

Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace

Conflict Prevention and Transformation: Women's Vital Contributions



EDITOR:

Jolynn Shoemaker, with contributions by Camille Pampell Conaway
Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace (Waging) and the United Nations Foundation
Washington, DC February 23, 2005

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Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank all of those who participated in the Conflict Prevention Conference in February 2005 as speakers and contributors to this report.

Special thanks to Swanee Hunt and Johanna Mendelson Forman for co-chairing the conference.

BACKGROUND NOTE

Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace and the United Nations Foundation hosted a consultation on the role of women in conflict prevention on February 23, 2005. The presentations and discussion highlighted examples and strategies regarding women's conflict prevention activities and generated policy recommendations for the international community. Based on the day's discussions, this conference report makes a more compelling case for the inclusion of women and gender perspectives in peace processes and offers practical recommendations, guidelines, and models to assist and encourage policymakers to include women and gender perspectives in their program designs.

The day-long consultation separated the broad topic of women's contributions to conflict prevention into three conceptual areas:

- 1. Nonviolent Transformation**—Women around the world are at the forefront of nonviolent reform movements for democracy and human rights. In authoritarian states, women's organizations are tolerated in some cases, because they are seen as "non-political." In other cases, women face repression for their activism. In either situation, women are working to prevent violent conflict through nonviolent systemic transformation. Case examples included Iran, Serbia, and Venezuela.
- 2. Preventing the Escalation of Conflict**—Whether protesting unconstitutional government activities, directly engaging potentially violent actors, or developing early warning systems, women are actively working to prevent heightened tension and violence. Case examples included Macedonia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe.
- 3. Preventing the Resurgence of Violence**—The signing of a peace agreement does not mean immediate stability. Years of war are inevitably followed by years of transition. During this delicate stage, efforts must be made to reconcile family, neighbors, and countrymen to ensure war does not renew, while fostering long-term development. Women are at the forefront of such efforts. Case examples included the Mano River region and the Pacific Islands.

This conference report consists of an overview chapter identifying trends and strategies from the presentations, followed by brief excerpts of papers composed by the conference speakers. Based on the day's discussions, concrete recommendations for policymakers and practitioners were generated by the participants and are also included in this report.

It is our hope that this publication will advance the field of conflict prevention, support the invaluable work of women, and serve as a resource for experts, policymakers, and practitioners worldwide.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Building the Capacity of Women to Prevent Conflict

The following recommendations were generated by the conference participants and are directed to the US Government, United Nations, and international community.

1. Increase the access of women leaders in conflict prevention and nonviolent transformation to relevant policymakers.

- a) Include at least 50 percent women in relevant conflict prevention and resolution events, conferences, and key meetings.
- b) Include women as at least 50 percent of delegates in donor funding coordination efforts, such as assessments and conferences.
- c) Ensure women are included in international exchange programs and conferences (e.g., the US Department of State's International Visitors Program and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women annual conference in New York).
- d) Identify opportunities to facilitate women's participation in policy formation regarding conflict prevention (e.g., Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Cooperation Directorate (OECD/DAC)).

2. Protect women leaders in conflict prevention and nonviolent transformation in unstable countries.

- a) Create a "hotline," whereby activists, including women, can report violence and potential retaliation for their peace-building work.
- b) Develop strategies to protect women activists that are culturally and politically sensitive.
- c) Create networks for women activists in unstable situations to share information and strategies with each other and with the international community.

3. Ensure women's participation in negotiations and efforts to prevent and resolve conflict.

- a) Reach out to women's grassroots and national networks to compile lists of qualified women to participate in planning, implementation, and monitoring of international assistance programs.
- b) Include women in all international missions, including as peacekeepers, human rights monitors, and humanitarian personnel.
- c) Mandate women's representation among all parties at the negotiating table, including as international representatives and mediators, and in all phases of the peace process. Include this requirement in mediators' terms of reference.
- d) Train negotiators, mediators, peacekeepers, and international mission staff about gender awareness, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and other international, regional, and local commitments regarding women's participation.

- e) In cultures where women are held in high esteem or play a traditional role in mediation, enable their activism and work with them to create entry points for dialogue.
- f) Ensure the equal participation of women in the implementation of peace agreements, including transitional governance structures, constitution drafting committees, and reconciliation mechanisms.

4. Strengthen the capacity of women leaders in conflict prevention and nonviolent transformation.

- a) Ensure equal participation of women in conflict prevention and transformation, conflict resolution, democracy, reconciliation, and human rights trainings. Provide specific training for women leaders in early warning, protest strategies, mapping, indicators, benchmarking progress and impact, and cross-ethnic cooperation. Methods should include training of trainers and exchange programs.
- b) Fund and provide capacity building for women's groups and women-led organizations.
- c) Build women's organizational and management capacity to write proposals for, manage, and monitor and evaluate international aid programs.
- d) Develop and utilize strategies to help ensure that programs and projects are designed to become self-sustaining after international support has waned.
- e) Ensure that an enabling legal environment is established and maintained for civil society groups to remain active in the face of a repressive regime.

5. Provide financial support to women leaders in conflict prevention and nonviolent transformation.

- a) Designate international aid funding for women's groups engaged in nonviolent, democratic movements, conflict prevention efforts, and peace-building efforts.
- b) Direct international funding toward women's conflict prevention efforts, using such funding sources as the UN Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, and the UN Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women.
- c) Use grant-making efforts as an opportunity to encourage cooperation across ethnic, religious, and conflict lines.
- d) Ensure that assistance for national governments promotes women's equal participation.
- e) Monitor the use of international aid to understand the impact of distribution of funds and services on women and families.

6. Increase documentation, communication, and awareness of the experiences and contributions of women to conflict prevention and nonviolent transformation.

- a) Provide awareness-raising programs and training for policymakers and practitioners regarding the key role that women play in preventing conflict and transforming unstable states.
- b) Highlight women's activities and document repression and discrimination in standard reports, such as the US Department of State's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Use documentation to pressure governments to prevent and punish abuses.
- c) Document "best practices" and "lessons learned" regarding women and conflict prevention and nonviolent transformation. Use the Internet and other resources to distribute this information widely.
- d) Encourage men to speak in support of women's participation in decision-making.
- e) Disseminate information on the role of women in nonviolent transformation through media initiatives.
- f) Interview women leaders for the media, where appropriate, to highlight their position and elicit international attention.

7. Utilize the establishment of the newly recommended UN Peacebuilding Commission:

- a) Ensure gender balance among Commission members.
- b) Include gender experts on the Commission staff.
- c) Incorporate the needs and concerns of women in the design and mandate of the Commission, drawing on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- d) Recognize women as planners, implementers, and beneficiaries, not just as victims, in conflict and post-conflict situations.

KEY FINDINGS: The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention

Camille Pampell Conaway

Conflict prevention is increasingly acknowledged by policymakers and practitioners to be a vital component of global efforts to maintain peace and stability. The first step toward operationalizing the concept and defining it in practical terms occurred with the 1999 release of the final report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. Based on the premise that preventing war is possible, the Commission outlined three goals for the international community: 1) to prevent the emergence of violent conflict, 2) to prevent the spread of ongoing conflicts, and 3) to prevent the re-emergence of deadly conflict.¹

Following the report's release, there was a general rise in international understanding of the value of preventing violent conflict—in terms of human casualties as well as financial and logistical costs—which led to a gradual evolution in rhetoric and practice. In 2001, the United Nations Security Council mandated a commitment to “take early and effective action to prevent armed conflict” in Resolution 1366.²

The UN subsequently established various internal mechanisms to support this goal and the 2004 *Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change* reiterated the need for the “international community to be more vigilant” in preventing violence.³

As governments and multi-lateral institutions recognize the importance of preventing conflict, individuals in unstable countries around the globe are daily confronting the dire consequences of a failure to do so. Consequently, at local, national, and international levels, civil society is actively pursuing each goal proposed by the Carnegie Commission. Local leaders have mobilized and networks have been formed. Non-governmental organizations are driving efforts from the grassroots in countries as diverse as Iran, Liberia, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.



Swanee Hunt, Chair, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace* and **Johanna Mendelson Forman**, Senior Program Officer, Peace, Security, and Human rights, the UN Foundation

An important facet of this movement is often overlooked: the experiences and contributions of women. As government representatives, leaders of non-government organizations, activists, students, and mothers, women are leading movements to nonviolently transform regimes into democracies, to deter the escalation of conflict, and to prevent a resurgence of violence.

The international community has recognized the role of women in statements and frameworks. In UN Security Council Resolution 1366, for example, the vital role of women as partners in preventing conflict was explicitly noted, as the UN Security Council “reiterate[d] its recognition of the role of women in conflict prevention and request[ed] the Secretary-General to give greater attention to gender perspectives

in the implementation of peacekeeping and peace-building mandates as well as in conflict prevention efforts..."⁴ This echoed Security Council Resolution 1325, which mandated the participation of women throughout the peace process.⁵

Women worldwide are demonstrating their capacity for promoting peace and development through the design and implementation of programs locally and nationally to enhance security, end corruption, increase transparency and accountability, bring reconciliation, and peacefully transform society. Capitalizing on the conflict prevention efforts of women is a critical and simple way to deter violence and promote democratic values.

Yet practical support for women's efforts remains elusive and ad-hoc. The goal of this report and of the February 2005 conference sponsored by *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace* and the United Nations Foundation is to explore entry points to strengthen women's efforts to prevent the outbreak and re-emergence of violent conflict.

This section of the report outlines key findings of women's roles in preventing conflict and provides an overview of themes, models, and strategies emerging across case examples.

Each of the following findings is supported by an array of evidence from case examples, to be introduced below. They are elaborated in greater detail in the papers from conference speakers in section two of this report.

Key Findings

1. Women worldwide are leading nonviolent movements for societal transformation and conflict prevention. They are highly organized and use deliberate strategies to promote peace and democracy.
2. Women come together from all backgrounds, and across conflict lines, to prevent violence.
3. Repression and intimidation of women by authoritarian regimes and warring parties is widespread, but does not quell women's activities for peace.
4. Women exhibit adaptability and flexibility in their efforts. As authoritarian regimes and warring parties combat women using various tactics, women leaders formulate new strategies to continue their work to prevent violence.
5. An overwhelming majority of women consistently choose nonviolent means to spread their message, even when confronted with violence.
6. In some countries, women draw on their traditional roles as mothers and peacemakers to effectively protest oppressive regimes and raise warning signs of potential violence.
7. Effective strategies often involve public demonstrations and use of the media to increase international and national pressure on authoritarian regimes and warring parties.
8. The international community is increasingly seeking out opportunities to strengthen women's efforts, but for women to be effective, consistent and targeted support is required.

Women Leading Nonviolent Transformation Efforts

The first goal of preventive action, according to the Carnegie Commission, is to prevent the emergence of violent conflict. As instability and tension escalates daily in countries around the world, the potential for violence is very real. In some countries, regimes become increasingly authoritarian, denying basic human rights to their citizens. In other cases, potential conflict may involve multiple parties vying for political or economic power. Against the tide of rising repression and tension, civil society has presented itself time and again as the voice for democracy, human rights, and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

In countries around the world, movements emerge to transform weak or failing states into stable, democratic societies without war. In many cases, success stories in societal transformation are driven by a variety of forms of nonviolent resistance or “nonviolent conflict.” As defined by the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, “Nonviolent conflict takes place most commonly when civilian-based resistance is used strategically to remove dictators, support democracy, neutralize occupiers, and gain human rights and justice through strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, and other tactics designed to constrain, disrupt, and subvert the opponents’ sources of support and control, including the military and police.”⁶ A recent successful example of nonviolent conflict occurred in the Ukraine in 2004. Dubbed the “Orange Revolution,” millions of individuals, including many women, strategically campaigned to reverse the results of a corrupt election, forcing the autocratic government to relinquish its power—not due to violence, but “because the people decided that enough was enough.”⁷

Often overlooked and undocumented, women are at the forefront of nonviolent reform movements for democracy and human rights. They are vocal leaders with grassroots constituencies able to mobilize with little notice. Their networks span ethnicity, political affiliation, class, region, and race. Women often view their position in society as directly related to the achievement of democracy and human rights.

Women’s organizations are highly organized and use deliberate strategies to promote peace and democracy. In some cases, they creatively work within the existing political framework to promote moderate and progressive policies. Women have also used innovations in communications as an organizing strategy. For example, in Kuwait and the Gulf states, women mobilize their networks to demonstrate against corruption and for the promotion of democratic values through text messaging on mobile phones. Often unmonitored, text messaging allows them to summon protestors to new locations at a moment’s notice when the government denies access to a certain area. Text messaging also allows women to “build unofficial membership lists, spread news about detained activists, encourage voter turnout, schedule meetings and rallies, and develop new issue campaigns—all while avoiding government-censored newspapers, television stations, and Web sites.”⁸

Women have capitalized on their traditional roles as mothers and family leaders in some societies to effectively protest oppressive regimes and raise warning signs

of potential violence when other actors are unable to do so. In some authoritarian states, women actually have an advantage; their actions may be tolerated because they are seen as “non-political.”⁹ For example, in Argentina, the public demonstrations and advocacy of Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo were not repressed, though similar actions by other social or political organizations were repressed. Where no political space existed, women alone were able to raise a red flag, garnering international attention in the process.

In other countries, women’s activism is aggressively repressed. In Egypt, for example, women demonstrators for democratic reform were attacked by members of President Hosni Mubarak’s ruling party during the May 2005 referendum on multi-party elections.¹⁰ They were targeted, specifically as women, with sexual remarks, groping, and assault, as the police “leered” at them, and refused to take a report on the matter.¹¹ In Venezuela, the government has openly begun to target women leaders of the democracy movement in an effort to hinder their activities. When the population expressed outrage upon seeing a woman protestor harassed and beaten by a male police officer, the government changed its tactics and sent female police officers to future demonstrations.¹² In Nigeria, the government is taking action against women protesters in communities near oil companies by establishing a female paramilitary unit within its infamous Mobile Police system, known internationally for human rights abuses.¹³ This new trend of using women to repress and perpetrate violence against other women is particularly disturbing and remarkably strategic. Yet women remain undaunted and continue to nonviolently protest governmental repression, even as they begin to plan their own, targeted response.

RECOGNIZING WOMEN’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONFLICT PREVENTION: Key Questions to Ask

- Are women among the leaders of pro-democracy groups?
- Do women constitute a significant percentage of membership of pro-democracy groups (though men may be the leaders or public spokespeople)?
- Are women visible during public protests and demonstrations?
- Do women’s organizations issue press releases and other documents, noting their clear stand for democracy and human rights?
- Do national and local women’s groups have links to international human rights, democracy, and women’s organizations?
- Are women undertaking local efforts to broker peace and resolve conflict?
- Are criminal and civil codes, including laws pertaining to property and inheritance, equitable for women?

Women worldwide remain committed to preventing violence and ensuring democracy and respect for human rights, as the following examples illustrate in more detail.

In **Chile** in the 1980s, civil society mobilized against the military junta of General Augusto Pinochet. Popular protest and grassroots organizing continued amid severe repression. Women from all backgrounds and political ideologies came together with one common goal: democratic transformation in Chile. Unrelenting public pressure, in which women participated widely, eventually led to a plebiscite in 1988, whereby Chilean citizens would vote “yes” for Pinochet or “no” to military rule. Women were among the key mobilizers for a “no” vote, organizing a massive national campaign that included housewives, academics, feminist activists, professionals, and *campesinas* of all political backgrounds. “In their pamphlets, women listed ten different reasons urging people to vote ‘no’ in the forthcoming plebiscite. Their pamphlets advocated saying ‘no’ to the dictatorship, to violence, to a culture of death, to social injustice, to abuse of power, and to repression.”¹⁴ The “no” vote won in Chile, and women remained active in the consolidation of democracy long after Pinochet’s regime was pushed from power.

A decade later, in the **former Yugoslavia**, massive protests were on the verge of toppling the dictatorial regime of Slobodan Milosevic. Student groups, including many women, united to form “Otpor,” which means “Resistance,” to organize nonviolent resistance. Women’s groups organized and participated in these activities, and distributed literature on tactics and strategies of nonviolence to other protestors.¹⁵ Due to strategic civil disobedience, street demonstrations, workers’ strikes, and Otpor’s campaign whereby 1.8 million stickers were posted noting, “He’s Finished,” the culture of fear in Serbia began to wane.¹⁶ After disputing his defeat in elections in 2000, Milosevic eventually stepped down, as repression was unable to quell the voices of change.

At present, the political elite and the public at large in **Iran** are aware of, and have been struggling with, a desire for reform. Students, women, and others have been key voices for the democratic transformation of the authoritarian regime. Since the 1979 revolution, women in Iran have been bulwarks against extremism. They have consistently pushed for progressive interpretations of religious texts and have found important partners in Iran’s reformist clergy who have encouraged a more egalitarian interpretation of the *Sharia* or Islamic family law. This strategy of finding solutions within an Islamic framework has provided the reformist movement with theologically sophisticated arguments that are better able to combat conservative viewpoints. The activism of Iranian women was recognized on a global scale when Shirin Ebadi, a former judge and activist, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her outspokenness on human rights and democratic reform. Ebadi notes: “I saw the prize as a message from the international community, first of all, to the Iranian people, primarily to women...I support peaceful change. The number of people who want reform is constantly growing.”¹⁷

In neighboring **Pakistan**, calls for democratic reform are also increasing, as President Pervez Musharraf continues his authoritarian grip on political and social life. Musharraf came to power through a military-led coup in 1999 against elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Since then, he has scaled back democracy through amendments to the constitution, the dissolution of parliament, and the dismissal of the prime minister. In recent months, the government has cracked down on opposition political parties and imprisoned leaders, prompting international pressure for reform.¹⁸ Internally, women are at the forefront of the movement calling for democracy, recognition of human rights, and peace. Hina Jilana, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, describes women's motivation as follows: “[The] adoption [of the struggle for democracy] by the women's movement as a key concern and cause really did result from experiences gained because of their struggle against the imposition of unjust laws and policies during the Zia years. Women were struck by the relationship between democracy and the level of recognition and respect that states accord to human rights. For the first time, women, as a collective, saw a stake in democracy... The need for peace was never a mere slogan for women and other peace activists, but a need felt so critical that despite all odds, the expression of this need took the form of a movement.”¹⁹

Across the world, women in **Venezuela** are similarly leading a national movement for democratic reform, as President Hugo Chavez has increased his powers in the country. In 2004, the Crisis Group declared Venezuela “in deep political crisis, with high risk that its democratic institutions could collapse,” and there was even the “possibility of civil war.”²⁰ In response to a “trend of increasing and unpunished human rights violations,”²¹ thousands of demonstrators forced a recall vote by protesting in the streets, using “pots and pans” demonstrations, and collecting thousands of signatures. In August 2004, Venezuelan citizens voted in a national referendum not to recall President Hugo Chavez—an election process that many in the democratic movement allege was corrupt. Despite the fact that Chavez won the recall, the opposition movement, with women at the helm, continues to raise their voices for true democracy in Venezuela through strategic nonviolent actions.

Women Preventing the Escalation of Conflict

The prevention of violent conflict is often divided into two broad categories: structural prevention and operational prevention.²² Structural prevention refers to long-term steps that reduce the potential for violence, addressing human rights, justice, good governance, development, and human security. Operational prevention refers to short-term, targeted mechanisms to “contain or reverse escalation” during a crisis.²³ Strategies for operational prevention include early warning and early response, preventive diplomacy, economic measures, and the use of military force.²⁴

In recent years, the international community has increasingly focused on operational prevention, primarily early warning and response. This includes information collection and analysis using early warning indicators of potential conflict and the formulation of scenarios and response options. The UN, for example, channels its early warning planning and response through the UN Interdepartmental Framework for Coordination on Early Warning and Preventive Action. Its early warning and response strategies have included assessment missions, humanitarian contingency planning, facilitation of dialogue and consensus building, deployment of facilitators, donor engagement, and partnership with civil society.²⁵

While women in civil society have traditionally been active in structural prevention, women are also increasingly conducting immediate-term, operational forms of conflict prevention. This includes information gathering and analysis, direct intervention with opposition parties, advocacy efforts, popular protests and

GENDER INDICATORS OF CONFLICT

Gender indicators of triggers and catalysts: When outright war is near, men may represent a threat to warring parties and will subsequently “disappear” or be killed. In other cases, young women, often pregnant, may be targeted as a means to destroy a specific group. These events as well as the occurrence of gender-specific human rights violations, such as rape or trafficking, indicate a high potential for impending war and represent a critical moment for intervention.

Proximate gender indicators: In the medium-term, gender indicators of potential conflict include sex-specific refugee migration, where women and children may begin to cross borders to escape escalating tensions. In addition, gender-based changes in economic patterns, such as the sale of jewelry or increased financial assistance from abroad to female-headed households, might indicate hoarding in preparation for difficult times. Increasingly, the “feminization of poverty”—the overwhelming presence of women and girls among the poorest of the poor—is linked to the potential for conflict. An increase in the number of unemployed young men is another medium-term indicator, as is propaganda emphasizing hypermasculinity and violence. A rise in violence against women publicly and in the home is often a sign of stress, tension, and heightened aggression in society generally. Other proximate indicators might include trends from an open to a closed society, such as restrictions on freedom of assembly or the imposition of curfews.

Systemic gender indicators: In many countries, women and other minority groups experience political exclusion and economic discrimination, such as the denial of property and inheritance rights. In the long term, these factors, combined with other societal problems, can create the conditions for instability. Sudden shifts in terms of women’s rights, such as limitations placed on women’s access to educational, economic, or political opportunities, can be another systemic sign of future tensions.

demonstrations, and awareness-raising campaigns. From a policy perspective, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and several non-governmental organizations have undertaken research, in particular, on “gender indicators” of conflict—signs that reflect the changing circumstances of men and women as tensions rise.²⁶ Gender indicators—and all types of early warning indicators—can be grouped in three categories: triggers and catalysts, proximate or medium-term, and systemic or long-term.

Often overlooked in analysis of potential conflicts, gender indicators for early warning provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation, thereby contributing to a more effective response. In many cases, gender indicators are evident at the grassroots level and point to early signs of instability and heightened tension. When a gender lens is used early in the process, there is greater likelihood that the response will also take into account the needs, concerns, and rights of both men and women. The “window of opportunity” provided by the peace process can thus be enhanced to forge a more inclusive and more sustainable society.

In addition to incorporating gender indicators in the analysis of information, women's networks must be tapped as part of fact-finding missions, preventive visits, and other information gathering mechanisms. During the design of scenarios and development of responses, understanding and addressing women's needs and concerns is critical to the overall success of the mission. As noted by the Carnegie Commission, “During the early stage of a crisis, policymakers should not only be attentive to how circumstances could worsen, but also be alert for opportunities to make constructive use of local issues and processes that could help avoid violence.”²⁷ Women's organizations have distinct knowledge of the situation on the ground and are in key positions not only to gather information and design scenarios but also to implement responses.

As the international framework evolves to recognize both the importance of women's input and a gender-sensitive approach to preventing conflict, women at local and national levels are actively engaged in pragmatic and strategic tasks to avert violence, in addition to their information gathering and early warning activities. Whether protesting unconstitutional governmental actions, directly engaging potentially violent actors, facilitating dialogue and awareness-raising in communities, or developing capacity for early warning, women are working to prevent violence before it occurs, as exhibited through the following case examples.

Despite avoiding ethnic violence when achieving independence in the early 1990s, **Macedonia** entered a period of crisis nearly ten years later as ethnic Albanian and Macedonian tensions escalated to violence. In August 2001, armed Albanians and Macedonian security forces signed the Framework Agreement at Ohrid, but many believe lasting peace will only be achieved when the two ethnic communities reconcile to form a unified populace. Conference speaker Violeta Petroska-Beska notes: “One of the key challenges facing the country is to extend this determination to promote cooperation from the political to the social level.”²⁸ With women at the forefront, civil society is using deliberate strategies to foster reconciliation and prevent the escalation of tensions. “Some NGOs specifically focus on interethnic relations and try to reduce tension among different groups in Macedonia. Others focus on development, advocacy, ecology, or other areas, and indirectly improve interethnic relations by promoting inclusion and equal participation of different ethnic groups in their work.”²⁹ Women's groups have been active in both ways.

In **Nigeria**, the strategic, nonviolent actions of women at the local level to negotiate with Western oil corporations have gained international attention.³⁰ Women in various communities of diverse ethnic background have held sit-ins, conducted demonstrations and campaigns, and negotiated creative solutions to issues of concern to the community that have the potential to break into violence. In July 2002, for example, 150 women conducted a peaceful sit-in at Chevron Texaco's Escravos oil station in southern Delta state, halting the production of approximately 500,000 barrels of oil a day for more than a week.³¹ To resolve the conflict, Chevron Texaco signed a five-year agreement with the women to build a town hall, fund community-based programs to generate income and employment, and support local schools, clinics, and water and electricity systems. This is one successful example of women using non-violent actions that contrast sharply with the violent protests of armed militias in 2004. During that recent crisis, Niger Delta women insisted that "only dialogue can resolve the Niger Delta question."³² Women are similarly intervening to peacefully resolve ethnic conflicts and other communal disputes throughout Nigeria.

In the spring of 2005, **Ecuador** faced a crisis within its fragile democracy that held significant potential for violence and an unraveling of the political system. Although President Lucio Gutierrez was elected in a fair vote in 2002, his activities led many to label him a dictator in the making. In 2004, with the parliamentary support of his political party, Gutierrez dismissed 27 of the 31 members of the Supreme Court, replacing them with political allies.³³ He also made moves to replace members of the electoral council, the constitutional tribunal, and other judicial offices.³⁴ In response, civil society began massive protests of his unconstitutional actions through public demonstrations, strikes, and civil disobedience across the country, leading to a fact-finding mission by the UN.³⁵ In April 2005, the president was ousted by an emergency session of Congress and fled to Brazil, while Vice President Alfredo Palacio assumed the presidency. As the country seeks to overcome this crisis, women's organizations are among the leading voices for the maintenance of democracy through protests and strategic action. Dr. Susy Garbay Mancheno, for example, heads the Regional Foundation for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization conducting fact-finding investigations of human rights violations and advocating for legal reforms that strengthen the protection of human rights and promote democracy.

In **Northeastern India**, Nagaland has been involved in a struggle for independence for the past 50 years. The parties to the conflict have failed to negotiate a permanent peace, despite two ceasefire agreements that remain in place. Naga women have played a critical role in sustaining the ceasefire by mediating among factions and encouraging communities, tribes, and neighboring states to form a broad constituency in support of peace. For example, the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) and the Naga Women's Union of Manipur (NWUM) have worked together to protect communities, mobilize for reconciliation, sustain the ceasefire, and promote an inclusive peace process. In August 1994, 3,000 mothers from various tribes convened in the capital of Nagaland to launch NMA's "Shed No More Blood Campaign," as a way to promote reconciliation between Naga and non-Naga communities. Through these and other efforts, Naga women have used cultural and tribal traditions to cross conflict lines and engage in peace activism. They have interceded directly in villages and townships to stop violence among armed actors and have formed coalitions to rescue hostages, provide support for displaced persons, and promote inter-community integration.

In **Zimbabwe**, tensions remain high following the March 2005 parliamentary elections, in which the ruling party, favored by President Robert Mugabe, won a majority of seats in a process viewed as “seriously flawed” and “rife” with electoral abuse by the international community.³⁶ As the president is able to appoint 30 additional parliamentarians, Mugabe and his party now hold the two-thirds power required to amend the constitution. Amidst international outcry, Mugabe has cracked down on opposition leaders and placed severe restrictions on media, open expression, and freedom of assembly. In response, the women of Zimbabwe are leading protests against the violence and corruption of the current government, but not without cost. The number of women parliamentarians decreased between the 1995 and 2000 elections, a sign that women shifted to the relative safety of civil society, which is also no longer outside the government’s reach. Experts note that “a large number of women in Zimbabwe are pre-eminently the silenced victims of politically motivated violence,” as rape and sexual violence against women leaders is often undocumented.³⁷ In 2002, as women met in the Young Women’s Christian Association facility in Harare to discuss their participation in upcoming anti-government protests, as well as many other issues, the police arrived, rounded up 370 women—many pregnant, with young children in tow, or elderly—transported them in trucks, and incarcerated them along with their young children for two days.³⁸ Despite such efforts to quell their activism, women continue to lead the movement for peace, democracy, and human rights. The non-governmental organization Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), for example, has gained increasing attention as its members mobilize for an end to violence and corruption through street protests, media, and publications.³⁹ Most recently, as they gathered in Harare for a prayer service following the parliamentary elections in March 2005, WOZA members—many of them mothers and grandmothers—were attacked by police, who arrested nearly 250 women, sending several to the hospital as a result of multiple beatings.⁴⁰

Women Preventing the Resurgence of Violence

As noted, the signing of a peace agreement does not mean immediate stability. Years of war are inevitably followed by years of transition. During this delicate stage, efforts must be made to ensure a successful transition from war and to consolidate peace. Those monumental tasks often fall under the umbrella of “peace building” and “reconstruction,” but are also components of structural prevention to avoid a return to violence.

As the survivors of violent conflict, women often bear the burden of ensuring that the transition to peace is complete. In many cases following war, men have fled or been killed, and women become the caretakers and providers for the family. They return to destroyed communities and begin rebuilding infrastructure; restoring and developing traditions, laws, and customs; and repairing relationships. In many cases, women work across the lines of conflict to conduct these activities, forging ties between previously warring communities and uniting them in a common task and goal. They draw on the knowledge and experience of their networks to formulate innovative strategies and programs to deter future violence.

Women contribute to all four of the components that form the foundation for sustainable peace: security, governance, justice and reconciliation, and social and economic development. In South Africa, women developed a new security framework—based on principles of human security—for the post-apartheid military.⁴¹ In El Salvador, women leaders designed a reintegration program that included the

needs of the community as a whole, not only former combatants.⁴² In Rwanda, women make up 49 percent of the parliament and are actively pressing for transparency and accountability at all levels of government.⁴³ Bosnian women are testifying as witnesses before the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia.⁴⁴ In East Timor, women are designing various options for transitional justice and reconciliation through the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation.⁴⁵ In Sierra Leone, women's groups are providing educational and vocational training for young people, primarily girls formerly in fighting forces, to ensure sustainable peace and prevent a return to violence.⁴⁶



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Women's contributions to achieving peace do not go unrecognized and partnerships with international organizations are on the rise. In the Millennium Declaration, UN member states resolved "to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger, and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable."⁴⁷ It is increasingly clear that countries that prioritize the needs and concerns of women and encourage their participation following war have a greater possibility of breaking the conflict trap, reducing poverty, and achieving sustainable peace.

The following examples illustrate cases where women are not only focused on building peace, but are explicitly working to prevent a return to violence. Their strategies are many and varied: women are conducting awareness-raising and peace education, developing early warning systems at the grassroots level, creating innovative reconciliation techniques, and partnering with donors to enhance these efforts.

In the **Pacific Islands** of Fiji, Bougainville, and, Solomon Islands ethnic conflicts, violence, and political turmoil have shaken the stability of the region. Although women have been marginalized from formal decision-making structures, they continue to play a vital role in brokering peace and promoting reconciliation in their communities.

In **Fiji**, women nonviolently intervened to protest a civilian-led coup in 2000 that held the prime minister and 30 others hostage in the parliament complex for 56 days.⁴⁸ Women's organizations immediately mobilized across ethnic lines and party affiliations to publicly denounce the coup and gather daily for a candlelight vigil that offered a sense of calm and hope to the general Fijian population. Since the crisis ended and elections were held in 2001, women have been conducting a broad spectrum of activities to prevent a return to violence and to continue progress down the path to democracy and peace. Women's organizations are promoting peace education and multi-culturalism, training local leaders to recognize early warning signs of conflict, and publicly monitoring the political and socio-economic life of the country. To ensure all Fijians are involved, the non-governmental organization FemLink Pacific has brought mobile radios to rural communities so that women can share strategies and testimonies of peace-building activities. Women's groups also directly partnered with the National Security and Defence Review Committee to ensure women's input was included in the defense review process in 2003; they made recommendations for the minister of women to participate on the National Security Council and for women to be represented at provincial and district-level security committees.⁴⁹

Women have experienced severe, and at times violent, consequences of the struggle for autonomy in **Bougainville**. Women used their involvement in church groups to establish peace initiatives and to petition the Papua New Guinea government to protect civilians and respect human rights. During the conflict between the Papua New Guinea government and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), women intervened as peace builders, landowners, and mothers. Women's groups obtained permission from the village chiefs, the Papua New Guinea government, and the BRA to negotiate with combatants. Women have demanded a substantive role in the peace process and continue to facilitate reconciliation and transitional justice. Three regional seats in the new provisional government have been set aside for women. In June 2005, 25 female candidates ran in the elections to establish the autonomous government, an important step forward for women's participation in the political arena.

In the **Solomon Islands**, women have advocated for peace within an environment of ethnic tension and violence. Women have used their traditional roles as mediators to engage in acceptable forms of conflict resolution. Women's groups, such as the National Council of Women and Women for Peace, distributed basic necessities and food assistance, appealed to militants to lay down their arms, enforced disarmament, and facilitated the reintegration of former militants into communities.

In May 2000, a group of women from **Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia** came together to advocate for their formal participation in the process of managing conflict and restoring peace in West Africa. This group of women would soon become the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) and were recognized for their contributions to peace building by the UN General Assembly with the 2003 UN Prize for Human Rights. As peace agreements have been signed throughout the region, MARWOPNET is currently combining traditional and modern methods of conflict prevention to ensure violence does not re-occur. It is active in rural and urban areas, working with political, traditional, religious, and civil society leaders to resolve inter-ethnic disputes. It distributes pamphlets throughout the countryside containing information on international instruments of human rights and conflict prevention as well as regional documents, such as the Economic Community of West African States' Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons. MARWOPNET conducts fact-finding missions to areas where tensions are emerging and brings this vital information and grassroots knowledge to the national, regional, and international levels, lobbying military leaders, government representatives, and the international community to ensure an early response. In recognition of the critical importance of MARWOPNET's work, the UN Department for Political Affairs made a significant grant from the Trust Fund for Preventive Action to bolster their efforts, particularly in Guinea.⁵⁰ MARWOPNET has used the funds to train "peace messengers" in local areas to ensure vital information on emerging tensions is captured, to organize workshops in rural areas on conflict prevention techniques, to conduct peace education media programs through film and radio, and to meet with high-level officials—including the prime minister—to obtain assurances that dialogue among political parties and civil society will continue.

Mindanao continues to hover between war and peace. Negotiations are conducted amid outbreaks of violence. Yet the peace constituency is gaining strength, and women are at the forefront of many efforts to end violence and consolidate peace, both in the official peace process and independently. Women have been involved in the development of a reconstruction framework for Mindanao through consultations with the Filipino government and have participated in the Local Monitoring Teams, established during the peace process to prevent and quickly resolve conflict.⁵¹

In addition, women's organizations are conducting programs directly with the public at national, regional, and local levels to encourage support for peace. In the capital, the "Women in White" conducted a 40-day silent demonstration in shopping areas and major streets, while the Mindanao Women's Group distributed "Peace" stickers on a massive scale.⁵² The Mindanao Commission on Women has been conducting community-level consultations to promote multiculturalism and peace, "even as it continues to advocate for the adoption of a national policy for peace and multiculturalism...The Mindanao Commission on Women believes that the women of Mindanao must make a case for respecting diversity and building a more inclusive Mindanao society" as one strategy in their efforts to end violence and secure peace in the region.⁵³

In February 2005, **Burundi's** citizens approved the country's new constitution by an overwhelming majority—91 percent of three million voters.⁵⁴ The document and the peaceful referendum approving it are major achievements in the Arusha peace process. An agreement was signed in 2000 that laid the foundations for a transition to democracy and peace. As noted by the International Crisis Group, "For the first time in more than a decade, [Burundi] could be headed towards a genuine end to conflict."⁵⁵ The constitution provides the legal framework for power sharing among the ethnic groups, but dialogue and reconciliation at the community level are key to building a sustainable peace. Women are at the forefront of such efforts. For example, 90 women from 10 provinces have formed the network *Dushirehamwe*, meaning "Let's Reconcile."⁵⁶ Through a variety of trust-building activities and inter-ethnic dialogue, *Dushirehamwe* leaders have worked with approximately 9,000 women at the community and provincial levels.⁵⁷ International Alert noted the broader impact of their activities: "The work of *Dushirehamwe* is increasingly gaining recognition and members are often requested to intervene to help defuse tensions within different communities."⁵⁸ In an example of local-international partnership to support women's role in reconciliation, the Women's Peace Center was established with support from the international non-governmental organization Search for Common Ground. The Center identifies community leaders and brings them together for training and dialogue on conflict resolution and reconciliation. In certain areas, the Center has conducted long-term series of exchanges to build trust and eventually break through the past with public testimony, pardons, and forgiveness.⁵⁹ Search for Common Ground notes: "By working directly with Burundian women, this program impacts husbands, fathers, and children, thus reaching Burundians in the military, the civil service, and at the grassroots level."⁶⁰

Conclusion

These case examples briefly illustrate the variety and creativity of women's strategic action to prevent conflict around the world. In some situations, the international community, including the United Nations and civil society, are capitalizing on women's efforts through financial and logistical support. These examples of effective collaboration should serve as models for future program design and implementation.

The following section elaborates on these examples, providing in-depth description and analysis of women's strategies and partnerships—they make a strong case for supporting women's preventive action.

CASE STUDIES AND MODELS: Women Preventing and Transforming Conflict

Iran: Women and Nonviolent Transformation

Summary of a forthcoming study

Introduction

The Iranian democratic movement is gaining momentum, and women constitute the major driving force behind this movement. Their support for reformist candidates at every level has proven to be a decisive factor in elections. In the presidential election of 1997, the support of women and the youth ensured the victory of Mohammad Khatami. During the presidential campaign in 2005, gender issues were on the platforms of most of the candidates, regardless of political orientation.

During the Khatami presidency, Iranians who voted for the reformists, as well as some political analysts, expected the executive and legislative branches to wield enough power to implement democratic reforms. However, the appointed Guardian Council and Expediency Council continued to overwhelmingly dominate the parliament and the executive branch. As a result, proposed bills and policies that were incompatible with the conservative doctrine were overruled. After several years of political tension, especially in the wake of the February 2005 massive disqualification of the reformist parliamentary candidates, the reform movement was forced to re-examine expectations—it had failed to fulfill its promises. Nonetheless, the movement succeeded in opening increased space for public discourse and raising awareness about democracy, freedom, and civil society in Iranian society. As the Khatami era comes to an end, Iran is clearly on a slow, yet irreversible, path to political change.

Women and women's rights issues play a central role in the movement for change in Iran. In spite of the repression and discrimination, women are laying the foundation for social transformation. Demographic changes have led to a new generation of young women with greater access to education, low fertility levels, and improved access to the job market. Women in Iran are highly educated—comprising 65-70 percent of university entrants—and are poised to participate more extensively in the economic and political sectors. They are at the forefront of the call for democracy and human rights, and they are using non-violent strategies to raise awareness and build support for equality and liberty.

At the same time, women activists are increasingly becoming targets of the conservatives' crackdown. Women journalists and activists, along with their male counterparts, run the risk of prosecution for their activities. Even Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner, has been subject to some political harassment. The regime's tactics constitute a major challenge to women's continuing efforts to promote equal rights and social transformation.

Background

The struggle for women's rights in Iran is interconnected with the political, religious, and social struggle to reconcile Islam, Westernization, and modernization in the country. In 1925, Reza Shah took control of Iran following a coup d'état. Women became a central symbol of his desire to modernize Iran. He introduced formal education for girls and abolished the hejab (Islamic covering). Reza Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Shah (the Shah), who ascended to the throne in 1941, continued the modernization policies of his father. In the early 1960s, a number of legislative changes were introduced, including full citizenship rights for women, women's political rights to vote and run for office, and improved rights for women under family law. The religious clergy were among the strongest opponents of these policies, arguing that they were against Islamic values and a threat to the family structure.

The revolution of 1979 brought the clergy to power and established a state based on Islamic ideology. The new state promised women respect and protection against Western imperialism. But women were stripped of many of the rights that they had gained during the Shah's regime. Sharia—Islamic jurisprudence—became the basis for women's inferior legal standing in the home and in society. The regime also restricted women's employment, resulting in a dramatic decline in women in the workforce. Ironically, at the same time, the regime manipulated women's participation as a tool to build legitimacy and prove that it had widespread public support. For example, the government encouraged women's participation in state-sponsored rallies and within the state-controlled political process.

During the Iran-Iraq war and in its aftermath, women began to speak out against legal discrimination and the lack of state support for family needs. By 1997, it was clear that women had become a potent political force in favor of reform, and they played a key role in ensuring the victory of Mohammad Khatami in the presidential elections. With the majority of the Iranian population under the age of 30, women are now an important component of the young demographic in the country. Women are active in all spheres of Iranian society, expressing their views and raising their voices for democracy.

Women and Channels of Dissent

Culturally, young people in Iran are increasingly finding ways to challenge the regime through their clothes, music, the arts, sports, and social interactions. Women in film are addressing once taboo topics such as adultery, domestic violence, prostitution, and oppression. Women are also rejecting discrimination in recreational activities, such as sports events. In June 2005, 26 young women defied the government ban on women attending soccer matches by pushing past the barricades of a stadium in Tehran to enter the stands. President Khatami, who was attending the game, ordered the women be given seats.⁶¹

In the political arena, women working inside the government are promoting women's rights. Women who occupy deputy positions in government ministries have allocated funds in the budget for women's empowerment and have expanded cooperation with civil society groups working for women's advancement. Women in the various ministries have organized workshops and educational programs to raise awareness about women's rights. Recently, 89 women registered to run in the presidential

elections out of a record number of 1,010 registrants.⁶² However, the Guardian Council subsequently barred the women candidates (as it had in the past), along with the majority of other candidates. The Guardian Council applies a strict interpretation of the constitution to bar women from becoming presidential candidates.⁶³ Women activists are pressing for a constitutional amendment to allow them to run for office in future presidential elections.⁶⁴ On June 12, 2005, approximately 450 Iranian women participated in a public demonstration in Tehran to demand equal rights.⁶⁵

Frustrated with the lack of political space available to them, many women have shifted their focus to civil society as a mechanism to promote women's equality. Through their involvement in NGOs, women have initiated educational programs and promoted women's rights, for example, by supporting female defendants on trial in criminal cases. Women's NGOs have organized diverse groups to plan public demonstrations and protests and have responded to government restrictions on NGO activities with creative solutions. When conservatives prevented NGOs from using public facilities, women began holding meetings in their homes.

The media has also become a vehicle to highlight women's rights issues. Various newspapers and magazines have been established by and for women. These media resources have addressed such issues as human trafficking and legal discrimination against women. Beginning in 2000, conservatives forced many of the reformist newspapers and magazines, including women's publications, to close. The Internet has become an alternative means of communication for the opposition movement. The government has responded by blocking web sites and targeting those who log onto opposition web sites. Despite government attempts to curb the activities, web sites and bloggers continue to express dissent, and many of the most vocal are women.

Conclusion

Women in Iran are at the forefront of social currents that are moving the country in the direction of reform. Women personify social transformation in Iran. As wives, daughters, and sisters, women are bringing the issues of equality and freedom into the private sphere. Women of all economic classes, including the lower middle class, where support for conservative and traditional values has been strongest, are among university students and workers in the formal sector. Women have the capacity to play a key role in building a broad, nonviolent social movement to change the political system.

Though the struggle for women's rights in Iran has been framed narrowly as a human rights issue, it has broader implications for the future of freedom and democracy in the country. The advancement of women's rights in Iran is closely intertwined with the larger struggle for democratic reform. Moving the country from theocracy to democracy will not be possible without women's full participation. As the international community struggles to devise strategies to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, win the war against global terrorism, and build democracy throughout the Middle East region, it will be vital for policymakers to offer continuing encouragement, support, and protection to women who are working inside Iran to press for lasting change.

Women in the Nonviolent Resistance Movement in Venezuela

Summary of a paper by Alexandra Belandía Ruizpineda

During the past five years, Venezuelan women have been defending democracy and participating in a nonviolent political opposition movement. As the president has increasingly imposed restrictions on democratic freedoms and encroached on the powers of the judicial and legislative branches, women have used nonviolent methods to protest these actions. Daughters, mothers, and grandmothers have been at the forefront of the defense of freedom, justice, equity, and peace against a backdrop of abuse and discrimination by the government. Women have organized diverse sectors of society, denouncing and courageously facing a regime that has demonstrated the capacity to repress any type of dissidence.

Women have used three types of nonviolent action: (1) protest and persuasion; (2) non-cooperation; and (3) intervention. Women have joined the resistance movement, openly opposing the regime's policies, particularly those that affect women and families. They have participated in public protests, often constituting more than half of the demonstrators, carrying flags and signs, blowing whistles, pounding pots and pans, and shouting slogans. Women have been involved in public Catholic masses and other organized events to highlight their desire for democratic freedom, and women's organizations have issued written statements of protest. Women have organized and led "asambleas de ciudadanos," meetings at the community level for community members to discuss nonviolent strategies and to plan public protests and activism.

The state has used killings and prison sentences as methods of repression, but these tactics have not been successful in quelling the resistance movement. During anti-government public demonstrations, authorities have wounded and killed protestors, including women. The regime has targeted women journalists for intimidation and many have been beaten and detained.

In 2001, women reacted to government education reforms by participating in public protests on the streets. Protestors opposed a presidential decree that would have established government-appointed inspectors with the authority to recommend the removal of teachers and administrators.⁶⁶ Women used the slogan, "Con mis hijos no te metas" ("Do not interfere with my children's education") in public rallies around the country.

On March 8, 2002, women from various states and towns throughout the country traveled to the capital of Caracas to march in support of International Women's Day. The public march concluded with speeches opposing the current regime and advocating for women's rights, family welfare, and democracy.

In 2003, Venezuela was rocked by general strikes, public demonstrations, violence, and state threats against media outlets and members of the opposition movement. Opposition and union leaders demanded a referendum to revoke the president's mandate. Women were vocal leaders of the call for the recall referendum. Women participated in the strikes and were among those who were killed in the violence that erupted when an unknown person shot at a group of demonstrators.⁶⁷ Women were fired from their jobs and at least one woman was criminally charged by the regime in retaliation for participating in the protests.

Across the country, in large urban centers and small rural towns, women collected many of the signatures calling for the referendum. Supporters of the referendum, including many women, risked personal retaliation by providing their own names, identity card numbers, signatures, and fingerprints on the forms. The government rejected the signatures, despite the fact that they satisfied the legal requirements. Women played a leading role in the effort to successfully collect and verify the signatures for a second time through the "reparos" (appeals process). On August 15, 2004, the day of the referendum, large numbers of women voted and worked in polling stations around the country. President Chavez claimed victory in the vote, although the democratic opposition in Venezuela and various foreign observers considered it fraudulent. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Carter Center observers accepted the official results, but noted that the process "suffered from some irregularities, politicization, and intimidation."⁶⁸ Women were among those who were arrested and criminally charged by the government for denouncing the irregularities.



Jack DuVall, President, International Center for Nonviolent Conflict and **Alexandra Belandia Ruizpineda**

“Venezuelan women have emerged as leaders and, despite attempts by the state to intimidate them, they continue challenging the status quo and the current regime.”

— Alexandra Belandia Ruizpineda

In 2005, the government instituted penal code reforms that limit freedom of expression and obstruct protest activities. The amendments expand the criminal penalties for violating “desacato” (“disrespect”) laws. These laws criminalize actions that insult or disrespect government authorities. The amendments also increase the penalties for slander and libel offenses. For example, if a statement is made in a document distributed to the public, the penalty for defamation is up to four years in jail and a fine of US \$27,000.⁶⁹ This law has consequences for women who have carried signs in public demonstrations and displayed posters in the windows of their houses denouncing the regime. The new laws also criminalize the use of pots and pans and other protest techniques that women have used successfully; such activities can now be punished with penalties ranging from jail to fines.

Venezuela continues to struggle for its freedom, and women are central to the country's recovery. Women have played a prominent role in the history of Venezuela in politics, art, and culture. They continue to participate in a very substantive way. Venezuelan women have emerged as leaders and, despite attempts by the state to intimidate them, they continue challenging the status quo.

Women in Conflict Prevention: Macedonia

Excerpt of a paper by Violeta Petroska-Beška

Macedonia is an ethnically divided society. Separated by language and religious differences, ethnic Macedonian and Albanian communities live parallel lives, with little cross-ethnic communication and much mutual mistrust. After the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, when the Republic of Macedonia became an independent state, the gap between the two communities expanded. Parallelism turned into separation in all spheres of life.



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Political parties were defined along ethnic lines—ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians gathered around separate parties; all of them claiming that they were fighting for democracy while they used radical nationalism to gain political support. The emerging civil society was also ethnically divided. The vast majority of NGOs, even those with conflict resolution and human rights agendas, were perceived to be either ethnic Albanian or ethnic Macedonian. During the early 1990's, a large number of women's NGOs emerged around the country. The new women's NGOs also established themselves within ethnic boundaries. These NGOs, despite common agendas, appealed solely to members of their own ethnic communities.

Armed conflict erupted in Macedonia in 2001. The conflict was widely viewed as a clash between the Albanian and Macedonian ethnic communities. The minority-majority issue was a central factor: Ethnic Albanians, constituting about 25 percent of the population, were dissatisfied with their status as a minority within the Republic of Macedonia.

Under the Framework Agreement that ended the armed conflict, the Albanian language became the second official language of the country, ethnic Albanians were promised proportional representation in all public sectors, and the process of transferring power from central to local governments was launched together with a reorganization of the territorial units based mostly on ethnic composition. The outcome deepened the gap between the communities; ethnic Albanians were perceived to be the clear winners.

Currently, there is significant mistrust between the two communities. Overcoming this mistrust and preventing future conflict will require cross-ethnic communication and cooperation at the grassroots level. Women in Macedonia have already played a vital role in these efforts.

Women in Civil Society

The Macedonian Women's Lobby is an example of fruitful inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict prevention by women. Founded in March 2001 as a gender task force initiated by the Stability Pact, it gathered women representatives of all political parties in the country, regardless of their ethnic background, around a shared agenda—to increase women's participation in political and public life and improve gender equality in all segments of society.

During the armed conflict in 2001, the Macedonian Women's Lobby managed to preserve its multiethnic composition—ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian women continued their communication. The women differed in perceptions and views but attended regular meetings and shared their personal experiences from the conflict zones. Women activists supported each other in their peace work; women from different ethnic groups were able to find a common language to discuss the conflict and fight for peace.

At the beginning of the conflict, the Lobby issued a written appeal for peace and security. Members met with the group Women in Black and prepared a joint declaration against violence and unrest in Macedonia. Unfortunately, women were excluded from the formal negotiations that ended the conflict. After the signing of the Framework Agreement, the Lobby issued a public announcement in support of peace, expressing its support for the agreement at a time when the Macedonian ethnic community considered the agreement to be a major threat to the country's sovereignty and integrity.

In the past four years, the Women's Lobby, supported by women's NGOs, has managed to initiate and achieve changes in legislation to require a quota to ensure greater women's representation in Macedonia's Parliament and to guarantee an increase in the number of women campaigning in local government elections. The Lobby has also pressed for improvement of working conditions for women and for an extension of maternity leave.

Reforming the Civilian Police Force

The necessity of creating ethnically mixed police patrols as part of the trust-building process in Macedonia opened a window of opportunity for women's inclusion. Women's participation in the police force was seen as a way to bridge the gap between the Albanian and Macedonian ethnic communities. Research conducted in Macedonia indicated that stereotypes that normally constitute the enemy image did not apply equally to men and women. In general, negative characteristics that "we" assign to "our" enemies related to male figures—women were not seen as real enemies. Because of these views, women police officers were able to play a role in decreasing the tensions and preventing future inter-ethnic conflict in the country.

Bridging the Divide Through Education and Training

Women have also been involved in efforts to reform the education system to bridge the existing inter-ethnic divide. Programs have been developed, with substantial involvement by female teachers and other professionals, to teach students techniques of peaceful conflict resolution, expose them to the "other" side's views of history, and offer a safe space to initiate and implement joint projects and activities. Female ministers of education have been particularly receptive to facilitating the implementation of these programs.

The Role of Nigerian Women in Conflict Prevention and Transformation

Excerpt of a paper by Emem J. Okon

In the Niger Delta, the prolonged economic crisis has been accentuated by the exploitation of oil and gas resources as part of the government's quest for greater revenues and the oil companies' bid for higher profits. Exploration, construction of the pipeline network, and production have led to frequent oil spillage. The consequences have been disastrous, as the region has suffered massive pollution of land and water, flora and fauna. The destruction of local economies has aggravated poverty, unemployment, and food shortages and fueled an environment of anger, bitterness, frustration, tension, and conflict.



Emem J. Okon, Program Officer, Niger Delta Women for Justice and **Violeta Petroska-Beska**, Co-director, Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution (Skopje) and Network Member, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace*

“Women’s organizations are at the forefront of calls for constitutional reform, social justice, respect for human rights, and the promotion of democratic principals.”

—Emem J. Okon

The communities of the Niger Delta have organized, often based on ethnicity, into youth groups, women's groups, and social movements to resist the activities of the oil companies and the government. Despite the subordinate status of women in Nigerian society, they are integral to the peace process in the Niger Delta. Women's organizations are at the forefront of calls for constitutional reform, social justice, respect for human rights, and the promotion of democratic principles.

Women's role in conflict transformation began in the mid-1990s with demonstrations for peace and has gained momentum throughout the years. They are currently the leading community representatives seeking nonviolent solutions with the oil companies. Women's organizations are also actively addressing violence among various ethnic and religious groups throughout Nigeria.

Women have intervened using written and oral appeals, persuasion, mediation, and protest. Women draw on traditional methods to broker peace, such as the threat to march naked in the streets—a strategy that has proved effective on several occasions, as men respond rather than endure this form of humiliation. Protests and demonstrations are often signs of frustration and exasperation, but they serve to mobilize the community and often lead to direct action.

Escravos Women's Protest: The women's intervention at the Chevron-Texaco terminal in southeastern Nigeria in July and August 2002 is now seen as a landmark in the evolution of women's role in preventing violence in the Niger Delta. Their nonviolent demonstrations and sit-ins at the facility mobilized international media and provided a tool for negotiation, which enabled women to obtain more concessions from the oil companies in one week than men had achieved in more than 30 years. The company pledged to build schools, clinics, town halls, and electricity and water systems in surrounding communities. By deciding to launch their own protest, women challenged the role assigned to them—as housewives—and have changed their position in the community as a result.

Niger Delta Women for Justice: In January 1999, amid heightened tensions and military attacks, the Niger Delta Women for Justice staged a peaceful march in the streets of Port Harcourt to demonstrate against the activities of Shell and the Nigerian government, protesting the military occupation of communities, human rights abuses, rape, and assault of women by state security agents. The women, dressed in black and carrying placards—one of which read “let us dialogue”—marched to the government house and delivered a letter to the current military administrator of Rivers State. Niger Delta Women for Justice subsequently participated in official conflict transformation meetings and conferences, such as the consultative forum with the Minister for Women's Affairs in Gambia in August 2000.

Aroibo Ijo Women's Development Association: In response to the Ijaw/Ilaje conflict in Ondo state, the Argbo Ijo Iyoro Beni (Argbo Ijo Women's Development Association) is carrying out a project titled, “Let the Widows and Orphans Live,” which aims to promote peace through supporting the widows and orphans of the communal war between the Ilajes and the Ijaws. This project has led to the opening of the waterways linking the two ethnic groups, which was blocked as a result of the conflict.

Ogbakiri Women's Peace Forum: This organization strives to maintain peace in the Ogbakiri region, drawing on religion as a foundation for their activities. The Ogbakiri Women's Peace Forum mobilized grassroots and elite women in a letter writing campaign to the Rivers State government, advocating for the restoration of law and order in Ogbakiriland during the 2004 crisis. The women also consulted with traditional rulers in Ikwerre, who subsequently advised the state's Attorney General to establish a judicial commission of inquiry into the Ogbakiri crisis. This development enabled a dialogue between warring parties and also established an environment for the women to organize peace and victory rallies in the villages. Victims were encouraged to rebuild their homes, and youth were reintegrated into the community. The Ogbakiri Women's Peace Forum contributed funds to rebuild the bus stand and restore the market square destroyed during the crisis.

The Role of Zimbabwean Women in Promoting Conflict Transformation and Democratic Reform

Excerpt of a paper by Mildred Sandi

As part of the escalating political crisis in Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe and his political party have cracked down on opposition leaders and placed severe restrictions on civil society, the media, open expression, and freedom of assembly. In response, the women of Zimbabwe are leading protests against the violence and corruption of the current government. Since the 2004 introduction of a parliamentary bill to monitor and restrict non-governmental activities, donor funding is slowing for civil society. This has an impact on women, in particular, as most community-based organizations are run by women who, for example, care for the thousands affected by HIV/AIDS.



Mildred Sandi, President,
DP Foundation (Bulawayo)

The impoverished region of Matebeleland is a case study in the life of individuals across Zimbabwe. The community faces a legacy of violence, political pressure, and imbalances in resource allocation compounded by the current democratic and political crisis. In response, local women established the DP Foundation in Bulawayo with a mission to “rebuild a lost community through bio-psychosocial counseling, information sharing, conflict transformation, mentoring, and enhancement of skills.”

The DP Foundation is a participating institution in the United Nations Development Programme and Government of Zimbabwe training project in conflict transformation, mediation, and negotiation skills. This has raised the organization’s profile and expertise. It has also participated in an advanced conflict management training course in Guinea, focused on enhancing women’s capacity to negotiate and mediate, implemented by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Centre for Conflict Resolution in South Africa.

As a result of such international partnerships and support, women leaders have extended their knowledge and skills through national and local-level training to manage and transform conflict. In partnership with the Centre for Conflict Resolution in South Africa, the DP Foundation trained 20 Zimbabwean women leaders, heads of non-governmental organizations, members of parliament, and media representatives in five days of conflict transformation workshops. With the goal of mainstreaming conflict transformation in the Zimbabwean education system, the DP Foundation trained senior leadership and regional directors of the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Culture in conflict transformation, mediation, and negotiation. Finally, the DP Foundation brought dispute resolution and problem solving skills to the local level by training senior leaders of the Ministry of Local Government in Matebeleland.

Sponsored by Finnish civil society, and in partnership with the Southern African Conflict Prevention Network, the DP Foundation enhanced its regional leadership in conflict transformation by organizing and hosting a one-week regional conference on conflict prevention and peace building. The workshop included civil society, former

combatants, government representatives, and members of rival political parties in Zimbabwe. Discussion topics included historical causes of conflict, land and constitutional reform, and innovative means to transform the conflict in Zimbabwe. Additionally, in partnership with the Southern African Conflict Prevention Network and UNIFEM/Zimbabwe, the DP Foundation organized and coordinated a regional workshop on mainstreaming gender, HIV/AIDS, and human rights in conflict prevention and peace building.

In addition to implementing conflict transformation trainings, the DP Foundation works in partnership with other women's organizations to advocate for policy changes on issues of democracy and conflict transformation within the Zimbabwean system. For example, civil society groups, including the DP Foundation, advocated successfully for the establishment of a gender-balanced independent electoral commission with a mandate to oversee the March 2005 parliamentary elections.

Women and Conflict Prevention in West Africa

Excerpt of a paper by Modem Lawson-Betum

Women in West Africa have been increasingly active as agents for peace, and, to some degree, have been able to influence peace processes. While the results of their efforts might be limited, their positive contribution points to the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peace building processes at the decision-making level. To achieve lasting peace and stability in West Africa, it is essential to facilitate women's participation and the integration of a gender perspective in peace processes and peace agreements. The international community, including the United Nations, should seek to establish constructive partnerships with prominent, well-placed women's associations to develop conflict prevention strategies at national and sub-regional levels.

Women's associations in West Africa have been reliable interlocutors and efficient partners in conflict prevention and peace building for several reasons. First, they have a sound knowledge of the internal dynamics and the potential and real threats to national and sub-regional stability. Secondly, these organizations are well connected with the grassroots and with all key decision makers, including senior government officials, civil society organizations, and opposition parties. Third, they enjoy commendable regional and international recognition in view of the high quality of their leadership, the aggressiveness of their advocacy, and their ability to maintain independence from external influence.

The activities of prominent women's associations in the sub-region have confirmed the dramatic shift in women's roles in conflict situations from the traditional domestic, educational, and humanitarian activities to the more public and challenging role of promoters of peace. As both witnesses, and principal targets, and victims of horrendous war-related atrocities and other gross human rights violations, women more than anyone else can testify to the high human and material cost of war. Significant in this regard is the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET).

The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET)

The idea of creating a sub-regional women's peace network stemmed from the realization by a group of Liberian women, that as the principal targets and victims of conflicts, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone, "women should have a say in the decisions regarding those conflicts." This idea led to a preparatory meeting (facilitated and hosted by ECOWAS in Abuja) to establish a sub-regional project for and by the women of the Mano River countries that would complement nationally driven activities to consolidate peace, prevent future conflicts, and create sustainable peace, stability, and development. The Abuja meeting resulted in the formal establishment of the Network on May 6, 2000.



Modem Lawson-Betum,
Senior Political Affairs
Officer and Team leader,
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UN Department for
Political Affairs

"As both witnesses and principal targets, and victims of horrendous war-related atrocities and other gross human rights violations, women more than anyone else can testify to the high human and material cost of war."

— Modem Lawson-Betum

MARWOPNET is headquartered in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and comprises three Chapters (Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone) working in close coordination. The Network comprises women from all walks of life, including prominent and experienced leaders (former politicians/heads of state, ministers, and parliamentarians), businesswomen, media practitioners, religious and/or community leaders, and rural workers.

MARWOPNET uses a combination of traditional and modern methods of facilitation/mediation to promote conflict prevention and peace building. MARWOPNET has established a wide network of contacts at national and sub-regional levels. These include: (1) mobilization and sensitization cells in rural areas; (2) focal points for liaison with political leaders and civil society organizations, traditional/community leaders, and religious leaders who can help resolve inter-ethnic disputes; (3) lobbying groups dealing with influential political and traditional leaders, as well as with prominent personalities and highly respected tribal figures who have leverage over senior government officials, including army officers.

The success of MARWOPNET can also be attributed to the high degree of political and professional experience of the leadership of the Network and its ability to access all key players from the top to the grassroots with clear and convincing messages. The Network leadership usually brings to the attention of the political and traditional authorities worrisome and well-documented developments that could grow into armed confrontations if not decisively and urgently addressed.

MARWOPNET is actively involved in the dissemination of peace messages targeting all key segments of society, including senior government officials and other political leaders; civil society organizations, youth, traditional and community leaders; and the media. MARWOPNET has been able to disseminate, in Guinea, 6,000 copies of the ECOWAS Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons. MARWOPNET has also distributed thousands of copies of a document entitled, "The Mano River Union; realities and perspectives," as well as copies of international legal instruments regarding human rights, conflict prevention, and the rights of women and the child. MARWOPNET is also involved

in capacity building and training programs, especially for traditional communicators and participants in lobbying and mediation/facilitation initiatives.

MARWOPNET has also been engaged in fact-finding visits to sensitive border areas experiencing emerging tensions. Those visits were generally followed by appeals to political and traditional authorities, as well as to civil society organizations, especially women and youth, to help defuse those tensions.

Although serious administrative, financial, and logistical constraints hinder MARWOPNET's capacity, it has registered a significant track record in the promotion of peace, stability, and development in the sub-region. Its main achievements include:

- a) *Enhanced public awareness about the crucial importance of promoting and preserving peace in the MRU sub-region and the role of women in this regard:* MARWOPNET has been able to establish a wide network of sensitization units and focal points in the three countries for the dissemination of a culture of peace, stability, and respect for human rights.
- b) *Contribution to the peaceful settlement of local disputes and the enhancement of security:* The Guinean chapter has been instrumental in finding a negotiated settlement of disputes between local government authorities and trade unions representatives, especially in the provinces of Guekedou, Faranah, and Nzerekore. MARWOPNET also helped recover an important arms cache in 2004 in Nzerekore.
- c) *Regional and international recognition:* The good standing and profile of MARWOPNET have earned it an observer status within ECOWAS, invitations to attend various international conferences/seminars, and the receipt of an international prize for its contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights.
- d) *Promotion of dialogue among the MRU leaders:* The Network convinced Presidents Taylor, Kabbah, and Conte to rise above their mutual suspicion and distrust to engage in dialogue. This led to the holding of the Rabat Summit under the auspices of the King of Morocco.
- e) *Contribution to the peace process in Liberia:* A group of Liberian women leaders representing MARWOPNET participated actively in the Accra Peace Negotiations facilitated by ECOWAS, which resulted in the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The delegation also elaborated a women's platform for implementation of that peace agreement.

Department of Political Affairs Partnership with MARWOPNET

In its efforts to maintain close working relations with civil society organizations active in conflict prevention and peace building in West Africa, the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) deemed it timely to develop a strategic partnership with MARWOPNET. The ultimate objective was to avert the looming risk of instability in Guinea, which could severely undermine or reverse the significant gains made by the international community in restoring peace to Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The DPA project, funded from the Trust Fund for Preventive Action in the amount of \$122,000, is geared towards three objectives: (1) to assist MARWOPNET to strengthen its capacity to promote conflict prevention and peace building both at national and sub-regional levels; (2) to facilitate harmonization and synergy among the national stakeholders in Guinea in the political, economic, and social domains to avert hardening of the political debate as well as possible violence; (3) to help MARWOPNET disseminate a culture of peace and stability in Guinea, drawing principally from traditional methods of conflict prevention. The project was intended to help MARWOPNET prevent the high political tensions prevailing in the country from developing into protracted instability or degenerating into open civil conflict. Ultimately, MARWOPNET was to facilitate/promote the resumption of political dialogue among the ruling party and opposition party leaders towards reaching a national consensus on key governance issues.

MARWOPNET has achieved significant progress, especially with regard to: (1) sensitization and training of “traditional communicators” acting as “peace messengers;” (2) public information and dissemination of a culture of peace, and (3) promotion of dialogue among the national political actors. MARWOPNET has organized five regional training workshops on conflict prevention and resolution techniques involving traditional communicators. As a result, MARWOPNET has now established a large network of “traditional communicators” covering the five regions of the country.

MARWOPNET carried out the following activities to promote a culture of peace:

- a) production of the first documentary film on the value of peace and stability;
- b) sensitization campaigns with community radios in Kissidougou, Faranah, and N’Zerekore (forest region); Kankan (Higher Guinea) Mamou (Middle Guinea); and Kindia and Boke (the Lower Guinea);
- c) printing and distribution of posters containing peace messages;
- d) sensitization campaigns in schools in urban and rural areas in Guinea Forestiere.

In an effort to promote dialogue among the different political actors, MARWOPNET held meetings on peace and security issues with senior government officials and traditional and religious leaders in Gueckedou, N’Zerekore, Kankan, Mamou, and Kindia, whom all welcomed MARWOPNET’s peace initiatives and committed themselves to play a facilitating role in settling local disputes. The government officials also pledged to facilitate the resumption of dialogue with opposition party leaders with the active participation of civil society organizations.

DPA’s partnership with MARWOPNET has been an innovative entry point for promoting dialogue among national stakeholders on key governance issues. Similar UN partnerships should be envisaged with other prominent civil society organizations to enhance the capacity of those organizations, including through the provision of adequate financial and logistical support. A key challenge facing those organizations remains the identification of qualified women leaders determined to mobilize the relevant groups around a well-articulated agenda for peace. International governmental and non-governmental organizations must take the lead in providing capacity building support to local women’s groups to enable them to take their activities from the grassroots to the peace negotiation table.

Strengthening the Gender Components of Early Warning and Prevention Efforts

Excerpt of a paper by Maha Muna

The threats to civilians, and especially women, in conflict situations have underscored the need to incorporate gender analysis into early warning activities and the opportunity for preventive measures to strengthen women's protection.

Preventive measures have the potential to avert disputes before they erupt into violent confrontations. In his June 2001 report on conflict prevention, the UN Secretary General called on the Security Council to incorporate protection of women's human rights in conflict prevention and peace building. The Security Council has since called on UN organs and agencies to develop and implement appropriate preventive strategies by enhancing early warning capacity and drawing information from a variety of sources (S/PRST/200/25). To develop this strategic approach, the Brahimi Report (S/2000/809) went further in calling for the UN to develop sharper tools to gather and analyze relevant information. Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security underscored the need for such measures to support local women's peace initiatives for conflict resolution and to increase women's participation, full involvement, and decision-making roles in all preventive measures. Security Council Resolution 1366 further reinforced the importance of the role women can play in peace building.

UNIFEM is conducting a two-year programme, "Strengthening Information Collection and Analysis on the Situation of Women in Conflict Situations" with the goal of strengthening the gender components of early warning and preventive actions. The two-year program consists of the following components:

- a) Development of indicators, in partnership with the UN system, NGOs, regional, and sub-regional organizations, including the development of approaches for collecting and analyzing information.
- b) Gender conflict analysis at the country level so that UNIFEM can better inform the rest of the multi-lateral system (including Common Country Assessments/UN Development Assistance Framework, Millenium Development Goal Reports, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers).
- c) Strengthened information dissemination on women, peace, and security issues through the inter-governmental process, particularly the Security Council and in support of Department of Political Affairs and Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Under this programme, UNIFEM is developing and field-testing gender based early warning indicators in three locations: Colombia, the Ferghana Valley, and the Solomon Islands.



Maha Muna, Programme Manager and Officer in Charge, Governance, Peace, and Security Unit, UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Colombia: UNIFEM is developing gender conflict indicators and mechanisms for information collection and analysis along with partners and stakeholders, including the Early Warning System of the Colombian Ombudsman, the only system of its kind in the region. This new information and early warning project will enhance UNIFEM's efforts to mainstream gender and will use the existing network of direct and indirect partner organizations in information gathering. It will further build the capacity of women's and social networks to analyze information, disseminate findings, and advocate for peaceful conflict resolution. A media strategy will target key journalists and media outlets. The Early Warning project in Colombia is being implemented with an awareness-raising campaign that links activities in the Andean



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and Central American sub-regions. UNIFEM is also partnering with the “Mesa Mujer y Conflicto Armado” coalition, which was specifically founded to produce information about women's experiences with conflict in preparation for the visit of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

Ferghana Valley: UNIFEM, in close cooperation with on-going UNDP initiatives on early warning, will enable its partners in three parts of Central Asia to cooperate in collecting and sharing information and advocating for a gender sensitive approach, as well as strengthening the collection of sex disaggregated data and the analysis of the impact of conflict on women. A special focus of this project is the relation between gender, land rights, water management, and conflict. Women are directly affected by possible conflicts related to water, as they are most often responsible for domestic and community

water management, which is increasingly a source of conflict in the region. Two information products will be produced every six months, which will be available on www.womenwarpeace.org: *Gender Risk Assessment Brief and Barometer of Women's Organizations' Contributions to Peace-building*. The Gender Sensitive Early Warning System will provide governments, NGOs, and international organizations with information for crisis prevention and for balancing the restructuring of the economy with the social costs of transition.

Solomon Islands: UNIFEM is implementing its Early Warning Indicators project in partnership with local NGOs and several governmental agencies. The pilot project will expand previous work done in the region on data collection and statistics. In addition to a broad range of political and economic considerations, the indicators being developed in the Solomon Islands will, for example, capture aspects of the effect of land disputes that remain unresolved and escalate over time within communities and will also monitor media content reflecting women's experiences and concerns. The pilot is also examining the gendered dimensions of gun ownership and women's involvement in “gun free village” programs in order to develop indicators that reflect the impact of excessive militarization in the country.

As a result of these three pilots and programming on Women, Peace, and Security, UNIFEM will:

- a) Develop gender-based early warning indicators in collaboration with national women's organizations and mainstream institutions;
- b) Highlight the impact of conflict on women to support enhanced protection and promote women's human rights and gender equality in post-conflict reconstruction;
- c) Increase awareness of, and support for, women's role in conflict prevention.

The Pacific Islands: Preventing the Escalation of Conflict Through Mediation

Excerpt of a paper by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

Women have suffered the brunt of the violence during conflicts in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Bougainville. Many of these violations remain invisible because they have not been documented. In addition, women have been greatly marginalized from formal decision-making structures. Yet, despite these obstacles, women were instrumental in brokering peace during the height of crises and continue to play a vital role in building and sustaining peace in their communities.

Fiji

The Fiji Islands, the largest group of islands in the central Pacific and the most multiracial, has twice during its 34-year independence experienced the illegal overthrow of a democratically elected government—on May 14, 1987, and on May 19, 2000. Although women participated on all sides of the conflict in Fiji, even as supporters of the coup perpetrators, they have been particularly visible as supporters of peace. Throughout Fiji's history, women and civil society groups have repeatedly mobilized to call for the release of political hostages, a return to parliamentary democracy and the upholding of principles of good governance, democracy, and rule of law. Women have also been instrumental in maintaining a degree of calm and infusing hope during the coups. Although women in Fiji have traditionally been perceived as the peacemakers in the home and family without a voice in community or public affairs, they have initiated efforts to advocate for peace and justice. Even though women have generally been excluded from mainstream decision-making processes, they have successfully used traditional networks to collectively address issues and concerns in response to continuing political instability in Fiji.

In May 2000, Fiji experienced a military coup and a hostage crisis. Women organized public events to promote peace and protest the situation. A multiethnic group of women held a daily vigil, which became known as “The Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil,” to bring different communities and groups together to pray for peace and unity in the country. Women known as the “Mothers in White” gathered at the parliamentary complex to pray for the hostages.

Women also responded with initiatives ranging from practical relief assistance to early documentation and reporting of human rights abuses. For example, The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre addressed the needs of families, especially women and children. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement focused on the legal and human rights implications of the political developments that followed the coup. Women and women's civil society groups also documented gender and ethnic-based violence in communities.

Women's groups reached out to the military to advocate for their concerns. In 2000, the National Council of Women Fiji met with members of the military council and other senior officers. The women's delegation presented what has become known as "The Women's Letter." It outlined various suggestions, particularly the need for Fiji to return to parliamentary democracy and for the military to uphold the 1997 Constitution as the supreme law of the country.



Sharon Bhagwan Rolls,
Secretary, Women, Peace,
and Security Committee
of Fiji and Network Member,
*Inclusive Security: Women
Waging Peace*

The political instability in Fiji and weakened rule of law stemming from the crisis have exacerbated the direct and indirect discrimination against women. Since 2000, reform bills and other lobbying efforts for women's equality have been obstructed, judicial processes have become chaotic, poverty in general has increased, and democracy has been subverted, with obvious impacts on women. In addition, the Bill of Rights and other articles on equality have been ignored by the new government.

In response to this situation, various NGOs, including the National Council of Women, have attempted to increase awareness of women's legal rights through seminars, workshops, and other activities. The National Council of Women Fiji is working to increase women's participation in politics in preparation for the 2006 elections. Recently, the National Council of Women Fiji convened a national consultation and an NGO task force to increase the numbers of women in decision-making positions and to strengthen the women's agenda in preparation for the 2006 national elections.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has become a vital tool in ongoing policy advocacy initiatives by women's peace groups and networks. For example, femLINKpacific: Media Initiatives for Women was established in September 2000 to provide an additional viewpoint to the coverage of issues by the mainstream media. femLINKpacific has documented and produced a range of community-based productions to share its perspectives and those of partner NGOs and civil society organizations regarding the implementation of Resolution 1325. It has also stimulated greater awareness

of international policy commitments to enable more women to participate in decision making for peace.

In December 2003, the National Council of Women Fiji and the Fiji Women, Peace, and Security Coordinating Committee formulated submissions to the National Security and Defence Review regarding women's concerns. However, to date, no formal acknowledgment of the women's submission has been provided and the National Security Defence Review report remains a "closed document."

The Solomon Islands

In 1998, economic frustration and ethnic tension violently erupted between two factions in the Solomon Islands. Until October 2000, when a peace agreement was finally signed, insecurity, violence, and unrest characterized daily life in the nation. As a result, women experienced displacement, rape, harassment, and economic hardship, as the central government was unable to provide necessary security and basic social services to provinces.

Despite their victimization in this conflict, women played a vital role in creating and maintaining peace at the community level. Women used their traditional go-between role to assist in conflict resolution. For example, in the Areare culture, women intervene by using their clothes, words, or body contact. A woman can stand between two warring parties and challenge them by uttering words such as: "Enough is enough. Stop fighting. If you continue to fight after my words, you have worked over my legs." Among the Areare, any male contact with a woman's body is tambu (forbidden) and requires compensation, especially if the man is an in-law or brother of the woman. After the woman speaks these words, the fighting must stop immediately and negotiations for reconciliation and compensation must begin.⁷⁰ Women were able to use this authority to encourage dialogue between the parties and resolution of the conflict.

The National Council of Women, which is comprised of many women from church-based women's groups, led women's call for peace and democracy during the conflict. The NCW made appeals for peace directly to the militants and offered food assistance to them. The Council mobilized women of rival ethnic groups to organize formal exchanges of food and supplies. The exchanges occurred at checkpoints set up by warring factions. Women even enforced disarmament by bravely moving between the "bunkers" of different combatant groups, persuading men to lay down arms.⁷¹

Women for Peace, formed as a network of women of all ages, religions, walks of life, and provinces, conducted various activities including: meeting with militants, government and police representatives; participating in ceasefire talks; organizing weekly prayer meetings; holding forums and conferences; and visiting displaced families, the hospital, and provincial communities. WFP members encouraged the reintegration of young militants and mobilized to provide assistance for people in need, regardless of ethnicity. At great personal risk, members also helped to distribute essential basic items to displaced families.

Unfortunately, women were not incorporated into the formal peace process in the Solomon Islands. Although women played a pivotal role in persuading parties to open dialogue, women's organizations and other civil society groups were excluded from the official negotiations that eventually led to the peace agreement. However, women were nominated as members of the weapons collection committees that were part of the Weapons Free Village campaign. The campaign was designed to encourage communities to play an active role in eliminating illegal weapons from the villages. As part of this campaign and through other initiatives, women have continued to play an instrumental part in the demilitarization process.

The patriarchal culture in the Solomon Islands has also prevented women from playing a more active role in formal economic and political life in the post-conflict phase. Currently, women are severely under-represented in decision-making bodies in the Solomon Islands. There are no women in the 50-member Parliament or in any of the provincial assemblies. Only one woman has ever served as a Member of Parliament and as a Minister.

The visible signs of underlying tensions remain in the country and there is clearly the need to strengthen the women's peace network and to assist these groups to learn how to advocate and negotiate at the policy level. Women also need to be supported in their efforts to address human rights violations, especially all forms of violence against women.

Bougainville

Since the independence of Papua New Guinea in 1975, the district of Bougainville has been engaged in a struggle for autonomy. In 1989, the struggle turned violent when the Bougainville Revolutionary Army sabotaged the major mine on the island and the Papua New Guinea government responded by sending in security forces and declaring a state of emergency. The violence, and the economic blockade on the island that was imposed by Papua New Guinea in 1990, resulted in gender-based violence and a health crisis that had significant effects on women. Despite daily challenges to their basic survival, women actively established, led, and participated in peace initiatives to resolve the crisis. Women were especially active within church structures, which had their own women's groups in place, and used them to facilitate cooperation among groups. Women developed a critical link between communities that had been torn apart by the destruction of infrastructure and communication links.⁷²

In September 1994, a delegation of 105 women traveled to the Catholic Women's Federation Conference in Port Moresby. The women negotiated with the airline to take them to the conference at a time when no planes were allowed in or out of the island. The delegation presented a petition to the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, urging him to protect civilians on the island. The Port Moresby Bougainville Inter Church Women, in a series of petitions to the national government in March 1997, emphasized the importance of dialogue in resolving the crisis.

In August 1996, the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum, led by women from United Church, Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and Pentecostal churches, staged a Women's Peace Forum with the theme, "In Search of Genuine Peace and Reconciliation." More than 700 women made the difficult journey to attend the conference. The Peace Forum emphasized the need for women to take part in decision-making bodies at the village, district, and provincial levels.

During the early 1990s, women were among the first to intervene as peace builders, traditional landowners, and mothers. Women met with the combatants of the BRA and sought out their sons in the bush and encouraged them to lay down their weapons. At the same time, women also worked within the combatant groups, such as the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom. The BWPF network was established as a peace-building initiative for women living in the jungle in BRA-controlled areas. Women met in the jungle, organized prayer vigils, and distributed relief assistance to widows and displaced families.

The effectiveness of women's actions was reinforced by the fact that Bougainville is a matrilineal society, in which women are accorded respect and authority. The peace initiatives by women on both sides of the conflict gave birth to the process of reconciliation and opened up mediation and negotiations among the BRA, the people, and the Papua New Guinea government.⁷³ Unfortunately, this authority did not influence national-level decision making. In 1998, despite women's successful efforts to implement a permanent cease-fire, women were left out of national-level negotiations and post-conflict programs. Despite women's prominence in the peace process, women received only 6 of 106 seats in the appointed Bougainville/Papua New Guinea People's Congress in May 1999.⁷⁴

On June 15, 2005, the first autonomous government of Bougainville was sworn in. Women were involved in the Bougainville Constituent Assembly that formulated the new constitution. Three regional seats (North, South, and Central) in the new provincial government have been set aside for women, and women can also contest other seats in their own constituencies. Twenty-five women were candidates for the three reserved seats in the June 2005 elections to establish the Bougainville Autonomous Government. Although women candidates faced considerable challenges in their campaign efforts, running for the set-aside seats allowed them to make initial inroads into formal politics in Bougainville.

Conclusion

Underlying causes of division remain among groups in Bougainville, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands. Such divisions will continue to affect women and impact reconciliation efforts within and among communities. Women have demonstrated the ability to effectively work together at the local level, but there is a need to strengthen women's and peace networks at the regional level. Women must have the support to develop a women's agenda for peace at the local, national, and regional levels. Otherwise, untreated wounds may develop into renewed conflicts. A reconstruction plan for the Pacific's arc of instability will not be complete without an equitable inclusion of women in the design, delivery, and evaluation of all development programs and plans.

ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX 1: Conference Agenda

Opening Session: Welcome, Goals, and Framework 9:00 – 9:30am

Swanee Hunt, Chair, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace*
Johanna Mendelson Forman, Senior Program Officer, Peace, Security,
and Human Rights, UN Foundation

Panel I: Conflict Prevention and Nonviolent Transformation 9:30 – 11:15am

Introduction and Framing the Field

Facilitator: Jack Duvall, President, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict

Case Study: Venezuela

Alexandra Belandia, Democratic Union of Women

Case Study: Iran

Assyeh Mir, Visiting Scholar, Boston University

Case Study: Serbia

Marija Marovic, former activist, Otpor

Panel II: Preventing the Escalation of Conflict 11:45 – 1:30pm

Introduction and Framing the Field

Facilitator: Johanna Mendelson Forman, Senior Program Officer, Peace,
Security, and Human Rights, UN Foundation

Case Study: Nigeria

Emem Okon, Coordinator, Niger Delta Women for Justice

Case Study: Zimbabwe

Mildred Sandi, President, DP Foundation and member, Southern African
Conflict Prevention Network

Case Study: Macedonia

Violeta Petroska-Beska, Co-Director, Center for Human Rights and Conflict
Resolution and Network Member, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace*

Panel III: Preventing the Resurgence of Violence

1:45 – 3:30pm

Introduction and Framing the Field

Facilitator: Elisabeth Kvitashvili, Director, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, US Agency for International Development

A UNIFEM Perspective on the Role of Women in Preventing the Resurgence of Violence

Maha Muna, Programme Manager, Governance, Peace, and Security, UN Development Fund for Women

Case Study: Fiji

*Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Coordinator, FemLink Pacific: Media Initiatives for Women; Secretary, Women, Peace, and Security Committee of Fiji; and Network Member, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace**

Case Study: Mano River Region

Modem Lawson-Betum, Senior Political Affairs Officer and Team Leader for West and North Africa, Department for Political Affairs, United Nations

Closing Session: Brainstorming Recommendations for Capitalizing on Women's Conflict Prevention Efforts

3:30 – 5:00pm

*Moderators: Swanee Hunt, Chair, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace* and Carla Koppell, Deputy Director of the Washington Office, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace**

APPENDIX 2: Speaker Biographies

Alexandra Belandía Ruizpineda belongs to the new and emerging political generation of her country that is fervently struggling for democracy. She is the granddaughter of Leonardo Ruíz Pineda—a real icon of Venezuelan democracy and the symbol of a political generation with moral and ethical values. He was one of the founders of the *Acción Democrática* political party and the “Head of the Resistance” against the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez, later killed by the ruling regime. Ms. Belandía earned her B.A. in advertising and marketing, graduating summa cum laude. She also received educational credit to further pursue studies in the United States where she graduated cum laude for a B.S. in Speech Communications at Emerson College. Ms. Belandía was appointed Culture Director of the *Universidad Santa María* where she involved students in cultural activities never carried out before and was also a professor at the School of Social Communications working in the area of creativity. Currently, she continues to work on the political and social activities related to her country, organizing workshops and activities at a community level, and offering guidance to these communities. Ms. Belandía also strongly promotes the defense of the democratic system and participates in rallies and marches taking place throughout the country.

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, a Fiji Islander, is currently the Pacific region focal point for the Women's International Network of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters and the Pacific region's coordinator for the Global Media Monitoring Project. She also serves on the Reference Group of the AUSAID Pacific Media Communications Facility. Ms. Bhagwan-Rolls became a fulltime media professional in 1986, starting out in radio and working her way up the ranks from on-air presentation to award-winning copywriter to station management. By the end of 1999, she chose to leave the mainstream media and rededicate herself to the women's movement, becoming secretary of the National Council of Women Fiji from 2000 to 2004. In September 2000, she and others founded a women's media organization called femLINKpacific. The organization focuses on increasing the visibility of gender issues and women's stories within the context of crisis and to ensure conflict prevention by developing, producing, and distributing community media initiatives. Ms. Bhagwan-Rolls was a member of the Fiji Government delegation to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and was appointed by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women to the expert group meeting on women and media in 2002. She has presented numerous papers and conducted training on a range of issues, including women's media advocacy and the implementation of UN commitments to women, peace, and security.

Jack DuVall is the founding Director of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. He was the Executive Producer of the two-part Emmy-nominated PBS television series, “A Force More Powerful” and co-author of the companion book of the same name (Palgrave/St. Martin's Press 2001). He has published op-eds and articles, most recently in *Newsday* (3/17/03), *Insight Magazine* (9/9/02), *Sojourners Magazine* (9/10/02), and *Le Monde* (10/28/02). He has been cited in such publications as *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Vancouver Sun*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. Mr. DuVall is also a veteran television executive and writer. Mr. DuVall was Vice President for Program Resources

of WETA, Washington, DC, and previously was Director of Corporate Relations of the University of Chicago. He was also the Director of Industry Compliance, Cost of Living Council, Executive Office of the President, and an officer in the US Air Force. His writing includes speeches for presidential candidates in four national campaigns. He holds a B.A. degree (cum laude) from Colgate University and serves as a member of the board of sponsors of Morehouse College (Atlanta, Georgia) and an associate of the Centre for Justice and Peace Development at Massey University (Auckland, New Zealand).

Johanna Mendelson Forman is the Senior Program Officer for Peace, Security, and Human Rights at the United Nations Foundation. Prior to joining the UN Foundation, Dr. Mendelson was senior fellow at the Association of the United States Army's program on the Role of American Military Power in the 21st Century. For the last eight years, she has held senior positions at the United States Agency for International Development and most recently as Senior Policy Advisor for the Bureau for Humanitarian Response where she managed the Agency's policy on post-conflict reconstruction, security, and governance. From 1998 to 1999, she served as Senior Social Scientist and Attorney at the World Bank's newly created Post Conflict Unit, an assignment from USAID. In 1994, she was appointed as a Senior Advisor to the newly created Office of Transition Initiatives. She also was one of the founders of the Conflict Prevention Network, a coalition of donor nations working together to coordinate and support the reconstruction of war-torn societies. Dr. Mendelson holds a faculty appointment at The American University's School of International Service in Washington, DC, and at Georgetown University's Center for National Security Studies. She is on the Advisory Board of Women in International Security and also serves on the board of the Institute for World Affairs. Dr. Mendelson holds a J.D. from Washington College of Law at The American University, a Ph.D. in Latin American history from Washington University, St. Louis, and a Masters of International Affairs, with a Certificate of Latin American Studies, from Columbia University in New York.

Swanee Hunt is founder and Chair of Hunt Alternatives Fund, a private foundation advancing innovative and inclusive approaches to social change at local, national, and global levels. In addition, she is the Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where she also teaches. During her tenure as US Ambassador to Austria (1993-97), Hunt hosted negotiations and several international symposia to focus efforts on securing the peace in the neighboring Balkan states. Building on her extensive work with US non-governmental organizations, she became a specialist in the role of women in post-communist Europe, leading to the July 1997 "Vital Voices: Women in Democracy" conference of 320 women leaders in business, law, and politics, and the film documentary "Voices." Her work in Europe prefaced the creation of *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace*, which advocates for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes. Ambassador Hunt is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She has authored articles for American and international newspapers and professional journals including *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Boston Globe*, *Denver Post*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Rocky Mountain News* and writes a nationally syndicated column for Scripps Howard News Service. Her book, *This Was Not Our War: Bosnian Women Reclaiming the Peace*, was published by Duke University Press in January 2005 and won the 2005 L.L. Winship/PEN New England Award for non-fiction. Ms. Hunt holds a B.A. in philosophy, two master's degrees (in psychology and religion), and a doctorate in theology. She is married to symphony conductor Charles Ansbacher; they have three children.

Carla Koppell is Deputy Director of Hunt Alternatives Fund's Washington, DC office. She is also a Senior Advisor to the Conflict Prevention Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Previously, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Special Assistant to the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and Director of the USAID climate change program. Ms. Koppell also has worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the European Union. She is author of *Preventing the Next Wave of Conflict: Understanding Non-Traditional Threats to National Security* and also has authored and edited a range of publications on forestry and the environment. Ms. Koppell received her master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She is married and has three much-loved sons.

Elisabeth Kvitashvili is Director in the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation at the United States Agency for International Development. She is a career foreign service officer with tours in Afghanistan, Russia, and Honduras. She has also spent significant time in the Caucasus, Nepal, Philippines, Bosnia, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Eritrea working primarily on humanitarian and conflict-related programs. She previously served three years as the Director of the Disaster Response and Mitigation Division in the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and one year in the Office of Transition Initiatives as a senior program officer. She holds a master's degree in Near East Studies from the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies and a diploma in International Relations from Paris University School of Political Science. She is fluent in French, Spanish, and Russian.

Modem Lawson-Betum is a Senior Political Affairs Officer and Team Leader for West and North Africa in the United Nations Department for Political Affairs. He has been working to prevent and end conflict in West Africa for years, holding various positions at the United Nations in New York, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia. Prior to joining the United Nations, Mr. Lawson-Betum served as the Director of Political and Legal Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of his native Togo and in various Togolese diplomatic missions abroad. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Grenoble (France) and a master's degree in International Relations and diploma of Diplomatic Training from the International Relations Institute of Cameroon.

Marija Marovic is a former activist with Otpor, a nonviolent student movement in Serbia working to unseat Milosevic in the mid and late 1990s. In 1999, she joined Otpor ("Resistance") as a member of the marketing and press teams and took part in conceiving and carrying out a variety of street actions and performances to mock and "un-disguise" the regime and its nature. She helped develop stickers and posters, as well as other promotional material to carry Otpor's message, create a recognizable public image, and encourage others to join the democratic movement. Ms. Marovic also organized several exhibitions of Otpor's work in-country and in Paris and Berlin and participated in meetings with foreign officials and representatives of various organizations. Finally, Ms. Marovic was a member of the delegation that received the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Human Rights Award on behalf of Otpor in 2001.

Assyeh Mir, currently a visiting scholar at Boston University, is a workshop trainer on women's rights and civil society. Across Iran, she has educated and raised the capacity of women, including government employees. A political scientist who specializes in Iranian women's political status, she has written numerous books, research reports, and articles on women's political life and the political history of her country.

Maha Muna is Programme Manager and Officer in Charge at the Governance, Peace, and Security unit of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Programming in 27 countries around the world includes supporting women's leadership and political empowerment; improving protection and assistance for women in conflict situations; and supporting women's role in peace building, especially through bringing a gender perspective to constitutional, legislative, judicial, and electoral reform. Ms. Muna holds a master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University's School of Public and International Affairs. Ms. Muna also studied at Beirzeit University in Ramallah in the Occupied Palestinian Territories after earning a B.A. at the University of California in Santa Barbara. Prior to her current post at UNIFEM, Ms. Muna served as Deputy Director of the Women's Commission (IRC) for four years. She has also worked at the International Rescue Committee where she held several positions including Regional Director for the Great Lakes region, Acting Country Director for Azerbaijan, and Program Officer in headquarters geographic sections. Ms. Muna worked for Save the Children/US before joining the IRC.

Emem J. Okon holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science. She is the coordinator of the non-governmental organization, Niger Delta Women for Justice, the executive director of Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Centre, and the coordinator of the Rivers States Chapter of the National Coalition on Affirmative Action. Ms. Okon is also the local coordinator of International Alert's project, Enhancing the Capacity of Leaders of Women's Organizations towards Peace building in the Niger Delta. In recognition of her work in the area of women's empowerment, the Rivers State Branch of the Civil Liberties Organization honored her with the Funmilayo Ransome Kuti award in 2003. Ms. Okon also received the 2004 Woman of the Year Award by the American Biographical Institute.

Violeta Petroska-Beska is a professor of psychology and the co-director of the Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution at the Sts. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Macedonia. As a researcher and activist specializing in multiculturalism and peace education, she designs and implements diversity and conflict resolution curricula for students in ethnically diverse classes from preschool through university level. She has a long-lasting practice of working with women's NGOs on empowering women to take a more active role in society. Dr. Petroska-Beska's professional experience includes a ten-month engagement as a senior fellow at the US Institute of Peace from 2000 to 2001. She holds an MA from Columbia University's Teachers College and a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Belgrade.

Mildred Sandi heads the DP Foundation, a women's organization conducting community-level conflict transformation and capacity building. Ms. Sandi is also a fully qualified mediator and conflict transformation trainer and an active member of the Southern African Conflict Prevention Network.

Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace,

a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes around the world. More than 400 members of the “Waging” network, all demonstrated leaders with varied backgrounds, perspectives, and skills, bring a vast array of expertise to the peace-making process. They have met with more than 3,000 senior policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts.

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