

Introductory Note on the 1325 initiative

The International Women's Day (8 March) in 2000 was particularly an extraordinary day for the United Nations. That day, the President of the Security Council issued a statement that formally brought to global attention the till-then unrecognized, under-utilized and under-valued contribution women have been making to preventing war, to building peace and to engaging individuals and societies live in harmony. The members of the Security Council recognized that "peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men" and affirmed "the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for peace and security."

The conventional impression of women as helpless victims of wars and conflicts was overtaken, at least in principle, by the assertion of the role and contribution of women in fostering peace in their communities and beyond. Thereby, the conceptual and political breakthrough was achieved in the Security Council and the seed for its historic norm-setting resolution 1325 on women and peace & security was sown.

The core focus of UNSCR 1325 is women's participation at all levels of decision making and thereby structure the peace in a way that there is no recurrence of war and conflict. That is why women need to be at the peace tables, women need to be involved in the decision-making and in the peace-keeping teams, particularly as civilians to make a real difference in transitioning from the cult of war to the culture of peace.

TEXT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL STATEMENT SHOWN BELOW:



8 March 2000

Press Release SC/6816

PEACE INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN SAYS SECURITY COUNCIL, IN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY STATEMENT

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The following statement on the occasion of International Women's Day was issued today by the President of the Security Council, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh), on behalf of the Council:

As the first International Women's Day of the new millennium is observed throughout the world, members of the Security Council recognize that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men. They affirm that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. In this context, members welcome the review of the Fourth World Conference on Women as an essential element in achieving this goal.

Members of the Council also recognize that while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly affected. The impact of violence against women and violation of the human rights of women in conflict situations is experienced by women of all ages. Women also constitute the majority of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons.

Members of the Council note that although women have begun to play an important role in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building, they are still under-represented in decision-making in regard to conflict. If women are to play an equal part in security and maintaining peace, they must be empowered politically and economically, and represented adequately at all levels of decision-making, both at the pre-conflict stage and

during hostilities, as well as at the point of peacekeeping, peace-building, reconciliation and reconstruction.

Members of the Council also note that during times of armed conflict and the collapse of communities, the role of women is crucial in preserving social order, and as peace educators both in their families and in their societies, thereby playing an important role in fostering a culture of peace in strife-torn communities and societies.

Members of the Council call upon all concerned to refrain from human rights abuses in conflict situations, often in gender-specific ways, respect international humanitarian law and to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and a culture of peace.

Members of the Council recall the obligation to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of international humanitarian law, while welcoming the inclusion as a war crime, in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), of all forms of sexual violence and noting the role the Court could play to ending impunity for perpetrators of such crimes.

Members of the Council stress that efforts should be strengthened to provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women in conflict situations.

Members of the Council underscore the importance of promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes while addressing armed or other conflicts.

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