase escalation. Moreover, at the international level policy-makers are often focused on dealing with existing crisis situations, and do not have the capacity to focus on longer-term interventions for the sake of prevention.

Despite these issues, internationally there is growing support for better conflict prevention, because it is not only humane but also cost-effective. In 2001 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presented his report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict to the General Assembly.⁴ Among the key points emphasised in the report is the need for national governments to take responsibility for addressing conflicts before they become violent. But he acknowledged that “if the government concerned refuses to admit that it has a problem that could lead to violent conflict and rejects offers for assistance, there is very little outside actors, including the United Nations, can do.”⁵

To address this dilemma, the report calls for the full participation of civil society in conflict prevention

efforts. It recommends that NGOs organise an international conference including local, national and international organisations to determine their role in conflict prevention and develop regional action plans for interaction with the UN. This acknowledgment of the role of civil society is further endorsed in **Security Council Resolution 1366** (2001), which states: “...the United Nations and the international community can play an important role in support of national efforts for conflict prevention and can assist in building national capacity in this field and recognises the important supporting role of civil society.”⁶

In 2004, a global civil society consultative process was well under way, with international organisations and networks such as the **Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)** and the **European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation** taking leading roles. This is an important process as it creates a space for national NGOs to have access to international actors, particularly in countries where governments are often reluctant to have NGOs involved in sensitive issues relating to politics, peace and security.

A Word of Warning...

Without effective and proactive responses, the early warning of violence is useless. But developing responses is challenging.

Early warning and context analyses require objectivity. Yet, there is always a risk that those conducting the analysis may give biased interpretations favouring particular agendas and interests. One way to promote objective evaluation is to bring together people with different political perspectives, economic backgrounds and social classes to do the analysis jointly. This in itself can be a means of addressing conflicts, as opposing parties hear each other's perspectives on the same situation.

Even if the information is objectively analysed and disseminated, without an appropriate strategy or policy for response by influential actors—particularly the international community—the conflict will not be averted.

In situations where violence has not erupted and there has been no recent history of war, it is often difficult for people living in the midst of rising tensions to accept that their community, society or nation could erupt into indiscriminate warfare. Denial is an easy way to avoid the ominous risk of war. It is always easier to retreat and say, “We are different and it cannot happen to us,” but the facts often tell a different tale. Violence becomes a first, rather than a last resort in many cases. Denial and disbelief that war could break out was the experience of many in Bosnia prior to the escalation of violence.⁷

2. WHAT DOES CONFLICT PREVENTION CONSIST OF?

Preventive action is not a single event, rather it is an ongoing process that changes according to given circumstances. It should strengthen existing processes for peace, respond to crises, help generate an environment and create mechanisms through which conflicts can be resolved non-violently. Effective conflict prevention measures require coordination and collaboration between various entities, including international, regional, sub-regional, national and local actors. Lessons drawn from conflict prevention efforts indicate that building the capacities of a society to manage and address conflict peacefully requires:

- a high degree of inclusiveness and participation of all sectors of society in dialogue, as well as peacebuilding;
- a high degree of local ownership of conflict prevention strategies and initiatives; and
- the strengthening of democratic institutions and empowerment of local actors through continuous consultation, assistance and training.⁸

To attain these goals, first and foremost it is important to have a thorough understanding of the factors, actors and conditions exacerbating conflict. NGOs, academics, policy-makers and practitioners have developed a series of approaches to improve understanding of conflict, including analyses, development of indicators and possible scenarios to help identify the actions that need to be taken. Gaining familiarity with them can help local actors—including women’s groups—to implement their work more effectively. Moreover, by using the tools developed internationally, local actors are often best placed to improve them and develop responses suited to their region and cultural context. At the same time, familiarity with the tools is a means of having a common “language” with international actors and other civil society organisations, with whom local actors might wish to develop alliances. There are numerous frameworks and methods for developing conflict prevention strategies,⁹ which generally share four key steps:

1. *Analysing the context and situation that includes identifying*
 - issues (indicators) that underpin and drive a conflict, and
 - issues or conditions that lessen conflict and that can be the basis for peace;
2. *Identifying or “mapping” the key actors and stakeholders*, including those who fuel conflict and those who mitigate it and promote peace;
3. *Developing scenarios* of possible situations from the worst to the best cases; and
4. *Planning effective responses* by identifying actions and steps that can be taken to alleviate tensions and promote the non-violent resolution of conflict.

RECOGNISING EARLY SIGNS OF CONFLICT AND UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

A key element in understanding the context and situation in an escalating conflict is the ability to read warning signs of trouble and indicators of increasing tension or violence, which is the basis for “conflict early warning” analysis.¹⁰

Indicators can point to:

- people’s security (physical, economic, political);
- political issues;
- economic issues;
- social and cultural issues;
- military issues, particularly mobilisation;
- sub-regional/geopolitical issues; and
- judicial and legal issues.

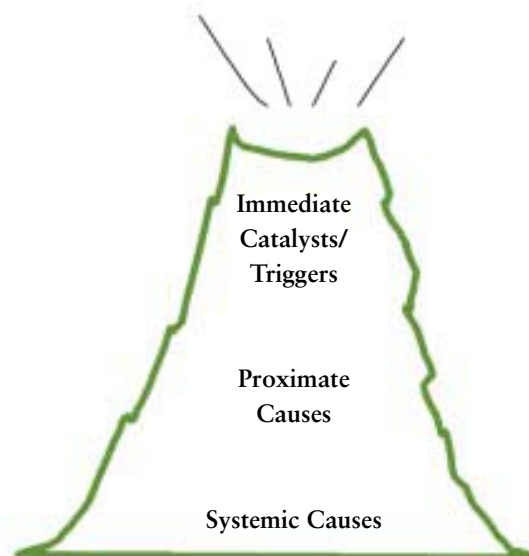
These indicators can be divided into four inter-related categories.

- **Systematic indicators:** highlight underlying, structural, deep-rooted conditions in a society. In Latin America throughout the 1970s there was overwhelming disparity between the minority rich, who often owned the vast majority of the land, and the poor. This economic disparity was

a key source of discontent and conflict. Other examples of systemic indicators are long-term political oppression or military rule or the social and economic oppression of one ethnic group by another.

- **Proximate indicators:** highlight medium-term events and situations and show a trend. In **Rwanda** for two years prior to the genocide in 1994, extremist Hutu groups were using radio to spread propaganda and hate messages against Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Other examples of proximate indicators are the formation of militias, increasing popular discontent, ongoing high inflation, increasing violence against specific ethnic or religious minorities and extremely high unemployment.
- **Immediate catalysts or triggers:** events or incidents that are difficult to predict but in combination with systemic and proximate causes, can trigger violence (see diagram). In **Rwanda**, the shooting down of the president's airplane was among the triggers for the genocide in 1994. Other examples include fraud during elections, a sharp rise in the price of basic goods, political arrests, and attacks against peaceful civilian demonstrations.
- **Peace indicators:** factors that promote peace and non-violence. In **South Africa**, prior to the end of apartheid, every police attack against demonstrations or guerrilla attacks on civilian targets heightened tensions. To ease the situation, leaders of the liberation movement, particularly Archbishop Tutu, immediately called for calm.

Analysing these indicators together can help provide understanding of the state of events and emerging trends in a society. It is also critical in determining whether corrective actions should be immediate and “operational” for **direct prevention** (e.g. deployment of peacekeepers), or if there is also a need for **structural prevention** to address the root causes of conflict in the longer term. Often there is a need for both.



3. WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO INCLUDE GENDER IN EARLY WARNING AND SITUATION ANALYSES?

In the 1990s, between 80 to 90 percent of those killed, wounded, abused or displaced in conflict were civilians.¹¹ This trend continues in the 21st century. The deliberate victimisation of women (through rape, mutilation or forced pregnancies) has increased international awareness of the differential impact of war on men and women. Some measures are being put in place to address the specific needs of women. At the same time, the contribution of women and women's organisations to conflict resolution, management and peacebuilding is also gaining wider recognition. Yet, often women's organisations lack the confidence to engage in conflict prevention efforts in a strategic manner.

In early warning efforts or situation analyses for conflict prevention, gender issues are still not widely addressed. Yet **gender indicators**—those signs that reflect the changing circumstances of men and women in society—are often the earliest signs of impending conflict. In a study by **International Alert** and the **Swiss Peace Foundation**, three hypotheses were presented in favour of using gender indicators in conflict analysis.¹²

First, gender indicators are often most evident at the grassroots level and can point to systemic problems or highlight early signs of instability. By drawing on them to determine the ongoing

“The aim [of conflict prevention] must be to create a synergy with those civil society groups that are bridge-builders, truth-finders, watchdogs, human rights defenders, and agents of social protection and economic revitalisation.”

—UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, quoted in *The Washington Times*, 23 June 2004.

situation, it is possible to recognise societal tensions and aim to alleviate them before they escalate. In the oil-rich Niger Delta region of **Nigeria**, women led a non-violent sit-in against Chevron/Texaco in 2002.¹³ Their actions were a sharp contrast to previous armed protests led by men against oil companies. The women were demanding community support, compensation for environmental damage and increased oil revenue for their region. While their actions were an indication of deeper resentment in the community, they also opened dialogue with the oil company, which resulted in Chevron/Texaco agreeing to a series of community-based programmes including creating jobs, starting a micro-credit programme for women and funding local schools, clinics, water and electricity systems. These initiatives alleviated tensions and the potential for violence by transforming the interaction between the company and the community. “We now have a different philosophy,” said one company executive to the BBC, “and that is do more with communities.”¹⁴

Second, when gender perspectives are excluded from situation analyses, there is a greater risk of overlooking the often deteriorating situation of specific sectors of society—e.g. women or young unemployed men—and ignoring related factors that fuel conflict. Yet if the gender dimensions of conflict are recognised early, the responses developed are more likely to address them. Where women are particularly discriminated against or targeted, inclusion of gender perspectives can help ensure that discriminatory policies are not perpetuated in post conflict situations and that “newly established freedoms” are not reversed. It is also a means of ensuring that responses at a political and humanitarian level address the vulnerabilities specific to women and men. In

Afghanistan, under the Taliban (1995–2001) women were severely repressed, unable even to leave their homes without being escorted by a man. Yet women represented an estimated 65 percent of the population in that country, and as a result of war, many were either widows or running households single-handedly as men were away or injured in war. In the aftermath of the US attack on the Taliban and the fall of the regime, the presence of a handful of Afghan-American women as part of the UN and international community efforts ensured that the voices of Afghan women were heard. They also advocated that women be included as beneficiaries of major reconstruction efforts (e.g. being paid for cooking food and sewing clothes for construction workers).¹⁵

Third, early warning and preventive activities can be made more effective by utilising the untapped potential of women, women’s networks and women’s organisations as actors for peace.¹⁶ Women’s organisations that undertake information gathering and analysis often provide their own insight, knowledge and solutions, which can complement and support the efforts of others—particularly international actors.

Another way to consider this is:

- What is happening to women compared to men? Are they under new pressures to conform to traditions? Are they being attacked? What can be done to stop the attacks?
- What knowledge do women have regarding impending violence compared to men? In the late 1990s in **Sierra Leone**, village women knew about impending attacks by rebels against UN peacekeepers. Despite the risks it involved, they were willing to pass the information on to the UN system, yet did not know whom to contact.¹⁷
- What actions are men and women taking to prevent or incite violence? In **Rwanda**, in the late 1990s, women convinced their husbands to stop armed actions and return home from hiding.¹⁸

ACTOR MAPPING

To fully understand the dynamics of a potential conflict, it is also essential to identify the groups or individuals that are exacerbating the situation, and

Gender-Based Indicators¹⁹

Gender-based indicators remain largely absent in conflict early warning efforts, including responses that are developed. As noted below, gender-sensitive indicators can be found at all levels.

Systemic: Indicators include long-term political exclusion of women, economic discrimination (e.g. laws prohibiting women from inheriting property), discrepancies between men and women's educational levels or place in the work force.

- Example of gender indicator: In 1977, 50 percent of women compared to 80 percent of men were literate in country X.
- Example of gender indicator showing a trend: By 1987, 40 percent of women compared to 80 percent of men were literate in country X.

The second example indicates that the situation of women in country X deteriorated over the decade. This could imply increasing economic hardship or the spread of religious extremism, with a focus on women (e.g. the Taliban's treatment of women in **Afghanistan**).

Proximate: Indicators include gradual trends from an open/tolerant society to a more closed society, particularly imposing or implementing restrictive laws relating to women. Other examples include an increase in propaganda that emphasises hyper-masculinity and violence; increase in the number of public fights between groups of men; more incidences of men ganging up on men of other groups or men not fulfilling the "masculine" ideal of a combatant; verbal harassment, physical beating, persecution of men who refuse to take up arms, rape and honour killings of women; and a lack of institutional prosecution of perpetrators.

- Increase in violence against women in private and public: Rising aggression in society, including domestic violence against women, girls and boys. The increased level of domestic violence (and general tension) was observed in **Ethiopia** prior to the outbreak of war with **Eritrea** in 1962.
- Gender-based changes in economic pattern: Sale of jewellery or other precious materials by women indicating increasing economic hardship; increased financial assistance from family abroad being sent home, hoarding of goods or sex-specific unemployment—particularly where there is a high percentage of unemployed young men.
- Sex-specific refugee migration: Population movements within a state or to surrounding nations. Approximately 6–8 weeks prior to the outbreak of widespread violence in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** in 1992, large numbers of women, particularly of Muslim origin, left Priador. Muslims described this as protecting their families from danger; Serbs described it as clearing the decks to prepare for all-out conflict.

Triggers and Catalysts:

- Killings and disappearances: Men, particularly those who are physically able or represent a political threat, are often targeted prior to outbreak of conflict. In **Cambodia** and **Kosovo**, many males were either killed or "disappeared" prior to the eruption of widespread violence.
- Gender-specific killing ("Gendercide"): Young, educated and often pregnant women are targeted for execution in an attempt to extinguish a culture. Non-pregnant women might be forcibly impregnated, as a way to dilute a culture or introduce the genes of another culture, as in the cases of **Bosnia, Herzegovina** and **Rwanda**.

those that are aiming to mitigate conflict and promote non-violence and peace. The following questions can help identify and map actors in terms of their position, interests, strengths, affiliations and weaknesses:

- Who/what is the actor or stakeholder, including their source of support/legitimacy?
- At what level are they most active and effective (international, national, regional or local)?
- Are they representative of different sectors of the community (including marginalised groups)?
- What are their demands, their needs, their fears?
- What power/resources/capacities do they have?
- Who are they affiliated with or who influences them?
- Do they have a vision of peace? What does their vision include (e.g. autonomy, co-existence, land reform)?

CREATING SCENARIOS

Situation analysis with actor mapping helps identify possible scenarios and answer the question “What will happen next (in a given time frame)?”

Prior to the invasion of **Iraq** by the **US** in 2003, for example, many analysts were developing best-case and worst-case scenarios about the outcome of the war. They ranged from those who believed the US would win easily and be accepted openly and peacefully by Iraqi society, to those that predicted urban guerrilla warfare and resistance to the US.

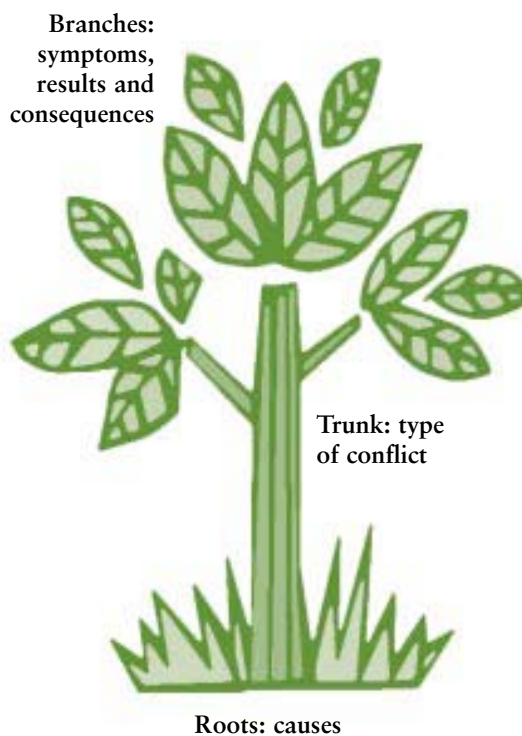
Scenario development is useful for planning and preparing actions in advance, and helping ground these activities in reality. In **Iraq**, the **US** was criticised for being unprepared in the face of resistance from Iraqis and not planning the reconstruction effort systematically; in the early days this resulted in mass looting of government buildings, banks, and even hospitals, and ultimately contributed to anti-US sentiment.

While these national or international approaches may seem daunting, there are actions that can be taken at the local level to promote better understanding and initiate dialogue between

conflicting parties. The **conflict tree** is a tool that was used in northeast **Kenya** by local communities. Each side of the dispute draws a tree, where the roots represent the root causes, the trunk represents the existing problem and type of conflict that has arisen (violent, internal, inter-community, etc), and the branches depict the symptoms or consequences of the conflict. The trees can then be exchanged so that each side can see and get a better understanding of the fears, concerns and general perceptions of their counterpart. A similar exercise undertaken in **Sudan** prompted a dialogue between local disputants and resulted in a written agreement.²⁰

The **peace flower** can be used in parallel, to identify potential sources for peaceful interaction. The roots

Conflict Tree



signify structures or systems in society that uphold peace or can contain conflict, (e.g. rules that govern interactions between groups or laws that enable freedom of expression). The stem symbolises processes that encourage and support peaceful engagement such as inter-village meetings or

gatherings of tribal elders. The petals symbolise mechanisms for dealing with conflict, including truth commissions and civil society activism such as mass vigils or peaceful protests against war.

EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Within the UN system, the World Bank, European Commission, and many bilateral aid agencies, there is an increase in monitoring situations in unstable countries or those at risk of violence breaking out. The **World Bank** and the **UN Development Programme (UNDP)** for example, initiated a joint “watching brief” project to monitor social and economic conditions in specific countries.

The **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** has a dedicated “early warning unit” that combines field missions and analytical work to track trends that might lead to humanitarian crises or failures. It also disseminates regular updates and one-page reports highlighting particular situations to other entities within the UN system. The **Department of Political Affairs (DPA)** prepares analytical studies of trends relating to peace and security and offers strategies for response. Its activities include conducting fact-finding missions, reporting to the Security Council, and providing political guidance for diplomatic interventions by senior UN personnel or the Secretary General.

In addition to the system-wide changes and efforts by the UN, other international entities—governments, multilateral organisations and NGOs—are also involved in conflict prevention efforts, as noted below.

- After war broke out in Yugoslavia in 1991, there were fears that the conflict could have a domino effect and spread to the southern **Balkans**, particularly **Macedonia** and **Albania**. In response to these warning signs, the UN deployed its first ever prevention peacekeeping operation **United Nations Prevention Deployment Force (UNPREDEP)** to **Macedonia** in January 1993. A UN Special Representative held regular meetings with political parties, convened national youth meetings, and undertook projects to encourage bridge-building, the formation of NGOs, and awareness of international human rights instruments. International NGOs initiated educational projects,

problem-solving workshops, conflict resolution trainings and media projects to help prevent an escalation of ethnic tensions.²¹

- The **World Bank** and **IMF** do not have mandates to intervene in the political relations of countries. But by basing their financial assistance on certain conditions, such as the rule of law, transparency and good governance, they are implicitly promoting long-term structural conflict prevention.²² In addition, the Bank’s **Post Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit** assesses the causes, consequences and characteristics of conflict and provides financing for physical and social reconstruction initiatives in post war societies to help prevent the resurgence of violence. The Bank has played a significant role in Afghanistan, Africa’s Great Lakes region, the Balkans, Iraq, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, East Timor, the West Bank and Gaza and other war-torn areas (see chapter on post conflict reconstruction).
- Bilaterally, **Sweden**, **Norway** and **Canada** have led many of the international debates and initiatives relating to the promotion of conflict prevention, and the need to promote human security as a key to preventing war. **Norway** in particular has also played a key role in facilitating peace processes (see chapter on negotiations).

Actions by regional multilateral organisations include:

- In 1994, the **Association of Southeastern Asian Nations (ASEAN)** established a **Regional Security Forum** to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern, as well as promote confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the **Asia-Pacific region**. Recognising that the territorial and jurisdictional disputes in the South China Sea directly affected peace and stability in the region, ASEAN issued the Manila Declaration of 1992, which promoted a policy of cooperation and collaboration to mitigate the conflict. The regional organisation also played a significant role that led to the settlement of the **Cambodian** conflict through the Paris Agreement, sponsored track two diplomacy efforts on the **Spratly Island** dispute in

1991, participated in mediations in 1999 regarding self-determination for **East Timor** and continues to host dialogues regarding nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia and South Asia.²³

- Since the 1990s, the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** has expanded its operational capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. In 1992, the post of **High Commissioner on National Minorities** was established to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or friendly relations among states of the OSCE. The High Commissioner's mandate describes the role as "an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage." The OSCE has been particularly active in the **former Soviet Union**—building confidence and trust between **Russians** and local populations in **Latvia, Estonia**, and other new states.

National leaders include governments or individual leaders. The ability and willingness of national leaders to analyse a situation, weigh options for action and balance personal ambitions and fears with national interest is critical. Examples of such actions include:

- In the 1990s, the growing mobilisation and protests of black **South Africans** caused leaders within the South African government to terminate apartheid policies that promoted preferential treatment of whites. Facing the threat of a descent into mass violence, white South African leaders opted for compromise and power-sharing. This choice was also possible because the majority in the liberation movement was against all-out war, and the leaders in the dominant African National Congress (ANC) valued plurality and equality for all within a system of majority rule democracy.
- During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a peace process in **Northern Ireland** began to take shape. Several developments prompted a dialogue between the Unionists and Nationalists, but the initiative of Social Democratic and Labour Party leader John Hume and Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams eventually led to closer cooperation between a coalition of pro-nationalist partners to pursue a united **Ireland** agenda. While the Hume-Adams talks were unpopular with the public, they moved the conflict towards negotiation of ceasefires in 1994–1995 and eventually the **Good Friday Accords** in April 1998.²⁴

Civil society organisations, including NGOs, religious entities, scientific community, educational institutions, media, grassroots movements and the business sector can play an important role, as noted below.

- Several international NGOs and networks are dedicated to raising awareness and advocating for early response through monitoring conflict situations and publishing reports. One of the most prominent is the **International Crisis Group (ICG)**, an independent NGO with offices worldwide that monitors and analyses conflicts and unstable situations globally. ICG publishes analytical reports with recommendations for action tailored to specific international and national actors. The organisation uses the reports to inform and press for actions that in its view would prevent the escalation of conflict.

- The **Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)** was formed in response to the UN Secretary General's report (see above). The network brings together a variety of actors involved in conflict prevention efforts from the international to the community level. With fifteen regional centres, GPPAC aims to influence regional, national and international policy and thinking on conflict prevention; clarify relations between civil society and the UN and its agencies; build better relations with governments; consolidate the network; and set regional agendas for the network for the coming decade.

- A number of international NGOs work to develop in-country programmes dedicated to conflict prevention. **Search for Common Ground (Search)**, an independent NGO, has developed numerous **media-based** programmes in conflict-affected states, promoting tolerance and peace. In **Burundi**, it started "Heroes"—a radio show that profiles ordinary people who have helped others across ethnic divisions. In **Macedonia**, Search had a television show in which children of all

- ethnicities faced prejudice and worked together to overcome it. Search also used public opinion polling to inform Israelis and Palestinians about each other's views and support for non-violence and negotiations.
- NGOs also develop media monitoring projects to identify increasing tensions and respond in a timely and appropriate manner. They can hold media organisations accountable in their reporting—to ensure that the media does not incite violence, does not exaggerate conflict and covers peace initiatives as well. Technological developments and a reduction in the cost of media productions have also created opportunities for women and community-based organisations to create their own news and information channels. In the **Pacific region**, **FemTalk1325** is a radio, press and Internet-based NGO that covers issues relating to women, peace and security, and promotes women's participation in these issues throughout the Pacific. The **Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE)** is a Central American-based project that disseminates news about women's issues in the region and provides training to grassroots organisations on Web site design, and newspaper and radio production. These informal news channels strengthen civil society networks and are an effective means of disseminating conflict early warning signs. The **Institute for War and Peace Reporting** runs training programmes for local journalists in conflict areas with the aim of promoting balanced and accurate reporting and understanding of human rights principles. The programmes also facilitate dialogue and exchange among journalists.
 - Grassroots and community-based efforts to limit the spread of violence also exist. For example, in 1995, inter-ethnic violence in **Burundi** increased significantly and youth became polarised. To alleviate and prevent division, several small women's groups visited schools, informing students about the political manipulation behind violence and encouraging the youth not to get involved with the heightened violent activities. Women's groups worked to establish joint Hutu-Tutsi neighbourhood security programmes to warn citizens against extremist actions.²⁵
 - There are also national efforts to encourage a return to democracy and prevent violent conflict. 1993, civil society groups in **Fiji** created the **Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF)** as a peaceful way to address the acute ethnic conflict following the military coup in 1987. Through consultations, the Forum gathered input from citizens, rather than from political parties and elites, to frame a new constitution. The prolonged dialogue ended with a new constitution in 1996 that created a power-sharing dynamic in the national government.²⁶ In 2000 another coup took place in **Fiji**. Despite death threats, women's groups led daily candlelight vigils protesting the coup. As the interim government was sworn in, women's groups launched a "good governance working group" publicly counting down the days as a reminder that the country needed to return to democracy. Since then women's groups have monitored socioeconomic and political developments, highlighting the severe impact of economic downturn on women in the country. National women's groups in partnership with the **Ministry of Women's Affairs** formed the **Women, Peace, and Security Committee of Fiji** in 2003 and have initiated a number of activities and programmes to promote peace and dialogue. The programmes range from community radio shows and public vigils to lobbying successfully for more transparency in national security and defence policy-making, and training local communities in detecting early signs of violence and conflict.²⁷
 - Finally, while the prevention of violent conflict continues to pose a challenge, "**winning the peace**," and ensuring that violence does not surge again in the immediate aftermath of war, has drawn the attention of many practitioners and policy-makers internationally. A major international project housed at the **Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)** in Washington, DC, developed a framework for post conflict programming based on immediate, medium and long-term actions needed in four key areas: security, governance and political participation, justice and reconciliation, and social and economic well-being (see related chapters in this Toolkit).

Chilean Women: Non-violent Action and Return to Democracy²⁸

In 1988 for the first time in fifteen years, the military government of General Augusto Pinochet lifted the state-of-emergency ban on political activity in **Chile**, and allowed for a previously promised plebiscite to determine the future of his administration. A loss for Pinochet meant holding presidential and congressional elections within a year and returning the country to democracy. Despite the obvious gamble, Pinochet was pushed by mass protests and increased political activism by all sectors of society as well as growing international pressure. Yet, as many Chileans note, he would not have held the referendum if he had not felt sure of success. He lost, however, and Chile returned to a path of political freedom and democracy.

To outsiders the change in Chile may have appeared to come overnight, but for Chileans it was a result of fifteen years of organisation, protest and political action, that was deliberately kept non-violent, even when the government used force. Women, along with church groups and others, were at the frontlines of the anti-government protests. The **Organisation of Democratic Women**, one of the first such groups, was formed outside of the national stadium, in which men were being tortured. Women relatives of the victims gathered to share information and provide support. The organisation remained active for fourteen years, advocating on behalf of political prisoners. As the years went by and women formed support groups, their political activism also increased. Some focused on knitting “arpilleras” or tapestries and art depicting their struggle, for sale abroad, as a means of raising international awareness. Others held protests: housewives in grocery stores banging their pots, hospital nurses marching in silence, and people going on hunger strikes. In soup kitchens across shantytowns outside Santiago, they mobilised and, when the time came, voted against Pinochet in the plebiscite.

4. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Use existing networks of women’s groups to raise awareness about conflict prevention issues; consult with them regularly to learn about conflict trends at the community level, their impact on women and potential roles in mitigating violence.
 - Identify a range of indicators including gender-based indicators that highlight trends in society.
 - Develop a common strategy to address root causes of conflict.
2. Identify and invite NGOs to a workshop on conflict analysis and mapping of actors.
 - Organise dialogues within communities, or among different sectors of the population (e.g. youth) on issues of concern and possible solutions.
 - Identify traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and explore ways of using them to de-escalate tensions.
 - Commission surveys in conflict-affected communities to identify demands for non-violence.
3. Seek to work with other groups with a potential for involvement in conflict prevention, including religious institutions and the business community and mobilise their resources and expertise to promote non-violence.
 - Identify and consult with key international actors, to gain awareness of their concerns and strategies for conflict prevention.
 - Advocate for wider interaction and support of women’s groups and use of gender-based indicators.
 - Using international networks and interaction with the UN and national diplomats, call for a UN fact-finding mission—and lobby for the presence of gender experts.
4. Identify and consult with key international actors, to gain awareness of their concerns and strategies for conflict prevention.
 - Advocate for wider interaction and support of women’s groups and use of gender-based indicators.
 - Using international networks and interaction with the UN and national diplomats, call for a UN fact-finding mission—and lobby for the presence of gender experts.

- Publicise Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1366, which advocate for the inclusion of civil society in conflict prevention efforts.
5. Reach out to educators to promote conflict resolution training and peace education in schools and colleges.
 6. Develop ties with local media and international services (e.g. the BBC's World Service) to publicise stories of non-violent conflict resolution in society.
 7. Work with local journalists to promote objectivity and moderation in reporting.
 8. Reach out to key stakeholders most susceptible to resorting to violence and encourage civic engagement and non-violence.
 9. Identify key actors that can be a moderating force, including trade union leaders, media personalities and journalists, and religious leaders and mobilise their support against violence.
 10. Reach out to the government and military to withhold the use of force and encourage non-violence.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeastern Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCF	Citizens’ Constitutional Forum
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
FIRE	Feminist International Radio Endeavour
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
ICG	International Crisis Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPREDEP	United Nations Prevention Deployment Force
US	United States

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Peace Negotiations and Agreements

SANAM NARAGHI ANDERLINI

Negotiations to end wars are never simple. They involve compromises, consensus-building and some level of mutual trust. Often parties negotiate because they recognise the gains that can be made, but even “interest-based” negotiations require enemies to trust each other. For people affected by violence, or those who have fought for a cause, accepting an opponent’s demands is difficult. But for peace to take root, negotiations are an essential starting point. As agreements are reached on key issues, the foundations of peace are strengthened. In many instances the decisions reached at the peace table set the course for the socioeconomic and political transformation of a country. Negotiated agreements are in effect a blueprint for the future.

If gender perspectives are absent at this stage, it becomes more difficult to insert them later. It is never too early to engage in peace processes—but sometimes it can be too late. This chapter explains the different types of negotiations that occur primarily at the national level, highlighting the challenges facing women, the strategies they have developed to gain their place at the peace table and the contributions they make.

1. WHAT ARE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS?

An **agreement or accord** is a formal commitment between hostile parties to end a war. Peace agreements can vary considerably. The 1991 Paris Peace Accords that led to the end of the conflict in **Cambodia** were essentially an agreement to end international involvement in the war, and a **ceasefire** to transform a military conflict into a political one, with the United Nations (UN) present and in control.¹ In contrast, in 1996 in **Guatemala**, detailed and extensive agreements provided a framework for political, economic, legislative and social reform and for the transformation of military structures and institutions. Peace agreements often seek to resolve protracted conflicts and provide a new vision for inter-group and interstate relations at the regional, national or local level. In **Somalia**, negotiations were needed with international actors, as well as within the clan system and local communities. In the **Middle East**, one approach developed by the United States (US) was to facilitate peace agreements between Israel and its neighbouring countries, independent of the Palestinians.

Sometimes peace accords can capture the broad spirit or framework of peace and guide the next steps without addressing issues in detail. The 1993 Oslo Accords—officially known as the **Declaration of Principles**—that initiated the Israeli-Palestinian 1994–2000 peace process offered no concrete details and were not legally binding. But they were the cornerstones of a longer-term negotiation effort or **peace process**. Peace accords often open the way to international assistance in the form of **peacekeeping** and peace support operations (see below and chapter on peace support operations).

Regardless of the political decisions made, negotiators have to prepare for “spoilers” (groups that have an interest in sabotaging the process) and public rejection of settlements. When the public has experienced significant trauma, it may not be ready to make compromises or accept a negotiated solution. It is the task of the leadership to generate support for peace. Where agreements are made in closed or even secret talks, gaining this support can be even more problematic, especially if those most affected by the conflict do not see signs of improvement. For example, during the Oslo process, Palestinians felt that they were

not gaining enough as the Israelis continued to build settlements in Palestinian territories. Israelis, on the other hand, felt that they were not gaining much, as they did not feel sufficiently secure. It is important to manage expectations and ensure that the public on either side of the conflict is aware of the approach being taken, the pace and the expected results.

Sometimes extremist groups will exploit public opinion as a way of breaking their promises. They will imply that the public does not favour negotiated solutions and use this as an excuse to generate more violence and attempt to derail talks. To avoid this in **Northern Ireland**, negotiators agreed to hold a referendum in the midst of the peace process, soon after all political parties signed the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. In the **referendum**, they asked the public to vote either “yes” in favour of the agreement and continuation, or “no” to stop the process. Seventy-one percent of votes in Northern Ireland and 94 percent in the Republic of Ireland were “yes.” This gave the negotiators a mandate to continue the talks, and ensured that extremists could not use the public as an excuse to sabotage the process.

KEY STAGES IN NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESSES

Few peace processes progress in an orderly manner. Typically there are fits and starts, times of advancement, followed by stagnation or even breakdown. In general, however, there are three key phases: pre-negotiations, negotiations and post-negotiations implementation.

Pre-Negotiations: Talks Before Talks

In many cases, before formal negotiations take place in public, a series of private or secret talks may occur. One aim of the pre-negotiations “talks before talks” phase is to “break the ice,” allow parties to explore options for making peace, convey their concerns and understand

each other. An important goal of this phase is to ensure that parties are mutually committed to the peace process. Issues to be addressed include:

- logistics;
- location of talks;
- security for each party;
- participants;
- time frame;
- mediators and their roles and responsibilities;
- setting realistic goals;
- alleviating fears and building trust perhaps through conciliatory gestures or creating a space for dialogue where a level of frankness and truth about the actions of all sides can be articulated; and
- agreement on agenda topics, which can be framed as a “limited versus comprehensive approach”² and the order in which topics are discussed. Common issues include a ceasefire agreement, power-sharing and governance issues, human rights, demobilisation, justice and socioeconomic reforms (see related chapters on these issues). A limited agenda may focus on security and power-sharing issues leaving other matters for post-settlement discussions. A more comprehensive agenda may address social and economic reform within the framework of the peace talks.

The challenge is to ensure that the “pre-negotiations” period leads to formal negotiations. In many cases parties use pre-negotiations to stall peace talks or to reinforce armed efforts. The conditions set for talks should not hamper or limit opportunities for getting to actual negotiations, but should ease the way. In other words, talks before talks *should not just be talks about talks*.

Colombia: Creating Space for Dialogue and Talks Before Talks³

In 1999, under pressure from civil society groups and a public campaign that resulted in 10 million signatures in favour of peace talks, then-President Andrés Pastrana and the guerrilla movement FARC (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces) initiated a series of “dialogues.” The process continued until 2002, with the involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), thematic public dialogues that focused attention on the concerns of different sectors of society, and international support. However, the process failed to lead to formal negotiations, in part because neither side ceased the use of violence during the dialogues. Despite this, the dialogues set a clear precedent for future talks to be more inclusive of civil society and attuned to public demands.

Negotiations for Peace: The Talks

Official or “Track One”: These are bilateral or multilateral negotiations between adversaries involving the leadership or their official representatives, from both or all sides, typically mediated by a third-party. The 1995 Dayton Peace Talks that ended the **Bosnian** war were mediated by officials from the “contact group” of nations including the US, Russia, Britain, France and Germany.

Track One and a Half: This involves unofficial interaction between adversaries in the hope of creating an environment where official processes can take place. In 1994, when US relations with **North Korea** were at a crisis point over nuclear proliferation issues, former US President Carter went to North Korea and negotiated an agreement that enabled the two sides to return to discussions. He did not represent the US government at the time, but because of his eminent status he had access to the highest levels on both sides and was able to resolve issues without risking dishonour or embarrassment for either side.

In **Guatemala**, the National Reconciliation Commission, with the support of the government, negotiated the Oslo Accord with the insurgency group, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity. This accord opened a process of informal meetings between the insurgency and civil society organisations that contributed to the beginning of formal negotiations with the government.

Back-channel talks and **shuttle diplomacy** are variations on track one and a half. Negotiators undertake one-on-one discussions, conveying messages through intermediaries (third-party facilitators or mediators) until obstacles are redressed and space is created for the resumption of face-to-face talks. In the **Philippines**, official peace negotiations between the government and insurgency movements (the National Democratic Front and the Moro International Liberation Front) in the 1990s were characterised by “back-channelling,” particularly when the formal negotiations stalled.

Unofficial or “Track Two”: Track Two efforts do not replace official track one efforts, but ideally precede and complement them. They are often led by non-state actors and involve a wider range of parties with

an interest in promoting negotiations. The Oslo peace process, involving Israelis and Palestinians through the 1990s, was initiated through Track Two efforts by Norwegian academics with contacts in both communities.

Multi-Track: This refers to the involvement of a variety of actors engaging in peacemaking activities at different levels of society—ranging from the Track One actors to local, national or international groups from civil society and other sectors. There are two guiding principles: 1. the greater the range of actors involved, the wider the sense of ownership and effort in resolving a conflict, and the greater the chance of attaining sustainable results; and 2. cooperation and coordination between a range of actors can draw on the strengths of each and help overcome their limitations. For example, religious leaders can influence their own constituencies, but may not hold sway with the business community, and vice versa. By having both sectors involved, there is a greater chance that a wider cross-section of people feel that they have a stake in the process. In **Guatemala** and **Northern Ireland**, civil society forums were established to promote wider societal involvement in the peace process. The terms “**third side**” or “**track three**” are sometimes used to describe the effort of engaging and uniting individuals at the community level to generate “people’s power,” public opinion and coalitions in support of peace.⁴ Similarly some theorists state that multi-track efforts should aim to create “networks of effective action”⁵ (see examples below).

From Words to Action: The Rocky Road to Implementation

Peace talks are often a climax—coming after months of preparation, secret negotiations and a degree of confidence-building. Not surprisingly a great deal of attention is paid to creating conditions conducive to success. But in many cases pitfalls arise once the agreements have been signed. At this point expectations are high, but the peace itself is fragile. It is also a time when **extremists** or **spoilers** can take advantage of the situation by taking violent action to force a breakdown of the process. In the **Middle East**, the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin by Israeli right-wing extremists altered the course of the process. Many observers believe that at that moment the spirit of the Oslo process was lost.

Parties to the conflict often play a “wait and see” game to assess whether their adversaries will take the first step toward implementing agreements. One major key step is to undertake **confidence-building measures** that offer tangible proof of the commitment to peace. Such measures can be taken prior to the start of talks—as in a ceasefire agreement or creating areas for safe passage. They can also be taken during talks. In **Guatemala**, a human rights accord was among the first documents to be signed in 1994. According to opposition groups, the government began implementing aspects of the Accord soon after its signing, fostering a more positive environment for the peace talks. Confidence-building measures can also be undertaken immediately after the signing of key agreements to demonstrate will and commitment to peace. Unfortunately, often agreements on paper are slow to affect people’s lives. In **Northern Ireland**, although progress was made on a range of social and economic issues, on security issues including “decommissioning” of the British army and its bases, and the Irish Republican Army, there was little progress. This resulted in a faltering of the peace process, and combined with other factors, led to a resurgence of nationalism in 2003.

In most cases the failure of negotiations results not only in a resurgence of violence, but also in higher levels of violence. In effect if the trust that has been created is then broken, there is often a severe backlash and more intense violence. *Thus the costs of initiating peace negotiations without adequate preparation and commitment to concrete implementation are extremely high.*

2. WHO IS INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATION PROCESSES?

In general there are two categories of people involved: those who are actual stakeholders or parties to the conflict, and those who mediate and facilitate the process.

MEDIATORS AND FACILITATORS

In many cases, the UN and/or regional inter-governmental organisations act as key **mediators** in peace negotiations. In **El Salvador** the UN convened the parties, encouraged progress and helped resolve

obstacles. In **Sierra Leone** in 1996, the Commonwealth Secretariat was involved alongside the UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In most cases where the UN is involved, the Secretary General’s **Special Representative** (SRSG) takes on the task of mediation and diplomacy. The SRSG can play a pivotal role in mediating, engaging in “shuttle diplomacy” between actors and conveying messages on behalf of the UN.

Third-party governments, such as Norway and the European Union (EU), often sponsor negotiations, fund the process and provide venues for meetings. At times, they also play a prominent role as mediators. When the 2002 peace talks started in **Sri Lanka** between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Norwegian government sponsored and facilitated the process.

In **Burundi**, a facilitation team made up of 18 African and European governments moderated the negotiations, alongside representatives from multilateral and regional international bodies.

Third-party civil society organisations have also facilitated a number of peace talks by helping to create an environment where talks can be held, providing a venue and bringing parties and mediators together. The opportunity arises because NGOs may have access to both sides of a conflict. In 1990, after years of ongoing contact through the church and humanitarian support, representatives of the lay Catholic community of Sant Egidio mediated talks between the government of **Mozambique** and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO).⁶ The talks lasted two years and the accords were signed at Sant Egidio’s headquarters in Rome, Italy.

In many instances, individuals who are known and trusted by both sides can be effective mediators. Sometimes they are people who are active and known locally. They are **insider neutrals**. These are people who, by virtue of living in the conflict area, have a profound interest in making peace, but are known to not take sides. For example, in Sri Lanka, Visaka Dharmadasa, founder of the Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action and the Association of War-Affected Women, has designed and facilitated track two dialogues, bringing together

West African Women as Ambassadors of Peace—The Mano River Story

Women were struggling for peace across the Mano River countries of **Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea** throughout the 1990s. But their successes were short-lived as conflict in one country inevitably affected the others. In 1999, believing that the solution could be found through regional peace efforts, women from the three countries joined together to form the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET). Lobbying regional security organisations, training women in communities, issuing public declarations, organising protests and directly meeting with leaders across the region became the network's trademark. In recognition of their important role in bringing the parties to the table, MARWOPNET was a signatory to the August 2003 peace agreement in Liberia. The UN recognised their efforts in December 2003, awarding them the annual United Nations Prize for Human Rights.

influential civil society leaders from both sides of the conflict. In 2002, as peace talks were faltering, the LTTE refused direct contact with the government, accusing them of non-compliance. Its leaders conveyed their concerns through Ms. Dharmadasa to the government, foreign embassy staff members, and Norwegian negotiators. Through 2004 she continued to be an impartial bridge between the parties.

Individuals can also be **outsider-neutrals**—those who have no direct stake in the conflict or peace but whose neutrality is trusted. At the height of negotiations between the apartheid government and leaders of the black community, a crisis arose between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) regarding participation in elections. Seasoned international mediators including Henry Kissinger and Lord Carrington were unable to resolve the issue and left **South Africa**. But Washington Okumu, a Kenyan university professor, stayed behind to broker the talks and ultimately achieved an inclusive agreement. As an outsider—but an African—Okumu had a deep understanding of the cultural issues, and was trusted and respected by all sides.⁷

PARTICIPANTS AT THE TABLE

Peace talks are often differentiated as **exclusive** or **inclusive**. Exclusive talks involve armed and unarmed major parties to a conflict—typically political and military actors—while inclusive talks tend to include a broader range of actors.

Exclusive: In **Colombia** in 1999, the government agreed to talks with FARC, but not with other left-wing guerrilla groups or right-wing paramilitaries. In

2004, talks were being held with the paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), but no other sector of the population.

Inclusive or Multi-Party: In contrast, there are many cases where the international community (the UN or other mediators) invites multiple political parties to the table. The All-Party **Burundi** Peace Talks in Arusha (1998–2000) included 19 political parties. As mediator in **Northern Ireland** (1996–1998), US Senator George Mitchell proposed that the top ten political parties bring two representatives to the negotiations. Elections were held to identify the ten parties.

The participation of armed factions is controversial in peace negotiations. Many political parties have strong affiliations or direct control over armed factions and thus represent them. However, participation by smaller armed groups is often problematic; they may be reluctant to give up the use of arms at the outset of talks, yet have the capacity to spoil the process. Among practitioners there is ongoing debate about the appropriateness of including militants and extremists in negotiations. The decision is typically dependent on the context and is never easy, but is nonetheless a key issue.

In **Sudan**, a series of parallel and consecutive negotiations have taken place whereby the government has engaged with different opposition and rebel groups separately. Women and civil society have been largely excluded from these processes.

Multi-Level and Multi-Track: These processes, as discussed above, happen rarely. In **South Africa**, the

anti-apartheid struggle mobilised people at all levels of society, including religious and tribal leaders, trade unions and community activists.

In **Guatemala**, the peace process started in 1987 with preliminary talks and ended in 1996 with a comprehensive peace agreement. It was exceptional in that it included a Civil Society Assembly of representatives from trade unions, human rights organisations, the women's movement, indigenous groups, the religious community and other non-state entities. They were able to make vital contributions to the process through recommendations to the negotiating parties. Although the Assembly did not have decision-making power, its presence and involvement ensured that agreements reached at the political level were endorsed by civil society. It was also effective in creating a public sense of ownership for the peace process and shared responsibility for its success.

Multi-track efforts also help provide a safety net. When negotiations at the higher levels stall, involvement by other parties and sectors ensures that the channels of communication are not entirely shut down.

MONITORS OF THE AGREEMENT

In worst-case scenarios, the lack of implementation leads to the re-emergence of armed conflict and even worse cycles of violence. But even in successful cases such as **Guatemala** and **South Africa**, implementation of the full peace agreement has been slow and at times non-existent. A key lesson that emerges is that parties to the conflict, and the public at large, must be made aware of the significant challenges that implementation brings, and consider establishing indicators to monitor progress.

As a first step, the **international community** may assist in monitoring **ceasefires**. Although the term peacekeeping is not mentioned in the UN Charter, extended peacekeeping and peace support operations have become a standard feature of UN work in conflict-affected countries, falling between **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7** of the UN Charter.

- Chapter 6 outlines the UN's role in the "pacific" settlement of disputes. Peace missions here include fact-finding and observer missions.

- International peace enforcement missions are often deployed under Chapter 7 (articles 43–45) of the Charter that mandates use of UN force and can call upon member states to provide armed forces to maintain and restore peace.

Peacekeeping missions typically monitor compliance, create a buffer zone between warring parties (see chapter on peace support operations) and, depending on the scope of their mandate, assist in the implementation of peace agreements. In **Ethiopia** and **Eritrea**, the **African Union** (AU) proposed the establishment of a peacekeeping mission with a mandate to "monitor the cessation of hostilities...and ensure the observance of the security commitments agreed by the two Parties."⁸ In other cases, monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of peace agreements may be noted within the peace accord. The August 2003 peace agreement in **Liberia** established an Implementation Monitoring Committee that included ECOWAS, the UN, the AU, the EU and the International Contact Group on Liberia (involving the US, France, Nigeria and Senegal among others). They meet regularly with the new government to assess and provide recommendations for the implementation of the accord.

Regional and local actors can also be involved in monitoring. Following the signing of the 1998 Lincoln Agreement to end the **Bougainville** conflict, the Peace Monitoring Group was established, comprising the military and civilians from countries in the Pacific region (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu). Its mandate included monitoring the ceasefire, serving as a link to the general population and assisting the implementation of the peace agreement. In the **Philippines**, Local Monitoring Teams (LMT) were established in August 2001 to monitor the security situation throughout Mindanao; they included representatives of local government, members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, NGOs and the religious sector. Where the LMTs were not active, grassroots groups formed "Bantay Ceasefire" (ceasefire watch) to monitor both sides. Bantay volunteers, including members of local community groups and NGOs, documented and reported violations and sought to complement the official LMTs.⁹

3. WHY DO NEGOTIATION PROCESSES EXCLUDE WOMEN?

Women remain largely excluded from negotiations despite their attempts in many conflict areas to participate and despite international policies, which explicitly call for women's involvement in decision-making at national and international levels. This marginalisation is problematic and can generate vicious exclusionary cycles.

On one hand, to ensure their concerns are addressed, it is necessary to have “strong” women's representation at the table. The strength can come from the number of women at the table representing all sides so that their viewpoints are heard. Strength can also come by ensuring that the women present are not merely observers but have decision-making power. It is acknowledging that women have contributions to make on a range of issues, from security to power-sharing, most of which affect all members of society.

On the other hand, to ensure strong representation, other stakeholders need to acknowledge that women's contributions are an essential component of the process. In most cases, however, neither the local parties to a conflict (i.e. the government or non-state parties to the conflict) nor international mediators acknowledge this. In fact, in cases like **Liberia**, even when women have played a role, their recommendations have been excluded from the final agreements.

In effect, when women are excluded, the differential impact of the decisions on men and women is not fully understood, and in most cases women's rights are not overtly addressed. Moreover, women's exclusion from negotiations often results in their exclusion from post conflict reconstruction planning and implementation. Particularly in post war situations where women make up the majority of a country's population, the marginalisation of women means squandering critical human resources.

REASONS AND EXCUSES

While theorists and even practitioners lament the exclusion of women and civil society from peace processes, in most cases the reality is that seats at the peace table are given to those who have the political power to implement agreements, or those who have the power to threaten a veto and spoil the process. Even

when there is recognition of the rights of women and the need for a more inclusive process, it is often cast aside in the process of bargaining. Thus the influence that women and civil society may have in sustaining the process is not considered a priority. A variety of excuses are given for the exclusion of women:

- Gender inequality and women's exclusion is embedded in local culture, and the peace table is not the place to address these “cultural norms;” promoting the participation of women can alienate some leaders and put the peace process at risk. A related argument is that international conventions and laws interfere with local culture; yet the same reasoning is not used for other issues.
- “Women leaders aren't representative of the broad population. They are elites. Their views and interests are no different to the men.”¹⁰ Interestingly, the same argument, while often true for men, is never used as a rationale for their exclusion. Moreover, in many cases (e.g. Sierra Leone, Burundi, South Africa) women at the national level had strong ties with grassroots movements.
- Women are not involved in the fighting, and so should not be involved in peacemaking.
- In the case of liberation struggles often the excuse used is that “liberation comes first,” then “gender equality,” yet time and again, women have found that if the two issues are not addressed in parallel, gender equality falls by the wayside soon after liberation.
- There is a prevailing belief that peace accords are gender-neutral. There is an implicit notion that references to human rights and justice encompass everyone, including women.
- In male-dominated societies where women have not been involved in political affairs, often those who do enter the space are viewed with skepticism and distrust by other women and men.
- Finally, it is often argued that women are not inherently more peaceful or “pro-peace” than men. This is true in many instances—indeed women have been strong supporters of many wars, have played a multitude of roles in conflict situations, and are not necessarily gender-sensitive. But it is

still the case that without women, gendered perspectives are more likely to be excluded or ignored in peace agreements.

In addition to these externally imposed obstacles, women and civil society groups themselves also sometimes show reluctance to engage directly, or succumb to pressures and withdraw. Common factors that affect them include:

- being too absorbed in local issues, losing sight of national and international processes, or excluding themselves from politics that they deem to be unethical;
- feeling insecure about the skills and knowledge required to participate (although this concern does not seem to afflict male warriors). In other words, women who are representative of the wider community often lack the confidence to engage at the national and international levels (with training this can be resolved);
- feeling pressure from male counterparts who fear the notion of sharing power with women after the negotiations and thus press them to withdraw;
- not having adequate representation. In many instances when male leaders are pressed into nominating women for negotiations, they choose the weakest. In this way they control the women representatives and can argue that the women made no difference to the process. This is particularly damaging for women leaders in civil society who find that women negotiators are unaware or unwilling to ensure that gendered perspectives or women's rights are included in discussions regarding social, economic or political reform;
- not having the necessary support from civil society organisations that are not focused on peace issues. Often, civil society organisations are overburdened groups and are unable or unwilling to accept the direct linkages between peacemaking and their area of primary concern (be it the environment, health or other issues), thus their support for peace movements wanes if results are not tangible in the short term. This lack of staying power is detrimental to those who are dedicated peace activists; and

- receiving little or no support from the international community, particularly from mediators or high level personnel who are unfamiliar with gender issues and unwilling to engage with women.

OVERCOMING THESE OBSTACLES

In conflict areas worldwide, women have developed and adopted strategies to overcome these obstacles.

In **South Africa**, women across the political spectrum worked together to establish a women's constituency that resonated with the political parties. Through national and local organisations, they consulted with some three million women over two years to develop a common agenda for women.¹¹ The document became an important tool during negotiations and constitution-drafting. Simultaneously, they worked across political parties at the negotiations to demand 50 percent representation. Of seven sub-councils established to decide on key issues, and to monitor and implement the transition process, one was on gender. Its mandate was to monitor the policies emerging from the other councils to ensure that all matters being addressed (e.g. national security issues, elections, etc.) were gender-sensitive. One of the reasons for the success of South African women was that they did not focus their attention just on women's rights issues. They played a key role in the broader struggle for liberation, winning the respect of their male counterparts, and making contributions to all issues addressed in the negotiations.

In **Northern Ireland**, Catholic and Protestant community-based women peace activists lobbied political parties with their agenda. When they were ignored, the women formed their own political party—the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC)—and won enough votes to secure a seat at the formal peace table. NIWC representatives played a critical role in mediating between parties from both sides, especially the extremists.¹²

In **Burundi**, with support from international NGOs, women formed networks across political party lines but were barred from the formal negotiations that began in 1998. In response, they adopted different strategies including lobbying national party members in the corridors outside the negotiating rooms and seeking out international mediators and support from

the UN (UNIFEM, the UN's Development Fund for Women, in particular, played a critical role). In 2000, the All-Party Burundi Women's Conference was co-hosted by UNIFEM and the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation; each party had two female representatives. They developed a set of recommendations that were included in the final peace accords in August 2000.

In **Somalia**, where a clan system exists, women have a particularly important role in conflict resolution, as they maintain close relations within their own clan, as well as the clan into which they marry. Because of their cross-clan allegiances, individual women have been able to facilitate peace processes by carrying messages between fighting parties, ensuring the safety of travellers passing through clan territory, and interceding among combatants. Organisations comprised of women from different clans and united in opposition to war have sought participation in peace and political processes, mobilising and training community mediators, and representing women as the "sixth clan."

In **Colombia**, following the collapse of the government/FARC dialogue in 2002, women's groups across the country mobilised to demand a return to negotiations. They led peace demonstrations involving thousands, formed national and regional coalitions, and developed a 12-point agenda for future talks. They are now at the forefront of the civil society peace effort.

In **Guatemala**, the only female representative at the official negotiations became increasingly aware of the gender dimensions of the process as the talks progressed. Once aware of the discrimination facing women, she drew on the proposals of the women's rights movement to integrate gender perspectives into the final agreements.¹³

In the **Georgia-Abkhazia** conflict in the Caucasus, women's organisations jointly wrote to the UN Secretary General requesting that he send senior women representatives to the UN mission in their country. In 2004, in part as a result of this advocacy, two women hold senior posts in the mission.

In **Sri Lanka**, the Norwegian sponsors proposed a gender subcommittee made up of representatives from the LTTE and the government to provide advice. International efforts on the part of NGOs such as

International Alert (IA) and **Women Waging Peace (Waging)** have been critical in raising awareness and support for women's participation in peace processes. In 1999 IA's Women Building Peace Campaign played a pivotal role in mobilising women worldwide and in creating the **NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security** that was central to building UN and governmental support for a Security Council resolution.¹⁴ Waging's advocacy efforts have been critical in influencing the US government's agenda, particularly in supporting women in **Iraq's** reconstruction throughout 2003–04. The global networks that IA and Waging fostered have enabled women peace activists to exchange strategies regionally and to gain access to international policy-makers. The Women Peacemakers' Program (WPP) of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) and Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS) are other effective entities providing training and capacity-building to women activists.

4. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO NEGOTIATION PROCESSES?

Where women have mobilised publicly and been present as informal advisors (including as corridor lobbyists—waiting in corridors and lobbying politicians as they emerge from negotiations) or formal negotiators, their contributions have been important in a number of ways noted below.

WOMEN AS CONVENERS AND CATALYSTS

Women's protests and actions have in many cases served as a catalyst for peace talks. In the 1980s the silent protests of the Mothers of the Disappeared in **Argentina** dealt a heavy blow to the military dictatorship by exposing the scale of its human rights abuses, and generating national and international public support. In the **Middle East**, prior to the Oslo peace process, Israeli and Palestinian women worked together on joint initiatives including protests and advocacy. Through the Jerusalem Link group, the coordinating body of two independent women's centres (the Israeli Bat Shalom and the Palestinian Jerusalem Center for Women) were often the first to publicise viable solutions to core issues. They were among the first groups to promote the idea of Jerusalem as the shared capital of two states. Following the collapse of the Oslo process in 2000,

the Jerusalem Link continued to press for a return to negotiations, calling for the creation of an International Women's Commission for Peace in the Middle East that would advocate not only for the inclusion of more women in negotiations, but also for shadow talks to take place with formal recognition from the official parties.

In 1999, following nearly a decade of war and broken peace accords, the government of **Sierra Leone** and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) signed the Lomé peace agreement. Just months later, however, the RUF was flouting the ceasefire provisions. In May 2000, a group of elderly women came together, demanding a meeting with RUF leader Foday Sankoh. On arriving at the RUF compound, they were mistreated and insulted. Frustrated, the women tried a different tactic. They collectively hitched up their skirts, bent over and bared themselves to Sankoh and his coterie. In Sierra Leone, such an action by women is the worst curse that can be brought upon anyone. The news had a galvanising effect on Sierra Leoneans. They had an obligation to uphold the women's honour and support the curse. The women's actions also gave people the courage to stand up to the RUF. Coinciding with the arrival of the new UN mission and British Special Forces, the women's protest, together with subsequent public demonstrations, culminated in Sankoh's arrest and a turn towards peace.¹⁵

In 2001, as **Sri Lanka** was entering its twentieth year of civil war, a leading businesswoman and President of the NGO Sri Lanka First, launched a massive public awareness campaign, calling on all Sri Lankans to take action in support of negotiations. The Stand for Peace campaign reached a climax at noon on 19 September 2001 when more than one million Sri Lankans across the country left their homes and offices to stand publicly, holding hands for peace and demonstrating their desire for an end to the conflict. This pressure led political leaders to put aside their own agendas and begin negotiations.¹⁶

In many cases women's power and influence is directly a result of their purported powerlessness in the formal political sphere. In places as diverse as **Colombia**, the **Caucasus**, and Nagaland in northeast **India**, women have greater freedom of movement than men in conflict zones; this enables them to establish contact with both peace activists and governmental or international

actors. They are also often deemed to have no vested interest in the war, and are trusted more. In the Caucasus, where there are a number of "frozen" conflicts (i.e. no war but no political settlement either), women have been critical in forming cross-regional networks, leading to greater communication and understanding across conflict lines. They have also created mobile groups that visit areas, such as **Chechnya**, where conflict is ongoing, to monitor developments including the impact of war.

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON PEACE AND SECURITY

It is extremely difficult to quantify the difference that women make to peace negotiations, particularly given the limited numbers of women that have participated in such processes. Evidence gathered in testimonies worldwide, however, indicates that when considering peace agendas, women are often credited for bringing an understanding of the root causes of conflict, and for speaking effectively about the impact of violence on daily life, relating the experiences and voices of ordinary people—men and women, young and old. They tend to have a holistic approach to resolving conflict, often motivated by the dream of a peaceful future, particularly for their children. Women also tend to focus on practical issues related to quality of life and human security, rather than control over political power. They also bring greater recognition of the discrimination and abuse faced by women and other marginalised sectors. Finally, women recognise the importance of building positive relations while negotiating for peace and security. Often they focus on reaching out to negotiators through their personal identity or reference to family.

In **El Salvador**, in negotiations over the reintegration of fighters, women leaders and negotiators of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) were critical in ensuring that not only fighters, but also men and women who had provided support (*tenedores*), were included in the programs. "A USAID representative involved in the implementation process recalls the "professional" calibre of women negotiators, who came to the talks with a clear "sense of responsibility" and awareness that "others were depending on them."¹⁷ Access to land, supplies for the home, and training programs

were included in the final reintegration packages.

In **Mindanao**, reconstruction and reintegration began after 28 years of protracted struggle for autonomy and a 1996 peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). However, while the political landscape changed, it was clear to women in particular, that the MNLF was still defining its ideals through revolution, rather than embracing a culture of peace and tolerance. The wife of a leading MNLF figure initiated contact with a national peace institute. In November 1997, a group of Bangsamoro Women from the Special Zone of Peace and Development areas in Mindanao gathered to reflect on, and promote a culture of peace to counter the culture of violence defined by guns and war.

Elsewhere women's participation has been effective in highlighting and addressing issues of particular concern to women. In **Guatemala**, as a result of the participation and influence of women in the peace process, the accords include the commitment to reduce maternal mortality by 50 percent, create laws and mechanisms to outlaw sexual harassment and create the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women and the National Women's Forum.

ENHANCING THE PROCESS

In cases where women have been involved in formal peace negotiations, in their efforts to generate support for the process they have been inclusive and consultative.

Inclusive: Women peacemakers tend to be more willing to talk to all sides in a conflict. In part because of their own experience of marginalisation, they understand the need to reach out and hear the voices of all concerned. In **Northern Ireland**, the political message of the NIWC was human rights, inclusion, and equality. At first, they were insulted and accused of being traitors by other parties in the negotiations. But during the 1996–98 talks, they were the only party that was willing to meet with all sides. They became trusted mediators during the negotiations. Their demands included the establishment of a civic forum in which different sectors of society could voice their opinions and their support for

victims of violence, integrated education and mixed housing. In 1998, their public campaigns were critical in mobilising people to vote in favour of the Good Friday Agreement to keep the peace process moving.

Consultative: In many cases, women peacemakers have emerged from community-based movements and civil society. Because of their strong ties to their constituents, they initiate consultative processes to hear opinions and share their own positions. This provides a critical channel through which the public can be informed and support the process. In 1999, as **Burundi's** peace process was under way, Burundian women, with support from UNIFEM and international NGOs such as IA and Search for Common Ground, and working through national networks, were informing women at the grassroots level of the issues being addressed, seeking their opinions and lobbying the international community to gain access to the talks. In **Bougainville**, following the peace talks in 1998 that ended a decade-long independence struggle, women's organisations led awareness-raising meetings in various communities; they were the only leaders who had been at the peace talks who returned to inform the population of the substance and decisions emerging from the negotiations.

Empathic and Trustworthy: New studies emerging on cross-cultural negotiations unrelated to peace and conflict issues indicate that women are perceived to be more trustworthy.¹⁸ Recent qualitative studies on the role of women in post conflict **Rwanda** and **Cambodia** also indicate that in conflict-affected societies women are more trusted than men to be honest and incorruptible.¹⁹ One common reason given is that they are not as implicated in violence as men.²⁰ While this is still highly debatable and difficult to prove, it is nonetheless important to highlight, given that trust is a key element in effective negotiations.

In a 2003 book, *The Essential Difference*, psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen provides empirical data to show that women and girls tend to be better at empathising and communicating than their male counterparts.²¹ In interviews conducted with women and men involved in peace

negotiations, many note that women are better at listening, allaying fears and therefore building trust.²² In **South Africa**, one negotiator noted that women participants used experiences and skills acquired in the domestic sphere, such as caring for family, listening to the elderly and empathising with children in their interactions at the talks. “The fact that the women were nurturing and caring became hugely positive attributes. The process became one of listening to what other people were saying, listening to their fears, even if you disagreed with them. People came out feeling that their concerns were being dealt with. It wasn’t just posturing.”²³

Empathy itself is an important ingredient for acknowledging the humanity of an adversary and in connecting with them on issues of mutual concern. In **Northern Ireland**, women at the negotiations drew attention to the human costs of conflict and to the impact that fear, hatred and violence had on families. In **Bougainville**, when the two sides met, it was women who were able to break down barriers most effectively; so much so that the Bougainville Transitional Government (which had three female delegates out of a total of 27) called for four more women to join their official delegation.²⁴

CONTAINING VIOLENCE AND CREATING SAFE SPACE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The grassroots and local conflict resolution efforts of women are among the least documented and most under-appreciated aspects of their peace work. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, throughout the 1996–98 war women were key members of community-based groups that sought to re-establish dialogue between rival tribes in the eastern parts of the country and negotiate with militias to spare villages. Following national peace talks in 2002, the region remained insecure, with a particularly high incidence of rape. Representatives from the two groups formed a protection committee to travel together, negotiating and resolving disputes as they arose.²⁵

Similarly in **Colombia**, studies published in 2004 document the critical role that informal women’s groups played in negotiating humanitarian agreements with guerrillas to enable passage of food and medicine to villages.²⁶ In the Mano River

region of **West Africa**, women’s networks operate under the assumption that conflicts must be resolved locally, to limit escalation to the regional or national levels. In **Cambodia**, where violence has permeated society through decades of war, women represent the majority of actors in non-violent conflict resolution efforts at the community level, often mediating between security personnel and local populations.²⁷

5. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES?

In recent years a number of resolutions and international policy frameworks have emerged that specifically call for the inclusion of women in peace talks (see chapter on international mechanisms). Key international policies include:

- Although the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** does not reference peace talks,
 - Article 7 demands that states allow women “to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government...”²⁸ and
 - Article 8 calls on state parties to “take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.”²⁹
- The **1995 Beijing Platform for Action** states that “the full participation [of women] in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives [is] essential to the realization of lasting peace.”³⁰ **Recommendation E.1** demands that states “increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels.”³¹

- UN Security Council **Resolution 1325** (2000) mandates that all actors adopt “measures that support local women’s peace initiatives...and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement.”³²
- To underscore their commitment to the international frameworks, many regional multilateral institutions including the European Commission, the Organization of American States and others have also adopted resolutions calling for the inclusion of women in peace processes.

UNIFEM plays a leading role in promoting the implementation of Resolution 1325 by advocating on women’s behalf at international forums and supporting women’s efforts to enter peace processes across the world, from Burundi to Afghanistan. The **Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI)** also plays a key role in advancing the implementation of Resolution 1325 within the UN. Since 2004, the UN’s **Department for Political Affairs (DPA)**, which has primary responsibility for UN engagement in peacemaking, has prioritised gender mainstreaming and is attempting to be more inclusive of women in its peacemaking activities.

6. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Mobilise people in your community to raise awareness and visible support for peace negotiations.
2. Build a strong coalition and constituency of supporters, bringing together a range of civil society actors and identifying key actors who can be “connectors” and those that are “dividers.”
3. Advocate for multi-track peace processes that include civil society and women in the peace process, drawing on examples from other countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy.
4. Open track two or “back-channel” talks, drawing on the network of women activists across conflict lines.
5. Publicise CEDAW and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as international laws that call for women’s inclusion in peace processes and decision-making and require compliance by the state.
 - Develop a media campaign and generate support among journalists covering the issues.
 - Hold community-level meetings.
6. Develop a common agenda, highlighting issues that are critical to women and that must be included in negotiations.
 - Ensure that you are aware of, and have positions on, *all* issues being addressed at the talks (see other chapters).
 - Reach out to UNIFEM and other international entities for support and expert advice.
 - Initiate simulated negotiations to strengthen women’s capacities for formal processes.
 - Where women negotiators do exist, reach out to them to provide support, expertise and advocacy on gender issues.
7. Seek out “champions” and supporters of women’s participation among national figures (men and women) such as politicians, religious leaders, media and business personalities.
 - Inform them about the issues that need to be addressed and ways in which women’s participation can improve the process.
 - Call for a “gender quota” at the negotiations.
 - Demand senior female representation from international organisations be involved (e.g. UN Envoys or Special Representatives).
8. Develop alliances between women in civil society, government, and parties to the conflict and create a cross-sectoral action plan that would ensure that gender perspectives and women’s rights issues are included in all areas of the talks.

9. Strategise to join political parties involved in the negotiations so as to promote your agenda from within the structures. If they are unwilling to embrace your agenda, consider alternative measures, such as creating a civil society dialogue, asking for the support of respected national institutions and leaders or creating your own political party.
10. Reach out to the international community and mediators, including representatives from UNDPA, demand inclusion and cite Resolution 1325 as a commitment that must be honoured.
11. Ensure that the public mobilisation does not end with the signing of the agreement.
12. Develop programmes to ensure monitoring, compliance and implementation of the agreements and promote civil society participation.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
AUC	United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FARC	Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
FAS	Femmes Afrique Solidarité
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
IFOR	International Fellowship of Reconciliation
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LMT	Local Monitoring Teams
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIWC	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women of the United Nations
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WPP	Women Peacemakers' Programme

ENDNOTES

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Peace Support Operations

NICOLA JOHNSTON

One approach to alleviating tensions, supporting a ceasefire or a peace agreement or creating a buffer zone between hostile groups is to organise a **Peace Support Operation (PSO)** to foster and reinforce conditions for sustainable peace. Since 1948 the **United Nations (UN)** has deployed 59 PSOs to conflict zones worldwide. Regional organisations, such as the **African Union (AU)**, also operate PSOs. The role and function of PSOs varies in each setting and has evolved over the past 50 years. This chapter provides an overview of PSOs, focusing particularly on the role of women in UN PSOs, the impact of these operations on women in local communities and the potential for women peacebuilders to engage with UN PSOs.

1. WHAT ARE PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS?

The term **Peace Support Operation (PSO)** describes organised international assistance initiatives to support the maintenance, monitoring and building of peace and prevention of resurgent violent conflict. There are two categories of PSOs: **peacekeeping** and **peace enforcement**. Peacekeeping operations monitor and support the establishment of peace, usually in the context of a peace agreement and peace enforcement operations create conditions for peace and are permitted to use force.

Most PSOs are authorised by a UN Security Council resolution under the **UN Charter**. Peacekeeping operations are generally authorised under Chapter VI and peace enforcement operations under Chapter VII. A UN Security Council resolution can authorise a UN PSO, or a regional organisation or coalition of willing states to undertake a PSO. **UN Security Council resolutions** determine the PSO's mandate, which defines the operation's core tasks. A mandate may be altered only by passing a new Security Council Resolution, usually if conditions have changed in the conflict-affected country or region in which the PSO is based.

Over the past two decades, PSOs have adapted to deal with the changing nature of conflicts in different regions of the world. Mandates range from the traditional monitoring of ceasefire agreements and conducting disarmament, demobilisation and

reintegration programmes, to protecting civilians from fighting factions, to the newer mandates for **nation building**, through which governing structures and the security sector are totally rebuilt. Peace enforcement operations where multinational forces are permitted to use force to establish peace are relatively recent phenomena, including the operations in **Afghanistan** and **Kosovo**.

PSOs are usually conducted in the context of a larger effort to reform and rebuild a nation, which can include confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law and economic and social development.

Key standards and principles on which all forms of international peacekeeping mandates are based include:

- **International Human Rights Law** based on the the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **International Humanitarian Law** based on customary international law and treaty rules governing the conduct of armed conflict. The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols of 1977 form the core of this

body of law. The **Hague Convention** provides rules for how armed conflict is to be conducted (the law of war), whereas the **Geneva Conventions** provide rules relating to the protection and treatment of prisoners of war, the sick, and wounded as well as civilians (see chapter on human rights).

- **The UN Charter** gives the UN Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security, based on

the fundamental principle of non-discrimination. It requires that PSOs plan and implement strategies to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights for all, and that such plans and strategies take into account the different situations women face during and after armed conflict. This includes ensuring women's equal access to food, aid and the means of economic subsistence in addition to access to justice mechanisms and opportunities for political participation.

Peace Support Operations and Mandates in 2004¹

REGION	OPERATION COUNTRY	MANDATE
Africa	Burundi	Ceasefire monitoring; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)
	Cote d'Ivoire	Monitor ceasefire; DDR; protect UN personnel and local civilians; support humanitarian assistance; assist in human rights issues; support implementation of peace process; support law and order
	Liberia	Support implementation of ceasefire agreement and peace; assist in human rights issues; DDR, Security Sector Reform (SSR)
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Monitor implementation of ceasefire agreement; protect civilians under imminent threat; DDR
	Ethiopia/Eritrea	Monitor Cessation of Hostilities Agreement; support (administrative and logistical) Boundary Cooperation; demining to support demarcation
	Sierra Leone	Support implementation of peace agreement; DDR; support national government; support humanitarian assistance; support elections; provide security for airports, government buildings, and DDR sites; coordinate with and support national law enforcement authorities; protect civilians under imminent threat
	Western Sahara	Monitor ceasefire; oversee exchange of prisoners (ICRC); implement repatriation (UNHCR); identify qualified voters; organise free and fair referendum, and proclaim results
Americas	Haiti	Stabilisation operation: support transitional government to develop secure, stable environment; SSR; DDR; protection of civilians under imminent threat; assist restoration and maintenance of rule of law; support constitutional and political processes to foster democratic good governance; support and monitor free and fair elections; support transitional government to promote and protect human rights, particularly of women and children; monitor and report on human rights, including returning IDPs and refugees
Asia	East Timor	Assist until operational responsibilities are fully devolved to national authorities
	India/Pakistan	Monitor ceasefire
Europe	Cyprus	Supervise ceasefire; maintain buffer zone; undertake humanitarian activities

	Kosovo	Promote the establishment of self-government; coordinate humanitarian and disaster relief of all international agencies.
	Georgia/Abkhazia	Verify compliance with ceasefire agreement and separation of forces; protect and promote human rights
Middle East	Golan Heights	Maintain and monitor ceasefire between Israel and Syria
	Lebanon	Support national government to restore control and confirm withdrawal of Israeli forces
	Middle East region	Monitor ceasefires; supervise armistice agreements; prevent isolated incidents from escalating
Central Asia	Afghanistan	Support transitional government; monitor and support elections; monitor human rights ²

2. WHO CAN CALL FOR A PEACE SUPPORT OPERATION?

The international community usually looks to the **UN Security Council** to authorise PSOs, since it is responsible for this in accordance with the UN Charter. Governments or civil society representatives can request PSOs. Where there is no legitimate government in place, or in situations perceived to require an urgent response, the UN Security Council can act independently to protect civilians or international security.

Once a request has been made either in writing or by a representative government and/or civil society delegation, the UN Secretary General or head of the regional peacekeeping organisation will request the Security Council to assess and discuss the need for intervention and the legitimacy of the request. An assessment operation may precede or follow this debate. If Security Council members agree to act, a mandate will be drawn up for the peacekeeping intervention, a plan developed and resources allocated according to this mandate.

If concern for a specific country or region is raised by Security Council members, the same procedures will be followed. Outcomes may include negotiations with representatives of the country for potential UN peacekeeping involvement. This may result in a resolution requesting that country to meet certain standards of disarmament or protection of civilians within a set time. If those standards are not met within the timeframe, the Security Council will discuss potential intervention to ensure international protection standards are upheld. A second resolution

may then be passed endorsing intervention or extending the deadline for compliance.

There are frequently difficult situations such as in **Israel and Palestine**, where the Palestinian authority representatives have requested intervention and the Israeli government has blocked any UN intervention. In this situation, the UN has not intervened, but has made certain requests through a Security Council resolution on Israel to uphold international human rights protection standards with regard to their handling of Palestinian civilians.

A similar situation developed in **Sudan**, where civil society representatives were calling for UN intervention while the government was against international intervention. The UN Security Council's initial response was to draft a resolution requesting the Sudanese government to disarm the rebels in the north who were killing and displacing those from the south and to ensure the protection of all citizens according to international human rights and humanitarian conventions.

3. WHO IS INVOLVED IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS?

The **UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** is the implementing body for PSOs and the **UN Department for Political Affairs (DPA)** is usually the lead UN agency in political peacebuilding operations. The UN Secretary General (SG) directs and manages PSOs and reports to the Security Council on progress. UN PSOs are generally established as part of an overall UN

mission led by Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs).

A number of important regional bodies also engage in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**; the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**; the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**, which has been very active in eastern and central Europe and currently in **Afghanistan**; the **Organization of American States (OAS)** in Latin America; and the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** in the Caribbean.

These regional bodies are more culturally and economically appropriate than external organisations in many peacebuilding contexts. PSOs led by a regional organisation or a coalition of willing states are separate from the UN, but are often conducted in partnership with a UN mission. Their peacekeeping or peace enforcement functions are usually endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution. For example, in **Afghanistan**, the Security Council authorised an international coalition to maintain a military presence while setting up a UN political mission to support the transitional government. In this case, the military coalition presence was not under UN command but had UN endorsement. In contrast, the US- and UK-led military coalition intervention in **Iraq** in 2003 did not have the endorsement of the UN Security Council, which created tension within the international community and criticism of the unilateral action of states, undermining the authority of the UN.

PSOs have different components and personnel in accordance with the human resources needed to implement the mandate. All operations usually include a military component, an international civilian police component (CIVPOL) and civilian personnel, who may be responsible for issues such as monitoring the protection of human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, assisting in the drafting of new legislation and coordinating logistics. In addition, a range of international and local humanitarian personnel may be running food relief programmes, infrastructure support programmes, or refugee camps. International humanitarian personnel

are often coordinated by separate UN entities or other international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and may only liaise informally with the PSO.

THE RESOURCES FOR PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Member states of the UN or of the regional bodies are responsible for committing military personnel, civilian police and civilian personnel on a voluntary basis. Senior military officers and military observers are directly employed by the UN, usually on loan from their national armed forces. Civilian police officers serve on the same basis as experts on missions paid by the UN. Peacekeeping soldiers are paid by their own governments according to their own national rank and salary scale. Countries volunteering uniformed personnel to PSOs are reimbursed by the UN at a flat rate of a little over \$1,000 per soldier per month. Civilian police and other civilian personnel are paid from the peacekeeping budget established for the operation.³ The UN also reimburses countries for equipment.⁴ However, the UN or regional organisation is in turn dependent on the core contributions of their member states to cover these financial costs.

Researchers and peacebuilding experts have raised the concern that military forces from UN member states are not the appropriate personnel to be employed in PSOs, since they are trained to be aggressive. An additional concern is that some UN member states subcontract their commitment to provide peacekeepers to **private security companies**. These are legal companies, often run by former military personnel, that provide security and protection services to paying clients. The use of such companies in PSOs creates another layer of unclear lines of accountability and line management, as illustrated when an employee of one such company, the US-based DynCorp, was fired for reporting allegations that officials and personnel serving on the UN PSO in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)** were frequenting nightclubs that were part of a trafficking route and where women were being held against their will.⁵ The same company has subsequently been awarded a contract of \$50 million by the **US State Department** to provide police officers in **Iraq**.⁶

The use of private military and security companies has been increasingly debated in recent years, due in part to mercenary involvement in security companies.⁷

While there are international and regional conventions outlawing the use of mercenaries,⁸ the international legal framework has been slower in addressing private security companies. **The UN Commission on Human Rights** has taken steps recently to address this issue by passing a resolution on *The Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self-determination*.⁹ However, the human and financial resources required to monitor the implementation of this resolution have not been allocated.

To address issues of accountability, some peace advocates have proposed that the UN should train and equip an independent peacekeeping force, but this again would be dependent on donor government resource allocation.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS TO LOCAL POPULATIONS

Local communities often see the presence of a PSO as a show of concern by the international community for the safety, security and protection of civilians suffering in situations of violent conflict.

Local communities should be made aware of the mandate and role of the PSO through the local media. Most operations include a **public information office** responsible for handling public enquiries from local citizens and undertaking outreach functions. Sufficient resources should be allocated for the operation to work according to the mandate, and the head of the operation is required to submit reports regarding implementation of this mandate to the UN Security Council or regional peacekeeping body.

PSOs work according to agreements between the international organisation and the host state, called **Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs)**. Peacekeepers are also required to act according to established codes of conduct.¹⁰ This includes the **UN Peacekeepers Code of Conduct** and the **Peacekeeping Handbook for Junior Ranks**. However, both lack guidance or warnings as to the serious legal consequences of conduct which may amount to a serious crime, such as sexual exploitation or rape.¹¹ Military and civilian police participate in UN PSOs under terms carefully negotiated by their national government that volunteered them, and they remain under their government's authority. A gap exists in

standard codes of conduct that apply to all peacekeepers and humanitarian workers as well as monitoring adherence to existing codes. The only all-encompassing international justice system is the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. However, under UN Security Council Resolution 1422, peacekeepers from states that have not signed the ICC are exempt from its jurisdiction.

Every PSO has a **disciplinary office** or an **ombudsperson** that can be approached with complaints if abuse is experienced or witnessed by other peacekeepers or local community members. The **UN Inter-agency Standing Committee** has also established a **Task Force on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises**. The purpose of this Task Force is to develop recommendations aimed at eliminating sexual abuse and exploitation by humanitarian personnel through;

- development of common codes of conduct and standards of behaviour for humanitarian workers;
- capacity and mechanisms for protection against sexual exploitation and abuse; and
- improved mechanisms for delivering assistance.

Other studies on the protection of children in peacekeeping processes¹² emphasise the importance of PSOs in channeling the outcomes of reported violations by individual peacekeepers back to the parties involved.

Ensuring the protection of the human rights of civilians and conflict prevention are central to the UN Charter on which all peacekeeping mandates are based. The participation of civil society in these activities is crucial in terms of engagement and monitoring to ensure that the PSO is effective.

STRUCTURES IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS ADDRESSING GENDER AND WOMEN

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security mandates that women be consulted at all levels and all stages of peacebuilding processes. PSOs are an important part of this process. Of the sixteen UN DPKO-led PSOs active in 2004, nine have established positions for **Gender Advisers** or **Senior Gender Advisers**, seven of which were filled in mid-

“United Nations peace support operations must guarantee that the protection of women’s human rights is central to all actions that promote peace, implement peace agreements, resolve conflict and reconstruct war-torn societies.”

Sherrill Whittington, Former Chief, Gender Affairs Unit, UNTAET¹³

2004. These are personnel with expertise in methods and strategies for understanding, documenting and addressing the different impacts of conflict on men, women, boys and girls and who focus on these issues in the context of the PSO. Four other PSOs in 2004 had a **Gender Focal Point**.¹⁴ This is a person who is the contact point for gender issues, but they are not necessarily gender experts and usually perform another task in the PSO. These different gender positions have supported a range of activities including:

- continued gender-awareness training for peacekeeping personnel, who normally rotate on a six-month basis;
- training police on women’s human rights and CEDAW;
- initiatives to support the political participation of women in election processes; and
- consultation with local women on DDR initiatives and the specific needs of women and girls in this process.

In the PSO in **Sierra Leone**, the Gender Advisor was based in the Human Rights Unit; from this position she was able to set up a **Women’s Task Force on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, which focused on gender-based violence during conflict. One of the policy recommendations from the Task Force was that psychosocial support be provided to victims of gender-based violence. The Task Force also concentrated on the achievement of gender balance in the **Special Court and Truth and Reconciliation Commission**.¹⁵

Despite the existence of instruments to support gender-aware practices, more is needed to ensure that the issues are fully integrated into PSOs. Despite DPKO’s commitment to the implementation of Resolution 1325, **Gender Units** (a team of UN civilian personnel focusing on addressing the different needs of women, men, boys, and girls) have been incorporated into PSOs on an ad

hoc basis, often as a result of lobbying by civil society groups, supportive governments and UN Agencies such as the **Office for the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)** and the **United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**. Gender advisers and focal points often have few resources allocated to them and insufficient status, making the task even more difficult for individuals within the UN system who are committed to promoting women’s protection and participation. The 2002 UN operation in **Afghanistan** included the post of Senior Gender Adviser, but the position was filled only temporarily for two months and then downgraded to Gender Adviser. The Gender Unit to the UN operation in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** has consisted of a Senior Gender Adviser, two other professional Gender Adviser posts, as well as two UN volunteers and national staff. Although this is a relatively large gender unit, the staff have a vast country to cover in a situation where many different militia groups and combatants use gender-based violence as a systematic weapon of war and very little infrastructure exists to access victims or develop protection strategies.

The expectation, with the appointment of a Gender Adviser at the **UN DPKO Headquarters** in 2004, is that the task of gender mainstreaming throughout all PSOs will become more systematic. However, its success is largely dependent on the commitment of sufficient budgetary commitment from UN member states.

4. HOW DO PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS AFFECT WOMEN?

The arrival of a PSO brings with it resources, people and equipment intended to assist in supporting and securing sustainable peace. With the drafting of a peace agreement and the initiation of political processes such as the development of a new constitution and new accountable governance systems, potential is created for women’s support and engagement in equitable ways that were not possible prior to or during the conflict. There is a chance to redress social injustices and impunity for crimes committed during war. A PSO can support and monitor the passage of such processes, if women are able to collectively develop and communicate their priorities. In **East Timor**, the Gender Unit of the peacekeeping mission worked with local women’s

groups to draft legislation on domestic violence and increase the gender balance within the local police. In contrast to these positive effects, PSOs can also generate dependency on their human and economic resources and, if not managed well in terms of building local resources and capacity, violence can resurface with the departure of the PSO.

PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW AND GENDER JUSTICE

One example of what a PSO can do to support women is the promotion and development of a gender-equitable justice system. When PSOs are mandated to help strengthen or rebuild rule of law institutions and to establish administrative, legislative and judicial infrastructures, significant opportunities are created to strengthen access to and protection of gender-inclusive human rights and human security. In this context, promoting gender justice is a critical function of PSOs.

Gender justice is the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic and social rights on the basis of gender equality. Gender justice necessitates that the rights themselves cover the specific gender needs of men, women, boys and girls and that all have equal access to these rights irrespective of gender.

The International Community recognises **gender-based violence**, including rape and sexual torture of women and girls, as a weapon of war. In the southern part of the South Kivus in Eastern **DRC**, there are villages where local women's networks¹⁶ have reported that all the women and girls have been systematically raped by different militia groups.¹⁷ Such atrocities impact the individual, household relations and the whole community. Critical medical, economic and psychosocial needs can be addressed by PSO outreach initiatives in such situations. It is also important that these cases of abuse are documented and followed through to ensure non-impunity of those responsible for such violations. It is vital that outreach initiatives and UN fact-finding missions include consultation with women's groups to understand their perceptions of the conflict situation and their priorities for addressing them.

PSOs can and must foster a culture of gender justice and accountability in the implementation of their

mandates in the communities in which they operate. At a minimum, this means avoiding compounding gender inequalities that exist already. This approach is supported if a peacekeeping operation has a Gender Adviser, Gender Focal Point or Gender Unit to monitor and ensure a gender-aware approach and sensitivity in all aspects of the operation.

NEGATIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The arrival of a PSO has considerable impact on the local economy. The salaries of peacekeepers are generally well above those of the community, and local entrepreneurs have been seen to adjust prices for accommodation and goods accordingly to increase their profits. This in turn may be negative for the local population, which can no longer afford such facilities and goods. A situation of dire poverty, which is most often associated with conflict-affected regions, also encourages desperate means of survival. For women and girls this has sometimes culminated in forced prostitution. Unfortunately, since PSOs are largely composed of unaccompanied men earning significantly more money than local nationals, this provides many potential prostitution clients and further entrenches prostitution as a sustained survival opportunity. A study by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in 1995 found that the incidence of rape and prostitution falls significantly, with the presence of women personnel in PSOs.²⁴

PSOs have also been described as vectors for the spread of HIV/AIDS (see chapter on HIV/AIDS). A local community in **Mozambique** in the conflict-affected border areas with **South Africa** claimed that **Zambian** peacekeepers brought HIV/AIDS into their rural communities.²⁵ The number of prostitutes in Phnom Penh reportedly rose from 6,000 to 20,000 during the UN peacekeeping operation in **Cambodia**. One troop-contributing country found that 25 percent of its peacekeepers were HIV positive upon their return home.²⁶ The UN has mainly focused on protecting peacekeepers from contracting the virus by encouraging condom use and abstinence. However, Resolution 1308 and especially 1325 mention the need to address the issue of local women being infected by peacekeepers and HIV/AIDS awareness in general through peacekeeping interventions.

The Challenges of Building a Culture of Gender Justice and Accountability through Peace Support Operations: East Timor and Kosovo

The PSOs in **East Timor (UNTAET)** and **Kosovo (UNMIK)** have been multifaceted operations in which the UN has executive governing authority. The operations have involved assisting in the restructuring of police and military forces, capacity building for the judiciaries, electoral assistance and the drafting of a new constitution. In both situations, the legal instruments establishing the authority of the interim administrations included the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** among the guiding human rights instruments to be applied by the governing bodies.¹⁸

Efforts to bring a gender perspective to the work of the **Serious Crimes Unit** were undertaken. In **Kosovo** this included forming a **Gender-Related Crime Team** linked to the **Serious Crimes Investigation Unit**. This team investigated sexual and gender violence committed as part of the widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population during the 1999 violence. This has resulted in several indictments, including for acts of rape and sexual violence.¹⁹

The UNTAET operation was characterised by close interaction with the local population and especially women's groups. Local women successfully lobbied for the Gender Unit when UN financial backing for it was not initially allocated.²⁰ Once in place, the Gender Unit organised consultations, workshops and training with women's groups and incorporated the Women's Platform for Action, adopted by women's groups after the end of the conflict, as part of its work plan. The unit worked to help women gain a strategic foothold and supported their involvement in legislative and electoral processes, drafting key policy documents and using the framework of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and later Security Council Resolution 1325. The unit later became the **National Department for Women**, once governance was officially handed over to the East Timor government.

Gender-sensitive provisions in the Constitution were among the successes of the unit and its local partners that established the Women and Constitution Working Group. In association with the Gender Unit, the Working Group held consultations throughout **East Timor** on basic issues of concern to women. This process yielded a Women's Charter of Rights.

Other rule of law initiatives supported by the Gender Unit included the establishment of a Gender and Law Working Group that brought legal professionals and civil society experts together with gender focal points to review and advocate for legislation in accordance with international human rights norms from a gender perspective. The unit also helped organise and support gender training for the judiciary and other legal and law enforcement professionals.

In contrast, in **Kosovo**, UNMIK was widely criticised by women's groups for marginalising women's voices and further jeopardising an already precarious situation in the post conflict scenario. One example was the use of many UN officials of *Leke Dukagjini*, a source of customary law in Kosovo dating back to the sixteenth century, as opposed to reviewing contemporary legislation drafted during the Socialist era.²¹ *Leke Dukagjini* promoted situations that are in direct contravention to CEDAW, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, as well as other international and regional human rights instruments. The code also made it difficult for women to own and inherit property and further characterised children as the property of the father and stated that if the father dies, his family inherits the offspring. Women's groups reported that several UN officials were referring to this source of customary law for guidance in implementing their mandate in Kosovo.²² In one incident a UN official argued with women advocates that Kosovo wasn't ready to recognise women's rights.²³

Financial and Legal Responsibility for “UN Children”²⁷

To date, the UN has not taken steps to address the issue of children conceived by personnel serving in UN missions. The issue of children being fathered by military troops serving away from home has been well documented (see chapter on children’s security).²⁸ In **Cambodia**, estimates place the number of children fathered by UN peacekeepers at 25,000.²⁹ In **Liberia**, the prevalence of children fathered by peacekeepers was considered so serious that several NGOs were established to deal with the matter. Estimates vary, but some reports project that at a minimum 6,600 children were fathered by soldiers serving in the UN Observer mission in **Liberia**.³⁰

Often the mothers and the children born of these encounters face persecution, scorn and stigma in their communities subsequent to the departure of a PSO. There are a myriad of political, psychological, economic and social issues for the children abandoned by their UN fathers, including rights of nationality. Abandonment of children is a direct violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.³¹

Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

Human trafficking is illegal and in this respect differs from prostitution, which is legal in many countries. Trafficking is a serious form of exploitation and abuse that constitutes a gross violation of fundamental human rights. Victims are primarily women and girls.

Trafficking refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, use of power or position of vulnerability or giving payments or benefits for control of another person. – UN PROTOCOL TO PREVENT, SUPPRESS AND PUNISH TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, 2003

There have even been instances of UN personnel acting as traffickers or using trafficked women for prostitution. Trafficking is driven by a variety of factors including:

- poverty and desperation among local populations (particularly young women);
- organised criminal networks involved in human trafficking (especially for the sex trade);
- lack of systematic accountability or penalties for peacekeepers violating their code of conduct; and
- no application of anti-trafficking policies by the peacekeeping operation.

A weakness in the system is that UN personnel are above the local law. Personnel caught trafficking or

committing any other crime are sent home to their country of origin. The choice of whether to pursue legal proceedings and punishment is left to their country of repatriation.

The DPKO has recognised that PSOs trigger human trafficking rings in the regions in which they operate because of the mass influx of a relatively wealthy, predominantly male peacekeeper population potentially interested in purchasing sexual and other services from trafficked women and girls. Recognition of this reality has led DPKO to start developing strategies to pre-empt and prevent trafficking. Efforts are being made in some operations to appoint an **Anti-Trafficking Focal Point** and to encourage a systematic approach of reporting to ensure that victims are protected. In **Kosovo**, a **Trafficking and Prostitution Investigation Unit** was established in 2000 within UNMIK police, composed of international police and members of the Kosovo Police Service. Local women’s groups have played a critical role in monitoring trafficking incidences in their communities and reporting abuses to the Anti-trafficking Focal Point or the Personnel Conduct Officer in the PSO.

In the PSO in **Liberia** (UNMIL), the **UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL)** appointed a female trafficking officer with a team of seven CIVPOL officers. The trafficking officer and her staff raided nightclubs and rescued women and girls who had been trafficked. However, the NGO **Refugees International** reported that there were no follow-up procedures to protect women who choose to testify against the traffickers or

assistance for the women in terms of temporary shelter and repatriation.³² The trafficked women were being handed over to local NGOs, who did not have sufficient resources to support or protect them. Local NGOs also raised the concern that the trafficking task force was all male, apart from the head trafficking officer. This did not encourage trafficked women to speak openly about the sexual and other abuses they may have experienced. To address these concerns Refugees International recommended that:

- UNMIL modify its law enforcement approach to human trafficking by working more collaboratively with NGOs and supporting organisations, in compliance with UN policy;
- UNMIL immediately appoint a community focal point for sexual exploitation and provide this person with adequate staff support and resources. Disciplinary action should be enforced for those found guilty;
- the Special Representative of the Secretary General instruct the CIVPOL trafficking officer to follow all UN policies regarding human trafficking;
- UNMIL begin sensitising CIVPOL and other staff on the many dimensions of trafficking;
- CIVPOL ensure that any interviews with women be conducted in a safe and secure environment by a female police officer;
- CIVPOL recruit more women officers to work on its trafficking team; and
- CIVPOL begin working with other organisations to address the issue of Liberians working in brothels and to provide them with equal access to protection.

It can be difficult to gather enough evidence to substantiate an allegation of sexual exploitation, whether through trafficking or forced prostitution. Victims are often pressured by their families to keep quiet. It is extremely difficult to investigate allegations and to maintain the victim's right to protection and privacy, as well as an employee's right to due process. The head of the PSO in Liberia was explicit about a "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation.³³ He emphasised repeatedly that any member of the UN community who was caught having sex with someone under 18 would be repatriated. To address problems with trafficking, UNMIL also made some notorious

nightspots off limits and enforced a midnight curfew for UN staff.³⁴ Despite these strict prevention initiatives the head of operation expressed his frustration at not being able to follow through cases of abuse beyond making recommendations to DPKO. He did not know what happened when the peacekeepers were sent back to their home country.

In the UN PSO in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (MONUC), the Senior Gender Adviser's Office cooperated closely with the Senior External Affairs Officer to address allegations of sexual exploitation of Congolese women and girls by UN peacekeepers.³⁵

States that contribute peacekeepers must ensure that personnel are:

- trained in trafficking and sexual exploitation issues;
- able to recognise its occurrence;
- aware of the anti-trafficking laws and policies that exist;
- familiar with accountability mechanisms that exist if they engage in abusing locals;
- checked for their own criminal record; and
- part of the solution and not the source of the problem.

DPKO has developed manuals for sexual exploitation awareness for pre-deployment training of all staff. DPKO should assist by sending gender and trainers to countries that lack this facility and the training should be followed up at regular intervals. Methods to improve managerial approaches in PSOs, using personnel conduct officers and safety and security personnel, are being developed by DPKO. Efforts are also being made to build stronger capacities for criminal investigations and follow-up of breaches at all levels.³⁶

These efforts are commendable. However, there is still a need for an overarching systematic accountability mechanism for the various actors involved in PSOs (civilian police, military police, military, private security and humanitarian workers). In practice, there is little consistency on how and why cases are selected and what action is taken to follow-up allegations of abuse, or punishment of individuals found guilty of committing abuses. Clear transparent

mechanisms are required for reporting, analysing and investigating disciplinary matters. The conduct of disciplinary proceedings and follow-up in PSOs at headquarters and with member states require strengthening at all levels.

5. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO PEACEKEEPING?

Women as Decision-Makers: Women can play an important role in determining the mandate and scope of PSOs. In **South Africa**, women parliamentarians got involved during post-apartheid discussions on the country's role in peacekeeping. Their influence helped expand the definition of peacekeeping operations beyond the traditional deployment of troops, to incorporate a more holistic, human security approach. The South African Deputy Minister of Defence has drawn attention to the contributions of women policy-makers: "Women have contributed to the fact that you have to assist with reconstruction...with the rebuilding of communities where there has been violence. In order to have lasting peace, you have to get involved in the development of that country."³⁷

Women as Peacekeepers: There are fewer women involved in PSOs than men, particularly in military and civilian police forces. At the end of 2003, women represented 25 percent of civilian professional staff, 4 percent of civilian police, and 1.5 percent of military personnel.³⁸ This low representation is mainly due to the lack of flexibility to move to a foreign location at short notice, based on women's usual role as primary caregivers in the home. There has also been a past bias to employ men in positions seen as being "too dangerous" for women, as well as a lack of political will to place women in senior positions in PSOs.

Research has nevertheless shown that women have a key role to play in peacekeeping situations.³⁹ This is particularly evident in their engagement with local communities. Victims of sexual abuse feel more comfortable and willing to come forward when faced with a woman civilian police officer. In some cultures, women are strictly prohibited from talking to men who are not male relatives. This can pose a security risk to the woman or any male peacekeeper involved. In view of the need for outreach that

includes women, the presence of women peacekeepers is critical to ensuring that women's perspectives and experiences are known. This has been evident in **Afghanistan** and **Somalia**.

Some of the specific and critical capacities of women peacekeepers were highlighted by a senior female military member of staff at the DPKO. These roles include:

- participating in the design, writing and inception of mandates to ensure there is explicit attention to women's specific support needs;
- training by women civilian police for new police forces in order to set a critical example to the local population; and
- female public information officers ensuring that the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-specific information addresses the information needs of local women.⁴⁰

Additionally, international studies on women and policing have found that across cultures, women police officers have the following positive attributes. They

- use force less frequently than their male counterparts;
- are less authoritarian when interacting with citizens and lower-ranking officers;
- have better communication and negotiation skills;
- are more likely than male officers to diffuse potentially violent situations;
- respond more effectively to violence committed against women; and
- have significantly lower rates of complaints of conduct, improper use of force or inappropriate use of weapons.⁴¹

Women peacekeepers are also seen as role models, encouraging greater gender balance in emergent democracies. When a Jamaican woman led the UN Observer Operation to **South Africa**, the presence of a black woman leading the operation was an important signal for local actors, particularly the women, who found it empowering and encouraging. The operation had 46 percent women, and studies indicate that they were effective at establishing trust with local

communities.⁴² The PSO in **Guatemala (MINUGUA)** experienced similar success, where the proportion of women to men was just under 50 percent.⁴³

Despite the fact that technological innovations have changed the nature of contemporary warfare, making old-fashioned close combat less likely and leaving the role of the modern soldier more gender neutral, women are underrepresented in all NATO militaries, especially in senior ranks.⁴⁴ In recognition of the crucial gender-specific role played by women in peacekeeping situations, some countries have attempted to further encourage women to join their peacekeeping personnel. In **Norway**, as part of the Defence Ministry's strategy for gender equality, extensive mentoring programmes were launched to encourage women to compete for senior positions in the armed forces. **Belgium** and the **Netherlands** are experimenting with opportunities for part-time work to make it easier for mothers of young children. A recently published family policy action plan for Norwegian armed forces focuses on support for families with members deployed on international operations. In **Denmark**, personnel are given a great deal of control over their work assignments and duty cycle to minimise strains on family life, including taking a temporary downgrading without jeopardising future career possibilities. **The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)** peacekeeping branch is conducting studies into why Canadian women officers do or do not volunteer for peacekeeping duties.⁴⁵ It is important that other militaries and police forces apply similar strategies.

Women in Civil Society: There are a number of examples of women's networks and organisations engaging with peacekeeping issues. At the international level, the UN-focused NGO **Working Group on Women, Peace and Security**⁴⁶ has:

- supplied lists of women's organisations to Security Council fact-finding missions in the DRC, Burundi, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Liberia;
- given input to gender briefs for PSOs and mandate development;
- with supportive UN member states, jointly facilitated two Security Council Working Roundtable Discussion on Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; and

- facilitated Arria Formula meetings, enabling women from conflict-affected regions which the Security Council is focusing on to speak directly to the Security Council about their priorities.

At the regional level, the **Caucasus Women's League** has written a statement to the UN Secretary General to consider the specific protection needs and human rights of women residing in unrecognised states, requesting a woman SRSG for the PSO in the region. **Femmes Africa Solidarité** has been engaging with the African Union in drafting a gender statement, which also integrates gender considerations for peacekeeping. In **Rwanda**, women ex-combatants from the association **Ndabaga** have asked for a role in regional peacekeeping operations in Africa, pointing specifically to the recent Rwandan government's commitment to support regional peacekeeping operations by sending soldiers to help protect African Union ceasefire monitors. They have urged that ex-combatant women be included in such operations; because of their experience of warfare and its particular impacts on women, and their interest in assisting women in conflict situations.⁴⁷

At the national level, the women's organisation **Kvinna til Kvinna** was involved in training peacekeepers on gender awareness and women's rights in the PSO in **Bosnia**. Women's organisations in **East Timor** requested UN support for a fully resourced gender unit in the peacekeeping operation. Once this unit was successfully established, women went further, working with the gender unit to ensure that the constitution and new legal system were gender equitable. In the **DRC**, women's groups are working with the gender unit and the human rights unit, sharing their documentation of cases of abuse and rape.

6. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST?

Within the UN system and among member states, there are small pockets of experts who recognise the important role that women can play in peacekeeping and PSOs. There is also increasing understanding of the negative effect that male-dominated PSOs can have on local populations. With regard to PSOs, in **Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security** (2000) the Security Council:

- calls for an expanded role for women in UN field-based operations and especially among military observers, civilian police and human rights and humanitarian personnel;
- expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into PSOs;
- urges the Secretary General to ensure that field operations include a gender component;
- requests the Secretary General to provide member states with training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures;
- invites member states to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment; and
- requests the Secretary General to ensure that civilian personnel of PSOs receive similar training.

In the **Beijing Plus Five** review of the Platform for Action, UN member states again committed themselves to provide gender-sensitive training to all actors in PSOs. The “institutionalisation of women’s participation” in peacekeeping and conflict resolution was identified as the biggest challenge and it was seen as important and strategic for member states to promote women in peacekeeping through high-level assignments.

The Windhoek Declaration Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000) preceded Resolution 1325 and provided detailed recommendations for integrating gender into areas of:

- negotiations in furtherance of a ceasefire and/or peace agreements;
 - mandates;
 - leadership;
 - planning, structure and resources of missions;
 - recruitment;
 - training;
 - procedures monitoring, evaluation and accountability; and
 - public awareness
- The declaration is based on the understanding that to ensure the effectiveness of PSOs, the principles of gender equality must permeate the entire mission at all levels, thus ensuring the participation of women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries in all aspects of the peace process, from peacekeeping, reconciliation and peacebuilding, to a situation of political stability in which women and men play an equal part in the political, economic and social development of their country. The declaration makes concrete recommendations.
- The initial assessment mission for any PSO should include a senior adviser on gender mainstreaming.
 - All mandates for PSOs should refer to the CEDAW, as well as other relevant international legal instruments.
 - Follow-up mechanisms should be established within the mission’s mandate to fully implement gender-mainstreaming in the post conflict reconstruction period.
 - Obligatory induction training with regard to gender issues held upon arrival at mission areas should include:
 - a code of conduct;
 - culture, history and social norms of the host country;
 - CEDAW; and
 - handling of sexual harassment and sexual assault cases.
 - Accountability for all issues relating to gender mainstreaming at the field level should be vested at the highest level, in the Secretary General’s Special Representative, who should be assigned the responsibility of ensuring that gender mainstreaming is implemented in all areas and components of the mission.
 - The current format of reporting, particularly situation reports and periodic reports of the Secretary General, should include progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions.
 - All possible means should be employed to increase public awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in PSOs. In this connection, the media should play a significant and positive role.

Resolution 1325 requested the UN Secretary General to submit a report on the progress towards implementation in 2002. This **UN Secretary General's Report on Women, Peace and Security (2002)** made further recommendations for action with regards to peacekeeping:

- Action 10: Incorporate gender perspectives explicitly into mandates of all peacekeeping missions, including provisions to systematically address this issue in all reports to the Security Council.
- Action 11: Require that data collected in research, assessments and appraisals, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on peace operations is systematically disaggregated by sex and age and that specific data on the situation of women and girls and the impact of interventions on them is provided.
- Action 12: Ensure necessary financial and human resources for gender mainstreaming, including the establishment of gender advisers/units in multidimensional PSOs and capacity-building activities, as well as targeted projects for women and girls as part of approved mission budgets.

The European Parliament Resolution on Gender Aspects of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding (2000) covers a number of areas to ensure the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected regions. In the context of peacekeeping, emphasis is placed on the need to increase the number of women peacekeepers to improve relations with the local community. The resolution covers three areas for implementation:

- the protection of war-affected populations;
- international efforts to prevent and solve armed conflicts; and
- community-based participation in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts.

Under *International Efforts to Prevent and Solve Armed Conflicts*, the section that most relates to peacekeeping, an increased use of non-military methods of crisis management is promoted, and accordingly it calls on member states and the **European Commission** to:

- recruit more women in diplomatic services;
- nominate more women to international diplomatic assignments and senior positions within the UN and

increase the percentage of women in delegations to national, regional, and international meetings concerned with peace and security;

- ensure that at least 40 percent of women hold posts in reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacebuilding and conflict prevention;
- undertake systematic gender analysis as an integral part of planning reconstruction efforts and external interventions; and
- promote the establishment of national machinery for gender equality within governments through a **Ministry of Women's Affairs**, a **Gender Desk**, or an **Office of the Status of Women**.

Under "Community-based Participation in the Prevention and Resolution of Armed Conflicts," the Resolution stresses the importance of local involvement and ownership of the peace and reconciliation process and in this regard calls upon member states and the Commission to:

- support the creation and strengthening of NGOs and ensure that the warring factions incorporate civil society representatives—50 percent of whom should be women—into their peace negotiation teams;
- promote public debate in post conflict regions concerning gender-based abuses, ensuring that men and women benefit from external reconstruction initiatives in the process; and
- pay particular attention to the specific rehabilitation needs of girl soldiers.⁴⁸

Despite the existence of these international policies and a number of other regional policies supporting gender awareness in peacekeeping, there have been no systematic implementation efforts.

7. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

At international and regional levels, women can call for:

1. the inclusion of gender-specific needs into all mandates for PSOs and resolutions;

2. gender units to be an integral and well-resourced component of all PSOs;
3. gender expertise to be a necessary requirement for all heads of peacekeeping operations;
4. states contributing peacekeepers to ensure that all peacekeepers receive mandatory training in human rights and the protection of civilians, in particular the specific protection needs of women from gender-based violence;
5. states contributing peacekeepers to encourage the deployment of women peacekeepers and heads of operation;
6. international bodies responsible for PSOs to ensure that international legal standards relating to sexual and gender violence are included in standard interim criminal codes for use by transitional authorities providing civilian police functions and protection for the local population;
7. all peacekeeping fact-finding missions and in-country PSOs to consult with women's organisations and build on women's peace-building initiatives, as mandated in UN Security Council Resolution 1325; and
8. the international media to cover the specific experiences and perspectives of women and girls in all countries where there are active PSOs.

the Gender Unit, focal point, human rights component or NGO liaison officer. In terms of specific action women can:

1. insist that PSOs consult with local women's organisations and that they support local peacebuilding initiatives as requested in Resolution 1325;
2. educate civil society on the role and responsibility of the peacekeeping operation in their country;
3. document and report any abuse to the ombudsperson, disciplinary officer, gender unit or human rights unit. If these do not exist, women can collaborate to call for an accountability mechanism from the head of the operation or approach the local, national and international media;
4. get involved in the gender-awareness training of peacekeepers in the context of their country and the conflict situation;
5. report any issues of trafficking in humans to the office of the head of the operation or ombudsperson;
6. get involved with the planning of DDR initiatives to ensure that gender-specific considerations are properly supported, particularly the reintegration needs of women and girl combatants, dependents, widows and communities to which the combatants are being reintegrated (see section on DDR);

Additionally, gender checklists can be provided for the drafting of mandates and resolutions relating to PSOs either according to a country-specific context or an issue specific context. Such checklists could be channeled to the Security Council through the **UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)**, the **UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**, or the UN-focused NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. For specific country contexts, it is also important that fact-finding operations of the Security Council have contact details for representative women's organisations and consult with them. These contact lists can also be channeled to the UN system through the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

7. report any issues not being acceptably addressed by the peacekeeping operation to the UN-focused NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and develop collaborative multilevel advocacy strategies to change the situation;
8. work with Gender Units to ensure they are consulted and included in all formal and informal peace processes facilitated by the peacekeeping operation. They can call for regular meetings, briefings, and appropriate media dissemination of information in the local language; and
9. call for a visit and report from the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and refer issues of abuse and violence to national CEDAW reporting focal points.

At national and local levels, women's organisations can make contact with the peacekeeping operation through

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women United Nations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MINUGUA	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organization of American States
OSAGI	Office for the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women of the United Nations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PSO	Peace Support Operations
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreements
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

ENDNOTES

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46. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security members currently: Amnesty International; Femmes Africa Solidarité; Hague Appeal for Peace; International Alert; International Women's Tribune Center; Women's Action for New Directions; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.
47. Pasqual, Leigh. "Rwandan female ex-combatants can play important role in peacekeeping." New York: UNIFEM, 2004.
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Post Conflict Reconstruction

SANAM NARAGHI ANDERLINI AND JUDY EL-BUSHRA

While conflict is ongoing, the provision of humanitarian assistance—basic food, shelter and medical services—is a priority for both national and international actors. The signing of a peace agreement or other event that marks the official end of war signals the beginning of post conflict reconstruction. Large bilateral or multilateral agencies arrive to work with national governments, and to manage and disburse most funds for social and economic reconstruction. This transition from war to peace is not smooth. More often than not “emergency relief, rehabilitation work and development assistance co-exist...and interact.”¹ When peace agreements hold and military violence subsides, the focus of aid shifts from emergency relief to long-term social and economic development.

Among international donors, there is widespread understanding that social and economic reconstruction in the immediate post conflict phase—often known as the transition phase—is not only a key to preventing a recurrence of conflict, but is also a critical step toward long-term development. In 2002 a consortium of international actors, including the **Center for Strategic and International Studies**, published the Post Conflict Reconstruction Framework.² The Framework identifies three phases of activity between the “cessation of violent conflict and the return to normalisation.”³ While overlapping and not always consistent, the phases (noted below) are helpful in identifying priorities and understanding the continuum from war to peace.

1. The **initial response** comes immediately after the end of widespread violence and is characterised by the provision of emergency humanitarian services, stability and military interventions to provide basic security. Internationally such responses also include the deployment of peacekeepers (See chapter on peace support operations).
2. The **transformation or transition** phase is a period in which legitimate local capacities emerge and should be supported, with particular attention needed for restarting the economy, including physical reconstruction, ensuring functional structures for governance and judicial

processes and laying the foundations for the provision of basic social welfare such as education and health care.

3. The **final phase** or the period for **fostering sustainability** is a time when recovery efforts should be consolidated to help prevent the resurgence of conflict. Military actors—particularly international peacekeepers—withdraw and society begins to “normalise” during this phase.

The critical role of local populations in post conflict reconstruction is often overshadowed by the arrival of major international actors, but there is acknowledgment that ultimately effective and sustainable reconstruction is largely determined by the commitment and capacities of local populations, including national government and civil society, to maintain the process. Increasingly, international actors are reaching out to local organisations in partnership for reconstruction efforts. Yet, often women and grassroots groups at the front lines of recovery are marginalised and excluded. This chapter, although not definitive, offers an overview of the policies and practices of the international community as they engage in post conflict reconstruction. Broadly speaking, this includes addressing security, governance and justice issues as well as economic development and social well-being. However, as other chapters of this Toolkit are dedicated to many of these issues, this chapter

focuses on economic regeneration. It highlights the impact of policies and programmes on women, the challenges and opportunities they encounter in establishing social and economic reforms that meet their needs and the ways in which women's organisations have overcome these problems.

1. WHAT IS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION?

The social and economic dimensions of reconstruction include re-establishing the functional components of society, including:

- restoring **internal security**, including the reintegration of uprooted populations, and disarming, demobilising and reintegrating former combatants (see related chapters);
- building administrative and **governance capacities** (see chapter on governance);
- repairing **physical infrastructure**, including building homes, roads and bridges; restoring water, electricity and fuel supplies; repairing schools, markets and hospitals; recruiting personnel; and providing the training necessary for operations and maintenance;
- establishing functioning **financial infrastructures and economic restructuring**. This includes creating a credible banking and financial system; fiscal planning and budgets; restoring an economic base drawing on traditional agricultural or pastoral production and existing industries; and creating an environment conducive to generating new sources of income and economic growth. It also includes the provision of loans and grants to businesses or new ventures, skills training, development of new industries and commerce and eliminating criminality and the control of armed actors over important sectors of the economy;
- establishing a credible and functioning **judicial system**, including processes for drafting legislation, reforming courts and judicial processes, recruiting personnel, providing training and initiating a national legal literacy program (see chapters on transitional justice and human rights); and

- ensuring **social well-being**, including the health care needs of the population, (e.g. food security, providing basic social services and rebuilding education systems).

Clearly these issues are not unique to post conflict settings, but the phase of conflict can determine the primary actors, the type of assistance most needed and what can be provided.

2. WHO AND WHAT IS INVOLVED IN POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION?

Societies emerging from conflict have become a growing concern for many international donors. There is awareness that while war has ended, peace, especially sustainable peace, is not so easily forthcoming. Dire poverty, ongoing ethnic, political or religious rivalry, the proliferation of arms, non-existent governments and infrastructure all pose tremendous threats that can easily lead a country back into war. Simultaneously and despite the overwhelming challenges, the post conflict period is also a period of hope and opportunity. Coming after years or even decades of fighting, it is a time—albeit brief—when financial and technical resources are available to help address the root causes of war and shape the future of a nation.

At the international level, there is acknowledgement that in many cases, “winning the peace” poses a bigger challenge than winning the war and that nation-building is a complex and long-term process. There is also understanding that no single institution can address every issue.

THE ACTORS

Many of the key actors involved in post conflict reconstruction are listed below. Although in the majority of cases, as noted, they have specific policies on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women, these policies often are not effectively implemented at the field level.

1. **The World Bank Group** comprises five institutions and is owned by governments of 184 member nations. The US is the largest shareholder, holding just over 16 percent of the votes. It includes:⁴

- the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, which focuses on poverty reduction through loans, guarantees and advisory services to middle-income credit-worthy countries;
- the **International Development Association (IDA)**, which provides interest-free loans to the world's 81 poorest nations;
- the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, which promotes economic development by supporting the private sector;
- the **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency**, which encourages foreign investment in poor countries by providing guarantees against non-commercial losses (e.g. as a result of war); and
- the **International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)**, which encourages foreign investment by providing arbitration and mediation services in case of disputes.

The World Bank specifically refers to the IBRD and the IDA. The **country director** leads its offices in each country and has primary responsibility for developing a **Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)**. The CAS is a 3-year plan that defines the priority areas for investments, technical assistance and activity for the Bank.

Since the 1990s, the World Bank has become increasingly involved in post conflict aid activities. Between 1980 and 1998 the Bank's lending to post conflict countries increased by 800 percent, which represented 16 percent of the Bank's total lending activity that year. More recent figures indicate that World Bank assistance to post conflict countries amounts to some 25 percent of its lending; in 2003 that amounted to \$18.5 billion.⁵ In part this increase is due to the surge in conflicts immediately after the end of the Cold War and thus to an increase in the number of countries that could be categorised as "post conflict" in subsequent years. But it is also due to increased involvement by the Bank in such situations. The Bank is also increasingly providing aid in grant form rather than as loans to post conflict countries.

The Bank also has a **Post Conflict Fund (PCF)** that gives grants for social and physical reconstruction.

It is administered by the **Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit**. In 2003 alone, \$13 million was disbursed through the Fund. The Fund accepts applications from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups in conflict regions, but uses World Bank country offices to assess the viability of requests. The country offices must endorse and recommend applicants to the PCF.

The World Bank's policies on gender equality state:

- Persistent gender disparities hamper economic efficiency and growth; and
- Public policy can make a difference in closing the gender gap.

The Bank's gender policy aims to reduce gender disparities and enhance women's participation in the economic development of member countries. To this end, the Bank—through its analytical work, policy advice, and lending programmes—assists member countries to:

- review and modify, as necessary, the legal and regulatory framework;
- strengthen the database for gender analysis;
- obtain necessary financing to support these policies and programs; and
- design gender-sensitive policies and programmes by:
 - identifying barriers women face;
 - assessing the costs and benefits of strategies to address these barriers;
 - ensuring effective programme implementation; and
 - establishing effective gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation systems.

To analyse gender issues in each country, the Bank uses country poverty and gender assessments, public expenditure reviews, other economic work, and in-country dialogue. The analysis is meant to be incorporated into the country assistance strategy and reflected in the lending programme.⁶

2. **Region-Specific Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)** are institutions that provide financial assistance and professional advice to countries

for economic and social development regionally. The term MDB is used to refer to the World Bank Group and four regional banks:

- the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** focuses on development in Africa;
- the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** focuses on poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific;
- the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** invests in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and a number of states of the former Soviet Union; and
- the **Inter-American Development Bank Group (IADB)** finances development efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. **The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Relief (OCHA)** is the **United Nations (UN)** focal point for responding to complex emergencies and natural disasters. OCHA has a mandate to coordinate humanitarian responses, develop policies and undertake advocacy. OCHA coordinates its work through the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** that includes many of the UN's key agencies with humanitarian NGOs and the **International Committee of the Red Cross** movement. OCHA is not involved in day-to-day operations, but it does coordinate:

- the development of a common strategy for humanitarian aid among its partners on the ground;
- situation and needs assessments—in a crisis, OCHA's job “is to 1) identify overall humanitarian needs; 2) develop a realistic plan of action ...that avoids duplication; and 3) monitor progress and adjust programmes accordingly;”⁷
- networking and meetings among key actors so that experiences and information are shared and there is increased transparency and accountability among actors;
- mobilising resources—particularly through the Consolidated Appeals Process, which identifies priorities for funding and is a cost-effective means of reaching major donors;
- addressing problems in the midst of crisis. When other agencies or NGOs do not have a

mandate, OCHA takes the lead in resolving problems (e.g. negotiating with warring parties to provide humanitarian aid to civilians); and

- the use of tools and mechanisms to improve coordination among agencies. For example, OCHA is responsible for “early warning analysis” to track potential humanitarian crises. It uses a methodology based on early warning indicators to identify potential crises, resurgence of conflict, or deterioration of situations (see chapter on conflict prevention).⁸

4. **The UN Development Programme (UNDP)** is the prime UN agency addressing development issues, particularly focusing on democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, sustainable energy and environment and HIV/AIDS. Given UNDP's presence in countries often before, during and after crises and conflicts, the agency's **Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery** has become a lead actor in post conflict transition states. Its goal is to coordinate UN efforts on the ground and it plays a leading role in UN missions that help determine the priorities for the social and economic reconstruction of a country. UNDP is also a member of the IASC (see above).

Traditionally, UNDP has focused most of its work on partnership with national or governmental entities, but it is also a prime partner and donor to civil society organisations, including national NGOs and local community-based organisations. In **Nepal**, UNDP established a \$2.6 million trust fund, financed by external donors, to strengthen civil society organisations in their efforts to rebuild societies affected by violence.⁹

UNDP offices worldwide are led by **Resident Representatives (Res Reps)**, who are responsible for consulting with UN agencies and international actors, and working collaboratively with national government and civil society actors, in identifying development priorities and initiating, implementing and evaluating in-country programmes. UNDP is the leader in formulating the **UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)** for any country. Typically this lays out policy and programme priorities for a five-year period.

UNDP's policies on gender state that: "Making gender equality a reality is a core commitment of UNDP. As a crosscutting issue, gender must be addressed in everything the organisation does. Why? Because equality between women and men is just, fair and right—it is a worthy goal in and of itself, one that lies at the heart of human development and human rights. And because gender inequality is an obstacle to progress, a roadblock on the path of human development. When development is not 'en-gendered' it is 'endangered'.... There are two complementary approaches to achieving gender equality: mainstreaming gender and promoting women's empowerment. Both are critical."¹⁰

5. **The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** works in partnership with other UN agencies, governments and civil society, providing technical and financial assistance to promote women's rights, capacities and opportunities globally. Its primary areas of focus are:

- strengthening women's economic rights and empowerment;
- engendering governance and peacebuilding; and
- promoting women's human rights.

In the context of conflict-affected countries, UNIFEM supports women's participation in peace processes and reconstruction by providing leadership training and capacity building, facilitating contact with the international community, supporting indigenous women's peace activism and advocacy and initiating conflict early warning and prevention projects. UNIFEM has fifteen regional and sub-regional offices.

6. **UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** has expanded its policies and range of expertise to match demands in a variety of areas as peacekeeping operations expand beyond military-style enforcement and into peace support efforts and even state-building. On the question of gender, since the passing of Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, new initiatives have been launched, including appointing full-time gender offices and advisers in missions, making efforts to integrate

gender perspectives in the disarmament and reintegration of fighters, promoting gender balance in local police forces, providing training on issues relating to domestic violence and trafficking, developing "quick impact" projects based on their differential impact on women and men and supporting the inclusion of gender-sensitive election laws and processes.

In its own organisational context, and particularly with regard to the recruitment of peacekeepers, DPKO recognises that "pursuing gender balance has the potential for greatly increasing the pool of talent. Further, gender mainstreaming can increase the understanding of a complex situation. It may lead to new assumptions and definitions. It may suggest different approaches to a desired end and it may reveal overlooked resources and talents."¹¹ It also states "the need to increase the participation of women in all aspects of peace operations and at all levels, particularly at the highest levels of decision-making, remains a priority concern."¹² However, the department places the onus for the recruitment of women on member states, noting, "the Secretary-General has called on Member States to increase the recruitment of women as military observers, peacekeeping troops and civilian police."¹³

7. **Other Agencies of the UN Family** are also involved in post conflict social and economic recovery efforts. The **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, which specialises in labour rights and the promotion of social justice and human rights, is a key actor in addressing economic and employment issues in post war countries. Working with governments, civil society and labour organisations, it provides technical assistance to improve employment opportunities and to ensure the provision of social protection for workers. The **World Food Programme (WFP)** is the leading UN agency in providing food and fighting hunger in crises and emergency situations, including conflict. It has a strong commitment to working with women, recognising that women are the "first and fastest route to reducing poverty and hunger."¹⁴ The **Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)** is the lead agency in ensuring food security and assisting nations in their efforts to improve nutritional standards and agricultural production.

The mandate of the **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)** is the protection of children. In war-torn countries, UNICEF is actively involved in the reintegration of child soldiers, restoring schools and providing education (see chapter on children's security).

In principle, there is a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment across the

UN system, with many institutions deriving their policies based on recommendations made in the **1995 Beijing Platform for Action**. In addition, there is a system-wide commitment to realising the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, which include gender equality and women's empowerment (see text box). In practice, more progress is still needed to achieve equality.

The Millennium Development Goals¹⁵

In September 2000, following extensive consultations globally, the member states of the UN gathered in New York to embrace and endorse eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

According to the **World Bank**, the MDGs commit the international community to an expanded vision of development, one that vigorously promotes human development as the key to sustaining social and economic progress in all countries, and recognises the importance of creating a global partnership for development. The goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.

The eight goals are to:

- eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- achieve universal primary education;
- promote gender equality and empower women;
- reduce child mortality;
- improve maternal health;
- combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- ensure environmental sustainability; and
- develop a global partnership for development.

Reaching these goals has become a primary objective of most bilateral and multilateral development and aid agencies. Many of the countries furthest from achieving the MDGs are those affected by conflict.

The introduction of MDGs has made it possible to restructure the relationship among donors and between donors, recipient governments and civil society. The mechanism for this is the **Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)** process. The PRS process is meant to be participatory, involving government, financial institutions and civil society agreeing on the priorities for poverty reduction. Civil society organisations that have monitored the PRS process so far have identified two main problems:

1. Participation has been far less than desired and the participation of women has been particularly poor in many cases. Women's organisations complained that they had often not been informed about the process and that when they were able to participate their concerns were not heard. The result is that gender issues have not been mainstreamed into the PRS process effectively.
2. The funding plan that results from the process (in the form of **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers**) is binding and restrictive. In effect, civil society has been invited into the world of development finance decision-making, but it has also been told that once decisions are made, only projects and organisations that conform to the agreed strategies will be able to access funding.

8. **The Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD)** also plays an influential role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is comprised of 30 member states committed to democratic government and the market economy. The organisation works with over 70 countries, NGOs and civil society. It produces internationally agreed-upon instruments, recommendations and decisions to “promote rules of the game in areas where multilateral agreement is necessary for individual countries to make progress in a globalised economy.”¹⁶ The OECD’s activities include research and publication and collation and analysis of statistics on issues ranging from development assistance to education and science. The organisation is divided into a series of thematic departments, directorates and other bodies. Issues relating to cooperation with developing countries come under the auspices of the Development Cooperation Directorate that supports the work of the **Development Assistance Committee (DAC)**. DAC’s 23 members¹⁷ are all major donors that are “expected to have certain common objectives concerning the conduct of their aid programmes. To this end, guidelines are prepared for development practitioners in capitals and in the field.”¹⁸

In 1997 DAC issued its *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, which set a new standard in international aid to conflict-affected states. In 2004, *Guidelines on Helping to Prevent Conflict* was published as a supplement to the 1997 work. Among the key principles noted to the development community are that they should:

- actively engage women, men and youth in peacebuilding and policy-making processes. All actors need to take better account of the pervasive linkages between gender differences and violent conflicts and their prevention and resolution;
- reinforce local capacities to influence public policy and tackle social and political exclusion.¹⁹

The OECD/DAC position on gender in development is that “progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment is vital for improving economic, social and political

conditions in developing countries. The knowledge, insight and experience of both women and men are required if development is to be effective, sustainable and truly people-centred. Gender equality requires specific measures at the macro, meso and micro levels in order to propel gender-responsive actions into development work.”²⁰

DAC’s work on gender equality is led by **Gendernet**, an international forum of gender experts from bilateral and multilateral agencies to share experience and develop common policies and approaches. Gendernet publishes studies, guidelines, fact sheets and other material relating to gender and development broadly, including gender and conflict issues. It also conducts thematic workshops with experts from within the UN system, civil society, and governments.²¹

The documents, particularly the guidelines emerging from DAC, reflect a common set of policies and standards that DAC members must adhere to when they are involved in providing development assistance in any venue. NGOs and others advocating for gender equality in post conflict social and economic reconstruction can therefore use the guidelines to monitor and hold DAC members accountable to their commitments.

9. **Bilateral Donors**—including the United States (US), Canada, Sweden, members of the European Union (EU), Japan and many other states—provide funds through the UN and World Bank, and directly to national governments, international and national NGOs and private companies and subcontractors for reconstruction work. The level and nature of their support varies according to their history, interest and involvement with the country. In many instances, these agencies have created specialised offices to address the different phases and dimensions of conflict and post conflict recovery. The **US Agency for International Development (USAID)** primarily supports long-term development efforts in poor countries and is a major actor in the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to war-torn countries and regions

suffering from natural disasters. It has a mandate to set “aside funds for small businesses and women-owned businesses.” However, its **Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)** is dedicated to working in conflict prone or “immediate post conflict transition” areas, with a goal of providing flexible, short-term aid that helps bridge humanitarian assistance with long-term USAID development efforts. Similarly the primary goal of the **Department for International Development (DfID)** in the United Kingdom is to reduce poverty globally. Its **Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department** focuses on conflict-related issues.

As evident below, many bilateral agencies have clear policies on gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment in their operational efforts.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): “Attention to gender equality is essential to sound development practice and at the heart of economic and social progress. Development results cannot be maximised and sustained without explicit attention to the different needs and interests of women and men. If the realities and voices of half of the population are not fully recognised, CIDA’s objectives to ‘reduce poverty and to contribute to amore secure, equitable, and prosperous world’ will not be met.”²²

DfID: “There is a growing and compelling body of evidence that shows that not only do women bear the brunt of poverty, but also that women’s empowerment is a central precondition for its elimination. Women’s equality is an absolute necessity if the blight of poverty is to be removed and the nations of the world are to create a secure, sustainable, and prosperous future.... The struggle for gender equality is a key instrument for lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Beyond this, it is also a central element of the wider struggle of human rights for all.”²³

EU: “Gender equality is crucial for development in general and the link between gender and poverty has made the relevance of gender mainstreaming in development cooperation more critical than ever before...Investments in

improving the situation of women (providing education, improving health and securing their land and labour rights) translate into higher levels of productivity and lower levels of infant and female mortality, food insecurity and poverty.”²⁴

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA): “Aiming for women’s empowerment and gender equality in all aspects of development assistance is now seen as an imperative.... Realising women’s empowerment and gender equality does not mean only increasing the number of women-targeted projects, but also integrating the gender perspective in all the assistance which JICA implements.”²⁵

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency: “The focus on equality between women and men within Swedish development cooperation is based on two important premises: Firstly, the long standing conviction that equality is *a matter of human rights*; and secondly the increasing recognition that equality—equal rights, opportunities and obligations for women and men—is a precondition for effective and sustainable people-centred development.”²⁶

USAID: “USAID has a special interest in the advancement of women worldwide. Women’s health, education, economic opportunity and human rights are at the core of successful, stable societies and economic growth. One of the fundamental principles of the new Department of State/USAID strategic plan is that ‘all citizens, men and women, are vital to meeting the critical challenges of today and reaching the goals of equality, peace and security’.”²⁷

- International NGOs** undertake a wide variety of activities in the post conflict reconstruction phase. On the ground, distinctions between “relief,” “development,” and “reconstruction” are not easy to make. In the same way, the distinction between “conflict” and “post conflict” phases can be artificial in practice. There are countless NGOs working internationally, regionally and nationally on post war social and economic reconstruction. For most, the range of activities they undertake must be determined by the specific context and their institutional expertise. As an example of the range of projects undertaken by international

NGOs in post conflict reconstruction, CARE/USA's programme in **Guatemala** includes projects in civil society development, village banks, education, mother and child health, democratisation, disaster protection, women's development, HIV/AIDS work with young people, as well as water and sanitation.²⁸ There are also international NGOs that focus on women's empowerment and gender equality. The US-headquartered NGO Women for Women International supports job training and income-generating projects for women in war-torn countries. Kvinna til Kvinna, a Swedish NGO, has been actively supporting women's empowerment in a variety of post conflict countries, particularly in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

International interventions may be direct (i.e. international agencies may themselves provide health services, reunite abducted children with their families or operate agricultural schemes) or they may be carried out through local partners. Where security cannot be guaranteed, such as **Iraq** in 2003–04 or **Afghanistan** in 2001–04, international agencies often feel obliged to withdraw their staff, while continuing to support their local partners financially and through training and joint planning. This enables the international agency to follow the situation on the ground, while carrying out international lobbying and solidarity work on behalf of their partners. This form of indirect support is also beneficial for strengthening local capacities and ownership of projects. It is also good practice for international actors to help establish systems and strategies through partnership, rather than being directly operational.

11. **National Actors** play a pivotal role in negotiating funding from the international community and setting its priorities. The main preoccupations of the state in the immediate post conflict period are likely to be military security, reconciliation, establishing political structures and integrating previously conflicting parties into national machineries. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the transitional government, established in 2003, incorporated five warring parties into the government by allocating to each a vice-presidential post, integrating rebel forces into the national army and preparing the country for

elections after two years. In **Uganda**, an education program (including building schools and training teachers) was created through the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme as a means of countering years of neglect that had ultimately led to the drain of young men away from school and into rebel forces.

Civil society organisations are also pivotal and often have greater capacities than state entities in the immediate aftermath of conflict. But the post conflict period does create new challenges for their relations with the state and international donors. In many war-torn countries, civil society is strong. It is the key provider of services and a major recipient of international assistance. However, in the immediate post conflict period, the focus of international donors tends to shift in support of strengthening the state's capacity to assert control and maintain authority. This can mean a direct diversion of funds from civil society to government and a marginalisation of civil society from the political arena at a time when its capacities and expertise are most needed.

12. **For-Profit Contractors**, such as major engineering and construction companies, often have a strong presence in post conflict countries, opening offices, hiring local staff and further subcontracting aspects of work to locally owned businesses. Although bilateral or multilateral development agencies have overall responsibility for reconstruction projects, the actual work is very often subcontracted to private businesses or contractors. Smaller contracting companies with expertise in specific issues such as health care and education are also present. They too offer job opportunities and collaboration with local businesses and NGOs. In many cases contractors have a specific mandate regarding the hiring of women or the support of women-run businesses and organisations.

THE PROCESS: DEFINING PRIORITIES AND ALLOCATING RESOURCES

As soon as an internationally-accepted peace agreement is signed (i.e. there is a political framework for peace) many key agencies conduct in-country **needs assessments**. The level of coordination

varies across and between institutions, but there is cooperation between UN agencies, the World Bank, and often representatives from other multilateral development banks. In **Afghanistan** in 2002, although there was no formal peace agreement between warring factions, post conflict reconstruction planning did take place. Representatives from the Asian Development Bank were members of the teams sent to the country.

The needs assessment process has not been systematic across institutions or countries and new efforts are under way to create frameworks that help international staff conduct assessments. In the UN system, following the preliminary needs assessment, UN agencies mandated with development work conduct a **Common Country Assessment (CCA)**. “The CCA is a country-based process for reviewing and analysing the national development situation and identifying key issues as a basis for advocacy, policy dialogue, and preparation for the **UNDAF**,” the UN’s five-year development assistance plan.²⁹ Donors such as USAID or DfID also conduct needs assessments and have criteria that help determine their engagement in a country.

These assessments often help determine the broad agenda and issues for discussion at international donor conferences, at which major bilateral donors pledge funds to support reconstruction based on the priorities identified in needs assessments, as well as other information, including their own mandates and issues of concern. In many cases a “**multi-donor trust fund**” is created, from which funds are then allocated to international and national actors for reconstruction efforts. The World Bank administers the fund either alone or in conjunction with other international institutions.

From the standpoint of local civil society activists, particularly women, a key goal must be to ensure consultation with the international teams so that they integrate gendered perspectives in their needs assessments, priorities and interactions with donors.

THE LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

In the aftermath of conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, and East Timor, the international community—including major donor countries, the UN system, the World Bank system and the NGO

sector—has gained significant experience in post conflict reconstruction. There is growing appreciation of the need to adapt and address the requirements of each country specifically. But at the same time, there is increasing understanding that for international aid to be effective, it must be coordinated and timely—with a common acceptance of priorities.

As previously stated, post conflict reconstruction aid is a unique form of development assistance with two key objectives:³⁰

- addressing short-term needs, including humanitarian assistance, relief and other forms of post-emergency assistance; and
- repairing (or creating) the infrastructure, physical and institutional, needed to support long-term economic development.

These goals are not incompatible. Inevitably, in many cases, however, finding a balance between the short- and long-term issues and developing an effective transition process is a challenge. In most cases short-term aid is provided that helps address acute humanitarian issues such as lack of food; but international attention is typically too short, so pledges made for longer-term aid are often not realised. Moreover, studies indicate that in the first few years after war, states have little capacity to absorb funds, but this changes radically in the medium term. Clearly there is no “one size fits all” approach to post conflict reconstruction, but major international institutions do have similar approaches to defining priorities and setting strategies.

The international community is constantly trying to improve coordination and collaboration with national governments, but inevitably there is overlap, fragmentation and gaps that are not addressed. Furthermore, despite the publicity around donors’ meetings, the pledges that are made are rarely fulfilled in their entirety. Oftentimes donor countries “double-count” their support by including pre-existing contributions to the country with their “new” pledges, or including their normal funding of UN agencies as part of their pledge. In many instances, the funds are not disbursed, or they are spent on short-term needs. In **Afghanistan**, between January 2002 and March 2003, donors pledged \$2.1 billion for reconstruction;

however, only 27 percent (\$499 million) was spent on major projects. The remainder was spent on immediate humanitarian relief.³¹

Several key lessons can be drawn from past experiences:

- Before international assistance is provided, it is essential to have a political mandate or framework for reconstruction that is rooted in the resolution of the conflict and is accepted nationally and internationally.
- National governments in conflict countries need to be supported with the provision of a comprehensive budget that is public and transparent. Transparency and accountability are essential at the start of this process.
- Reconstruction programs must be developed in partnership with other donors, the national government and the people of the country and they must match the nation's aspirations.
- International actors should coordinate their efforts as much as possible (e.g. pooling resources in a common trust fund administered by a combination of national government, civil society and international representatives can be a means of reducing fragmentation and duplication). NGOs should also have access to the fund.

3. HOW DOES POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AFFECT WOMEN?

The substantial financial support, technical assistance and attention given to countries immediately post conflict are driven by a commitment to bring about major economic, and political changes that strengthen the prospects for peace. This support could and should also address historical causes for discrimination against particular sectors, including women.

The funds that pour in, the programmes and projects that are developed and the major choices that are made, from prioritising for national reconstruction to decisions relating to rebuilding schools, roads and hospitals, or providing energy, all affect women directly. If women are absent from the decision-making process and if gender perspectives are not integrated in

the assessments, planning and implementation—then there is a strong likelihood that women's needs are neglected and their capacities are overlooked. Countries emerging from war, where women often make up the majority of the population, cannot afford to ignore and marginalise their needs and skills.

Women need to be involved in discussions about reconstruction priorities in order to ensure that their voices and those of other habitually marginalised groups are heard in the planning of investments and implementation of projects. They should work with national governments and international actors to ensure that women's skills are developed, pay special attention to technical education and training in new technologies and advocate for the employment of women in major reconstruction efforts. Girls' education at primary and secondary levels must be supported and programmes initiated to enable children that missed schooling to return to their education. In places where girls were targeted during war and where many have their own children, childcare facilities and other incentives (e.g. meals, health care) should be given to enable their attendance in school.

Women's organisations can take a direct role in reconstruction efforts by bidding for contracts on physical and social reconstruction projects, as well as supporting micro-finance projects that are often targeted to women. This will benefit their members and provide the organisations themselves with the experience of interacting in a business environment, as well as ensuring that the funds reach a broad range of beneficiaries.

CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN

In areas of intense conflict and war, as state services and traditional support networks collapse, local and international NGOs take on the responsibility of caring for the vulnerable sectors of the population. Women in particular take the lead in caring for orphans, the sick and the elderly and in providing psychosocial support to the bereaved and traumatised. They also seek out economic opportunities—often under unfamiliar and insecure conditions to maintain basic levels of food, water and shelter. While the burdens are heavy, these tasks and responsibilities enhance women's skills and capacities and often mean that women are uniquely placed to engage in the reconstruction effort.

Despite this, women face an uphill struggle in accessing and benefiting from post conflict aid. On the one hand, they face constraints in their own often male-dominated societies. On the other hand, they face resistance or disinterest from international actors who control major resources, but have limited capacity, willingness or understanding to consult with women and ensure effective gender mainstreaming. The constraints on women's participation are many.³²

- Women are under-represented at decision-making levels in institutions such as ministries, local councils and international NGOs that control the most important resources.
- The localised and informal nature of many women's organisations in addition to their lack of contacts makes it difficult for women to access the funds and programmes that are developed by major international actors.
- Social sector budgets, where women are most likely to find jobs, tend to be the first to experience reduction when the economy is tight and women may be excluded through discrimination in education, training and employment practices.
- Returning male soldiers or male heads of households may compete with women for employment and control of economic resources, with women often being pushed "back to the kitchen" at the end of a war.
- In agricultural communities, women may be unable to maintain their farms because of displacement, inadequate family labour, or destruction of equipment and seeds.
- Ownership and inheritance laws that uphold rights of ownership in male family heads only, may exclude women from access to or control over credit, land and other means of production, even when the male head is absent.
- Many women who are unable to access land, or offer their labour to other farmers for wages that are small and unreliable.
- Women push against accepted norms of behaviour when they engage in illegal or socially unacceptable activities such as bar work, beer brewing or prostitution for economic survival, which may result in stigmatisation and abuse.³³

- Women may feel unable to accept formal employment because of child care and other domestic commitments.³⁴
- The sheer volume of work needed to sustain a family in reduced economic circumstances may strain women's health.
- Violence against women continues after the war in their homes. This seriously impacts their ability to participate in the public and economic spheres.

4. HOW ARE WOMEN OVERCOMING CHALLENGES?

Women's organisations can play a fundamental role in assisting women to overcome the constraints and challenges they face in attempting to access and benefit from reconstruction aid.

SHAPING PRIORITIES AND HAVING A VOICE AT DONORS' MEETINGS

Women's organisations can contact major international actors such as the World Bank and UNDP to offer information about the situation of women in their country, advocate for increased gender perspectives in their work, assist in the needs assessment process to ensure that gender issues are fully integrated and initiate consultations to define priorities and ensure that women's needs are considered.

Women's groups can also lobby for inclusion and representation at major donors' meetings. For **Afghanistan**, prior to the January 2002 international donors' meeting in Tokyo, Japan, advocacy efforts by women's rights activists from Afghanistan and elsewhere, supported by UNIFEM, led to a meeting of Afghan women's groups with donors in Europe. In Tokyo, women's rights advocates acting through the Working Group on the Rights of Afghan Women submitted a number of proposals to donors, including recommendations that aid should be conditional on the participation of women in decision-making in reconstruction; that the gendered impact of interventions be assessed; that women be the beneficiaries of 50 percent of the economic aid provided; that the Ministry of Women's Affairs be adequately resourced; and that NGOs be funded.³⁶

Conflict and the Feminisation of Poverty³⁵

Violent conflict is often said to be a trigger for the “**feminisation of poverty**,” meaning that women are increasingly found among the ranks of the poor. This happens partly because of the increasing proportion of households headed by, and dependent on, women (usually around 30–40 percent in post conflict transition societies). Female-headed households are thought to be particularly vulnerable.

One difficulty female-headed households may face is inadequate labour resources, especially in agricultural communities, because there are few adult men and the adult women are occupied with domestic work. Another is that without men they are not well linked into the networks that control marketing, supplies, community decision-making and have poor links to power structures.

Despite their vulnerability in society at large, there are also instances where members of female-headed households fare better than others, since female caregivers prioritise the family's welfare. Also depending on the cultural conditions and the extent to which war has diminished traditional male roles in the economy, women often find new public outlets for trading and other income-generating activities. In **Somaliland**, the absence of government regulation has provided opportunities for business to flourish. This has been positive for women in some ways, because they now occupy increasingly important roles in trade. But such changes are often temporary. Typically, after war, women are forced out of jobs and put under pressure to give control of resources to men.

The challenge for those wishing to support female household heads is to increase their entitlements (i.e. strengthen their position when it comes to making claims on authorities or on other members of the community). This can be done by changing legislation and policies, raising awareness among women of their rights and supporting their efforts to voice their needs. However, this is difficult to achieve when all households are likely to be unusually vulnerable and when new systems of governance and legislation are not yet in place. In these circumstances women rely more extensively on mutual support.

In post conflict **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Rwanda**, following advocacy efforts by international groups, specific funds (of up to \$5 million) were established under the auspices of international agencies, with the mandate to support women and promote their participation in reconstruction. In **Iraq** in 2004, US-based organisations including Women Waging Peace initiated advocacy and awareness-raising efforts that ultimately led to the allocation of \$10 million for women's empowerment from the aid package approved by the **US Congress**. In **Somaliland**, women's groups pressed for the restoration of local hospitals and educational services and sought funding for micro-credit facilities for demobilised young men.³⁷ In **Kosovo**, 22 women's organisations came together in a series of meetings to discuss women's involvement in politics and social and economic reconstruction. This was seen as a preparation for women to take part in reconstruction activities led by the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**. As a result, six women were appointed to the interim transitional council.³⁸

INFLUENCING NATIONAL POLICIES AND BUDGETS

In the post conflict period, as new ministries are established and national budgets created, there is an opportunity to ensure that national level policies on a range of issues are gender sensitive. One approach taken in many countries is to establish a Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) with a mandate to promote women's empowerment and to work with other ministries to ensure that gender perspectives are fully integrated into their work. There is concern that such a ministry can risk marginalising women, but there are also benefits to having a ministry with a dedicated budget for women. In contrast, in **South Africa**, while there is no dedicated ministry, there is a Commission on Gender Equality set up under the Constitution that promotes gender equality, makes recommendations on legislation and monitors the country's progress toward gender equality in relation to international norms.³⁹ In addition, individual ministries, such as the Ministry of Defence, have gender focal points that promote gender equality within the institution.

Advocating for and initiating **gender budgets** is another approach to mainstreaming gendered perspectives into the national economy. Gender budgeting is an exercise in which government financial allocations are reviewed to assess whether they represent an effective use of resources to achieve gender equality. Three sorts of budget item are examined: expenditures allocated for programmes and policies with specific gender targets (such as projects designed specifically for women), expenditures that promote gender equality and those that mainstream it in other areas. For example, if the population of a country is over 60 percent female, with a majority of whom are of childbearing age, gendered health budgets could ensure that adequate funds were allocated for reproductive healthcare. Gender-budgeting exercises can be carried out internally within government, but are more effective if civil society participates.⁴⁰

Programmes such as the **Gender Responsive Budget Initiative**—led by UNIFEM, the **Commonwealth Secretariat**, and the **International Development Research Center**—have developed tools to support governments and civil society in applying gender budgeting techniques, which is practiced in an increasing number of countries.⁴¹

In **Rwanda** in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, women organised themselves and established effective coalitions across civil society, government, and parliament to push for equality. The government created a ministry dedicated to women's empowerment and a national gender policy was drawn up in 2001. This paved the way for gender to be identified as one of three cross-cutting priorities in the poverty strategy review process. The government sponsored extensive research into different aspects of gender-based disadvantages. The findings were fed into discussions within every ministry and government department about the barriers to gender equality and how they may be overcome. As a result, the Ministry of Agriculture is committed to increasing the number of women reached by its extension programmes. The Ministry of Education aims to increase retention of girls in school. Provincial government structures are promoting the representation of women in local decision-making processes. Gender-budgeting exercises are used to train civil servants to translate policy decisions into concrete actions through resource allocation.⁴²

PROVIDING SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Another means of accessing international aid and influencing its use is to partner or subcontract with international actors and provide services and support (e.g. income-generation training, trauma counselling, sexual and reproductive health advice or legal advice and training). This support might be directed to other women. For example, the **Ugandan** organisation **People's Voice for Peace (PVP)** works with women and children who have been injured and disabled by war. PVP sets up mutual support groups, arranges training in income-generation and advocacy skills and puts its members in touch with medical and other forms of assistance.⁴³ The **Medica Women's Therapy Centre** in **Bosnia** offers a combination of medical and psychosocial care for women who have been raped and otherwise abused. In **Sudan**, the **Sudanese Women's Association of Nairobi (SWAN)** has played a key role in liaising with international donors and facilitating the transfer of funds to small and local organisations.⁴⁴

AVOIDING BACKLASH: TACTICS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Although it is widely argued that education, economic power and the ability to generate resources can enable women to influence political decision-making and affect social attitudes, in many cases this does not happen. Women may generate income, but they are either unaware of, or unable to affect political decision-making. Furthermore, in post conflict societies (and in developing nations) women's control of resources and their successful efforts in generating revenue can create a backlash among men in their community. If not addressed, this can result in the closure of the project. Donors and recipients of aid must ensure that, on the one hand, income-generating programmes have a distinct women's empowerment component to enable women to maintain their space and work. On the other hand, they must try to identify the potential threats and reduce the risks of a backlash against women. In **Colombia**, following years of women's involvement in economic development but limited influence in politics, women's organisations are now combining income-generating projects with training on political rights and empowerment.

In **Sudan**, women's groups and a widow's association have established catering and conference facilities to

generate income. While the ownership rests in the hands of the women, the management and staff are predominantly local men who benefit from receiving salaries. In **Afghanistan**, gender-sensitive UN personnel reached out to male tribal leaders, seeking their approval to initiate programs that would generate income for women in the villages.

5. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Identify key international actors and agencies present in your country and consult with them, advocating for the inclusion of gender perspectives in their needs assessment and planning work. Drawing on their own institutional commitments and mandates on the issue.
2. Encourage your organisation to find out what strategies are being adopted by the OECD, UN family and other international organisations. Build on:
 - their policies on the inclusion of women in post conflict reconstruction;
 - the investments being made; and
 - their interaction and commitment to the inclusion of civil society.
3. Seek to engage with the donors' meeting process, working with UNIFEM and other organisations that support women's inclusion.
4. Develop proposals for programmes and projects based on your institution's strength. Identify key funders, meet with them and propose partnerships.
5. Drawing on global networks and sources on the Internet, identify international actors (NGOs, donors) that could partner with your organisation in advocating for full gender mainstreaming in reconstruction efforts.
6. Join together with other civil society organisations to conduct a needs assessment for communities that identifies priorities, existing skills and capacities and key gaps. Publish and disseminate the results widely among national and international actors.
7. Have clear objectives based on your capacities, what you can contribute and whom you should work with in order to scale up your impact. Have a strategic plan and be clear about areas that need to be strengthened, including project management, information technology, budgeting and accounting.
8. Establish a consortium or identify one organisation to be a receiver of funds and facilitator for the disbursement of small grants to local and informal groups. Ensure that the international community knows of its existence.
9. Identify the potential spoilers and others who can obstruct your efforts. Engage with them and develop tactics to gain their support.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The 2001 OECD/DAC Guidelines on Helping to Prevent Conflict, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/54/1886146.pdf>>.

The Beijing Platform for Action, <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm>>.

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Gender-Related Budget Initiatives, <www.gender-budgets.org>.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Crisis Response and Reconstruction, <<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/crisis/index.htm>>.

The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework, <<http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/framework.pdf>>.

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United Nations Development Programme: Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, <<http://www.undp.org/bcpr>>.

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DfID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICSID	International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives of the United States Agency for International Development
PCF	Post Conflict Fund
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy Process
PVP	People's Voice for Peace
SWAN	Sudanese Women's Association of Nairobi
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

ENDNOTES

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INTERNATIONAL ALERT

346 Clapham Road
London, SW9 9AP
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 207 627 6800
Web: www.international-alert.org

WOMEN WAGING PEACE

2040 S Street NW, Suite 2
Washington, D.C. 20009
United States of America
Tel: +1 (202) 403 2000
Web: www.womenwagingpeace.net