BACKGROUND BRIEF

The Next 15 Years of Resolution 1325: Charting a Path Forward

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Fifteen years is both a short and long time. Since the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security in the year 2000, there have been both significant advancements and dramatic shortfalls in global efforts to advance women's inclusion in preventing, resolving, and rebuilding from conflict. Against a backdrop of progress in international, regional, and national policies, how can key actors improve implementation so that women's decision-making in peace and security increases at all levels? As collaborative approaches to peace become the prerequisite, how can governments and civil society work together to deliver inclusive and sustainable peace? And how can women continue to advance their leadership in this realm in the face of unconventional security threats?

These were the questions that civil society and several international government leaders grappled with as they gathered in Washington, DC, on October 13, 2015, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of Resolution 1325. As the UN released a global study commissioned by its secretary-general reviewing progress on women, peace, and security and the Security Council conducted an open debate on the topic, women leaders from Inclusive Security's Women Waging Peace Network and interested civil society representatives gathered at the US Institute of Peace. Their goal was to discuss these policy developments and to highlight the issues they see as most critical for advancing women's leadership, conflict prevention, and peaceful societies in the decades to come, with a view to informing their collective advocacy agendas. The group was co-hosted by the US Institute of Peace; Inclusive Security; the US Civil Society Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security; and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security at the UN.

A number of ideas for action emerged from the roundtable meeting and small-group discussions, which focused on three broad objectives: to translate policies into progress; bridge divides between governments and civil society; and advance women's leadership in addressing unconventional threats.[1]

Translate Policies into Progress

How can more progress be made to implement policies relating to women's decision-making in peace and security issues at national, regional, and international levels? This question was addressed by the first break-out group, which suggested the following pathways: strengthen leadership; generate political momentum; and hold governments accountable.

Strengthen Leadership

The proportion of women in parliament, which correlates with peaceful societies, has nearly doubled over the past 20 years.[2] In Africa in particular, women's leadership has advanced in politics and other policymaking positions that influence peace and security, such as the African Union. Yet the percentage of women in parliament globally remains extremely low at 22 percent, and the proportion of women leading security forces is lower still. Referring to security policy in particular, one participant reported that "in top places where strategic decisions are made, there are no women."

In addition, participants reported that very often "once a woman is in a leadership role, she is on her own." Legislation—often in the form of quotas for women—has helped some women get into decision-making positions. But after gaining power, women face prejudice and other obstacles that men don't, and legislation does not account for this. As such, women need more support to lead effectively and implement the changes that Resolution 1325 has promised, particularly in the form of mentorship.

Indeed, even when national and regional policies on women, peace, and security are in place, progress on implementation often depends heavily on leadership, whether male or female. "Once a [friendly] head of state is out of power, we don't have a guarantee that the successor will be useful," one participant said. As a result, those looking to advance the women, peace, and security agenda need to go beyond policy to address deficits in leadership that adversely affect implementation. Institutionalized and funded capacity building for policymakers, security actors, and civil servants on these issues could help move beyond relying on the political will of the leadership at the top.

Generate Political Momentum

Politicians often need incentives to include issues relating to women, peace, and security in their campaigns and in their actions while in office. Civil society organizations can influence political leaders and generate political will for advancing this agenda using a carrot or a stick, or both.

Public campaigns can apply positive or negative pressure on government leaders, or some combination of both, depending on what's more likely to be successful in the local context. This kind of advocacy can pressure leaders into taking action by highlighting shortcomings in women's inclusion, or it can inspire them to do so with evidence of how women are advancing peace, whether locally or globally. In Afghanistan, for example, while international actors pressured the government from the outside to include women, Afghan women exploited their own politicians' rhetorical commitments to women's inclusion in order to publicly push for change in practice while also providing concrete ideas on how to achieve change. Some participants emphasized that though a "naming and shaming" approach works well in some contexts, it can prove counterproductive in others. In the latter case, providing positive examples of how women have helped to improve peace and security elsewhere may work better to inspire male leaders to adopt a more inclusive approach in their own countries. One participant suggested that the UN or regional bodies should issue a monetary prize for countries that perform well on women, peace, and security, to incentivize change.

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National, regional, and global social movements can also be invaluable tools when it comes to advancing women's participation in peace and security processes and strengthening political will. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which emerged from the world's largest women's conference held in Beijing in 1995, is an example of this. Tens of thousands of nongovernmental activists mobilized and organized locally and regionally

before coming to Beijing to advocate to government participants and to shape a global agenda for gender equality. This ultimately led to the passage of Resolution 1325 and a dramatic increase in awareness and initiatives at the intersection of women's leadership and peaceful societies. Participants at this discussion pushed for a new global initiative for advancing women, peace, and security 20 years after the Beijing Conference. "We need a movement," one participant said, "That's why Beijing was so successful." Another linked the global campaign to "Bring Back Our Girls" to local impact in Nigeria, after hundreds of girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram. Although few of the girls have been freed, one participant remarked, "If there hadn't been global advocacy, the issue would still be on the back burner." Participants highlighted the need for similar social media campaigns to generate more global awareness for grassroots activism on issues around women, peace, and security.

Hold Governments Accountable

As more than 100 countries and regional bodies made declarations and commitments at the open debate in the UN Security Council,[3] meeting participants in Washington offered suggestions for holding governments accountable to the promises they've been making on issues relating to women, peace, and security for the past 15 years and more.

Some participants suggested that citizens can use national action plans (NAPs) for implementing Resolution 1325 as a tool for holding their governments to account. These national-level strategies are comprehensive coordinating mechanisms for integrating gender throughout a country's defense, diplomacy, and development processes. As one participant remarked, "Our NAP is not very strong, but it is a recognition and a place to begin from. It is a hook for women in our country to say, 'Based on this NAP, it is our right [to participate]'." Participants highlighted the importance of these strategies, particularly for civil society organizations, to provide a "hook" for advocacy with governments on institutionalizing women's inclusion in their policies and programs.

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A number of participants underlined the importance of local ownership if this tool is to be effective: "People need to understand that this is not just a piece of paper from the UN. This is created for us, to make our lives better." A sense of ownership can be fostered if communities are involved in the development of these frameworks and in consultation processes that follow.

Independent monitoring bodies can also be used to track a government's and security sector's progress in implementing the commitments laid out in the NAP or other legislation relevant to women, peace, and security. "We have the laws," said one participant, "it comes

down to whether we are going to monitor them." In countries where the judicial system is strong, civil society organizations may be able to approach the courts when legislation relating to women's inclusion is not being implemented. Depending on the context, legislative bodies may also use tools such as legislation or committee oversight mechanisms to hold governments accountable for and make improvements to NAP implementation. While one participant reported that monitoring the implementation of national legislation can be very difficult given the complexity involved, another suggested more measurement of progress across countries as well as within countries. "We are unclear on universal markers for progress," she said, proposing a global accountability index with universal scoring that could help to measure each country's progress on implementing Resolution 1325.[4]

Bridge Divides between Governments and Civil Society

How can civil society organizations, governments, and multilateral bodies better work together to advance women's leadership in peace and security when such coordination is desired or required? The small discussion group that addressed this question suggested the following ideas for action: ground Resolution 1325 at the grassroots; create space for civic engagement on women, peace, and security; and shift the international spotlight beyond the usual suspects.

Ground Resolution 1325 at the Grassroots

"1325 is a policy from top to bottom; we should not forget that," one participant remarked, reflecting on the funding flows to governments as a result of Resolution 1325 that do not always trickle down to civil society organizations working toward these goals on the ground. Women had been working for more inclusive approaches to peace and security long before governments signed on to Resolution 1325, but "the realities on the ground never merged with the UN level," another participant said. "The local voices never made it into the [resolution]."

> Help engaged citizens to articulate the connection between their work and Resolution 1325 so they can better influence policy.

Today, many women working to realize the goals of the women, peace, and security agenda remain unfamiliar with the international frameworks that they could use as a tool to justify their work in the eyes of their governments and secure greater support. As a result, many participants identified a need to ground Resolution 1325 and associated governmental frameworks at the grassroots—in other words, to make engaged citizens aware of Resolution 1325, show relevant groups how they can—or already do—actualize it in their work, and help them articulate this connection so that they can influence policy and gain support.

This grounding can in turn facilitate collaboration between government agencies and civil society organizations working to implement the goals of Resolution 1325. One participant suggested the creation and implementation of NAPs offers a logical entry point for such cross-sectoral partnerships. However, many cautioned against tokenistic partnerships and collaboration that is often limited to the creation of the NAP without any participation in the implementation phase. In order to be meaningful, participants suggested that partnerships on NAPs need to be continued through implementation and should include building the institutional capacities for collaboration on both sides.

Create Space for Civic Engagement

Participants identified a need for governments and civic organizations to prioritize creating more "space" for their work—in other words, advancing laws, policies, and practices that facilitate rather than restrict nongovernmental organizations' work on women, peace, and security. In some places, the social space for this work appears to be shrinking—from militant groups' encroachment in Afghanistan to government restrictions on funding for nonprofits in Egypt. However, participants also shared examples of how they have increased the space for their work in a variety of challenging settings, so that civil society and government can balance each other and better advance women's security and peace writ large.

> Bridge divides within civil society, take a structured approach to influencing the government, and use effective spokespeople to champion the cause.

Many suggested that if civic organizations could bridge divides within civil society, take a structured approach to influencing the government, and use effective spokespeople to champion the cause, they could create more space to engage the government in the advancement of their work on women, peace, and security. In this context, several participants raised the need for greater advocacy support in terms of "speaking" to the government in a language that it can relate to, as state and international organizations frequently associate "expertise" with use of particular terminology. In Sudan, for example, the Taskforce for the Engagement of Women,[5] comprised of male and female peacebuilders, used strategic advocacy that combined a number of these elements to lobby for an inclusive national dialogue for two years before being invited to join the male-dominated process in 2015. "So space is small, but there are some opportunities for engagement," said one participant.

Others emphasized the need for national and foreign governments to provide women working to advance peace and security with the moral support, financial resources, physical protection, and access to networks necessary to carry out their work effectively. In Kenya, civil society's significant involvement in creating a new constitution led to significant com-

mitments to gender equality and peace, but much work remains to be done to realize these tenets in practice.

Shift the International Spotlight Beyond the Usual Suspects

International engagement can play a significant role in helping governments realize their commitments to the women, peace, and security agenda. Participants argued that external governments and multilateral bodies like the UN need to pressure governments to advance inclusive peace in their countries. In particular, international donors can incentivize governments to take action by linking funding to women, peace, and security goals. For example, many countries seeking accession to the European Union or membership in NATO are incentivized to enact national action plans. However, in many cases, these international actors may need to change or go beyond their conventional approaches if they're to succeed—particularly in terms of whose agendas they advance and whom their actions affect.

"People are so focused on policymakers, they forget where 1325 is really happening," one participant noted. For example, members of the international community tend to focus excessively on providing support for and highlighting the voices of those in cities at the expense of smaller communities, and amplify male voices in a way that is unrepresentative of the society at large: "They expose themselves to the same kinds of people and perspectives on the situation." Yet if international actors listen to and amplify the voices of those who are already marginalized and, in particular, recognize women's contributions to peace in their societies, they could increase the likelihood that national decision-making on peace and security issues could become more inclusive and effective.

> Incentivize governments to take action by linking funding to women, peace, and security goals.

External governments and multilateral bodies also need to reflect on their own practices. "We need to be humble enough to say we have not mastered this ourselves," one participant said, referring to Western governments, "This is an iterative process for all of us." In addition to demanding that governments in the Global South adopt a gender-balanced approach, multilateral organizations and governments in the Global North need to reflect inclusion and gender equality in their own policies and initiatives. One participant highlighted that in Sudan past mediation bodies have been composed primarily of men and remarked, "How can we convince our people [about inclusion] if these bodies created by the international community are all men?"

Advance Women's Leadership in Addressing Unconventional Threats

As the realm of peace and security expands beyond traditional inter-state conflict, what actions can help to advance women's leadership in addressing unconventional threats, such as violent extremism and Ebola? The break-out group considering this question suggested the following ideas: recognize and support women's contributions to minimizing these threats; change the narrative to transform attitudes about women's roles; and increase the evidence base showing the benefits of an inclusive approach for society as a whole.

Recognize and Support Women's Contributions

Governments have been struggling to respond adequately to unconventional and evolving threats, from climate change and mass migration to violent extremism and pandemics in fragile states. Yet women in civil society are stepping up to meet these challenges. In Liberia, for example, while local clinics were forced to close and hospitals proved unprepared for the crisis, "women were on the frontlines as caregivers in their families and communities," one participant said. She explained that before international organizations arrived, Liberian women were adapting their caregiving techniques to help prevent the spread of the disease despite scarce resources. In the absence of protective gloves, for example, one woman devised a way to use plastic bags to wrap her hands and avoid contamination—the "plastic bag method" then became widely used. When international funding was secured, women served as frontline community workers, going from house to house to teach others how to prevent the spread of the disease.

As threats in Syria continue to evolve—"from the government to extremist groups to bombings by Russia"—other participants reported that women working for peace in their communities have continually adapted their approach. Initially focused on securing democracy, women's rights, and human rights, groups of women would go door to door in their communities and meet with women in their homes: "If the regime showed up, [they] would just be a group of women having coffee." As the conflict escalated, active women shifted their focus to delivering first aid and humanitarian aid. In areas controlled by ISIS, al-Nusra, and other militant groups, they kept working in secret, creating an alliance of organizations so that if an individual is targeted in one, the others can campaign for her release. Apart from elderly men or male combatants, "There are no men in many of the areas,"

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the participant recounted, "they are either dead or detained or refugees." Women are targeted in different ways, but are frequently better positioned to carry on peacebuilding work below the radar.

Participants agreed that those looking to support peace as well as women's advancement should recognize the courage and achievements of women who are confronting unconventional threats and provide them with increased financial and technical support. Rather than relegate women's work to "women's issues," decision-makers should support women's contributions as effective peace and security tools, learn from their creative approaches, and help them inform broader policies to address unconventional threats.

Change the Narrative to Transform Social Norms

When it came to ideas for advancing women's leadership in preventing and countering these threats, many participants chose to look beyond the conventional focus on UN frameworks and government policies. Instead, participants emphasized a need to transform attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate women's marginalization. They suggested that changing dominant narratives about women's roles in decision-making could help transform social norms in this regard by showing women's substantive contributions to addressing security threats. And while "the UN needs to be engaged in these [endeavors], changing psyches requires influence from both sides, top down and bottom up, at the same time."

To this end, participants suggested new approaches to telling women's collective stories; the use of online, multimedia tools; engaging with family members so that attitudinal change could start at home; and emphasizing women's meaningful participation in decision-making beyond the number of women included. In terms of target audience, "we really need to work on the psyche of the men who work in decision-making," said one participant. "They don't pay any attention to women's intelligence, skills, and knowledge. That is the problem in our countries."

> End the exclusion of women in decision-making around peace and security more broadly.

Indeed, many of the suggestions for overcoming the marginalization of women in national and international efforts to address unconventional threats reflected a larger need to end the exclusion of women in decision-making around peace and security more broadly. Regarding the focus on meaningful participation, contributors suggested that "this applies to everything from peace process to NAP implementation, as well as women's inclusion in security forces. It's not about numbers or percentages, it's about real decision-making power and influence."

Demonstrate the Benefits of an Inclusive Approach

Some who resist more inclusive approaches to countering unconventional threats do so because they are unaware or unconvinced of the benefits of an inclusive approach. "Men have not realized that women can really be effective when it comes to bringing peace in the communities and societies in their countries," said one participant. Others resist because they believe a new approach is not in their interest and "worry they will have to give up power."

As a result, participants suggested a need to build the evidence base to show how effective inclusive approaches are against unconventional and conventional threats, and the benefits of these approaches for society as a whole—both men and women. This should not be considered a zero-sum equation; men should work with women, youth, and others who are typically excluded from decisions about these threats because it's in the interest of society as a whole.

In a similar vein, participants underlined the fact that "gender" is not limited to women—to integrate a gender perspective into every security decision is simply to adopt "a different way of looking at the roles women and men play in society, power imbalances, and [to take] that into consideration." Again, there was concurrence that these tactics should apply to both conventional and unconventional security threats.

Pathways Forward

In the past 15 years, much progress has been made in the development of international, regional, and national frameworks on women, peace, and security. The day this meeting took place, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2242, its eighth on the subject. While these diplomatic achievements were highlighted, civil society leaders report that implementation of these commitments has not kept pace. The rhetoric around inclusion does not match the reality on the ground in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and many global powers still don't practice what they preach.

Nonetheless, there are a number of entry points for accelerating progress before the 30th anniversary of Resolution 1325 arrives, as this group identified. Civil society organizations, governments, and multilateral agencies will need to work together to translate policy into practice and tackle a variety of threats to inclusive security and sustainable peace. Listening to the voices of women already building peace in their societies—as so many who attended this meeting are—can contribute to a robust foundation for action in the years to come.

About The Institute for Inclusive Security

Inclusive Security is transforming decision making about war and peace. We're convinced that a more secure world is possible if policymakers and conflict-affected populations work together. Women's meaningful participation, in particular, can make the difference between failure and success. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. We have also bolstered the skills and influence of women leaders around the world. Together with these allies, we're making inclusion the rule, not the exception.

Endnotes

1   This note reflects the three discussion group topics established by the co-hosts and the rapporteur's interpretation of the conversations that followed—it does not necessarily represent the views of all participants.

2   UN Women, "Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation," www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures. On the correlation between women in parliament and peace, see Erik Melander, "Gender equality and intrastate armed conflict," *International Studies Quarterly 49*, no. 4 (2005): 695–714; Mary Caprioli and Mark Boyer, "Gender, Violence, and International Crisis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (August 2001): 503-518; Erik Melander, "Political Gender Equality and State Human Rights Abuse," *Journal of Peace Research 42*, no. 2 (March 2005): 149-166.

3   As documented by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security and formally submitted to the UN Secretary-General by the Spanish Mission to the United Nations, 30 October 2015.

4   For more information concerning Inclusive Security's NAP monitoring and evaluation tools please visit: actionplans.inclusivesecurity.org/.

5   The Taskforce for the Engagement of Women in South Sudan and Sudan is a cross-national group of peacebuilders that has been mobilizing women for peace and advising the government on both sides of the border since 2013. The Institute for Inclusive Security supported the creation of the Taskforce and continues to support its advocacy work.

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