

THE STOCKHOLM FORUM ON GENDER EQUALITY

WHOSE SECURITY? GENDER AND GLOBAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL SECURITY

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OVERVIEW

The linkage between peace, security and gender (in)equality was established within the wider global community when the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was adopted in 2000.

The different stakeholders working for global, regional, national and individual security had not previously focussed on gender equality and the integration of gender perspectives. Today, several security and defence organisations globally, regionally and nationally have taken steps to implement the WPS agenda and to achieve gender equality through both gender mainstreaming and gender balance. However, with two years left until the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, progress is insufficient and far too slow.

While some good practices have been established, there are remaining challenges to meet and gaps to fill. Furthermore, the nexus between security and development, and the nexus between civilian and military need to be bridged.

This interactive panel brought together policymakers, scholars and security sector practitioners for an open and forward-looking discussion about the next steps they need to take in order to achieve peace, security, justice, gender equality and sustainable development.

KEY TAKEWAYS

Where are we?

We have to focus on a broader understanding of security – from local to international. We have to ask ourselves who decides which security matters and whose security should receive money? When you work with WPS you could get an impression that security for women is taken care of, in terms of prevention and protection, especially in conflict areas. There is, however, not much evidence that women's safety has been improved.

Decisions are made in New York and at the national levels. If we go to Congo, there are about 200 private security companies working to secure economic interests. This does not include women's protection and security. Even when activities related to women's security and

protection are financed, it is primarily about trainings, seminars and workshops. We need to speak about deterrence, how to protect from and prevent violence, SGBV, domestic violence, political violence, silencing of different actors. We're not doing everything we should do. We need to take the next steps to improve ourselves.

That is why, after 18 years since the adoption of the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), its implementation is still facing a number of challenges.

These challenges include:

- (a) insufficient role of the military in integrating gender perspective in all military/security activities;
- (b) emphasis on gender balance at the expense of gender mainstreaming;
- (c) preventive practices at work with gender equality and implementation of the WPS agenda in military and security organisations;
- (d) a lack of comprehensive understanding of security and whose security we do give priority within the political economy of global relations;
- (e) a lack of a robust doctrinal framework for effective gender mainstreaming in military and security organisations.
- (f) an (over)focus on symbolic activities and public diplomacy giving an impression that the implementation of the WPS agenda has come further than it has, and that certain things, e.g., security for women is addressed.
- (g) the implementation of the WPS agenda is leaning towards a neoliberal ideal and coincides with a set of strategic interest for states and politicians that are primarily related to power, security and legitimacy, thus making flawed any implementation that does not sufficiently consider the political economy aspects.

What are we doing?

These challenges have been recognised in certain spheres of the international communities and best practices have been shared among the stakeholders. These practices include, for example, a trial from the eastern part of Congo, where a local parliamentarian has been brought to justice for the rape of young girls. After the trials, many activists have been attacked. We need to work jointly to prevent this.

Political perspective: In Ukraine, peace and security is very important as part of the territory is occupied by the Russian Federation (Donetsk, Lugansk, Crimea). 10,000 people have been killed, more than 20,000 wounded. 1.8 million have been internally displaced of which 60 per cent are women and children. Another consequence is PTSD among demobilised soldiers leading to an increase in domestic violence. The UNHCHR report on conflict-related sexual violence in Donbass has presented evidence. A national hotline yearly receives 13,000 phone calls from the occupied territories about violations of rights.

One of the responses was to develop an action plan by the government in 2016 in relation to resolution 1325. UN Women work to be included in the national action plan on resolution 1325.

Military perspective: Strategies are important, but not enough. Leadership is important for strategies that require a systematic implementation plan. If there is no way to trace

the budget, then it accomplishes nothing. All the military personnel should participate in gender training and have advisory supervision for two years. Women are still in the minority. We have a hotline that women can call if their boss abuses them. Gender should be included in the operational planning. Gender should also be included in intelligence preparations in the battlefield and during the deployment of troops.

Police perspective: We have state security. Often, we forget the human, individual security. It takes time, maybe generations, to go through peacekeeping operations and implement the rule of law.. The focus should not be numbers just to create reports. We can have 100,000 police officers, but if they do not talk to people in society, they will not be able to prevent violence. It takes time. When the international community agreed to transfer national security to the Afghan national forces, who decided what security to transfer? Village security was transferred. What was left behind? Did we leave them access to police stations? Did we leave them police officers who can read and write? Police officers were trained very quickly, without understanding what kind of security and whose security they would ensure. We need to dare say it takes time. It cannot be dealt with in a short time. There should be zero tolerance to any UN representative committing sexual abuse.

Civil society perspective: We are not where we want to be. It has been almost 20 years since the adoption of Resolution 1325 and 104 years since the first fight started. We need to be less patient. There is a worrying trend among women human rights defenders. The WPS agenda becomes a militarised agenda. Now it is about getting more women into the military. It was not the initial idea behind the WPS agenda. This is a problem. We need to take it back and make it more feministic. Who is to decide what security is? We are talking about state security, and how it undermines human rights. We need to ask who we should ask, who we should protect, where to invest the money. It is time to include more voices and get to know the real situation. Women are also not all the same, we have different needs. Are there safe ways to get into schools? Are people free to walk the street with no fear? Are these the places where we should invest money? Women should set the agenda and see how different it can be from what we have now. When we, the civil society, go somewhere, we need to see that we are not making the situation for people who live there even less secure. Who will be there when we leave? Corruption, criminal gangs? Many decision-making areas are not open for women. The only place remaining open is civil society. But the space is shrinking. If you don't have a human rights organisation pushing for gender equality, you will not get there.

Academic perspective: How we think about national, regional and global security is closely related to what gets enacted and rewarded in security institutions. Security institutions are shaped and distorted by gender in ways that are both dysfunctional and dangerous. A few months ago the US President responded to a comment of Kim Jong-un's by tweeting 'I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!' It seems very important to both of these leaders that the world perceives them as manly. And since masculinity in many cultures is associated with having the biggest weapons and being willing to use them, we can all too easily imagine a scenario in which their manly egos create the greatest insecurity imaginable for the rest of us.

The point is that regardless of how important it may be to leaders to appear manly, or how much they feel the need not to be accused of being a wimp, of not being tough enough, it is important that national and international security professionals and politicians not think about gender and about masculinity and femininity in damaging and dangerous ways.

There's a need for differential access to power, material resources, status, privilege and influence – and that differential access to power is not only between men and women, but also within those groups. There is not only a hierarchy between men and women, but hierarchies within each group. And we know that for any system of power to work, you can try to rely on brute force, or the threat of force, or punishment if you transgress its structures.

But it is much more effective when there is a set of beliefs supporting it, making it seem justified or natural that one group of people have more access to power than another. Like racism is a set of beliefs that justifies colonialism, sexism is a set of beliefs about gender that associate masculine characteristics as better than feminine characteristics. This system of belief not only says that men are the ones most likely to be strong, rational, prudent, responsible, aggressive, objective, decisive and willing to take risks and to fight, but also that women are weak, emotional, irrational, passive, subjective, indecisive, nurturing, and in need of protection. As masculine characteristics are believed to be better than feminine, they not only justify men having power over women, but also power to run the world's political, economic, and social institutions. A male physicist said once that when he realised that his nuclear weapon will kill 30 million people, he thought that it was awful and that he felt like a woman.

What is the most powerful thing you can do? Use weapons! But where is the evidence it will help you to accomplish what you really want to achieve? Would civil disobedience be better? But civil disobedience is feminine, so it does not count. Where is the evidence that men can actually come to an agreement that brings sustainable peace?

Women have also proved what they want to do. Even when they have evidence, there is always somebody who says that it is not sufficient.

Conflict-related sexual violence: There are three main misunderstandings: it is inevitable, it is unspeakable, and it is a lesser crime. Therefore, there is impunity. We need to work with national security – work with military ad training – everyone must be involved. In the EU, we should make sure there are national action plans in relation to resolution 1325. The UN has to do more to ensure a budget for women. The question of where the women are should be addressed. Women should be allowed to brief UNSC. Remember the three Rs: rights, resources, representation. In Ukraine, the displaced women trusted to tell a woman minister from Sweden their stories about sexual violence. In Bosnia, women still tremble, because they still meet the perpetrators in the village and in the shop wherever they go. These issues should be addressed. In Iraq, a reform of the security forces is needed. How do we train them? Informal expert groups in UNSC should be there to ensure women's participation in political life. It is tough to run as a political candidate in many countries. This can deter them from becoming political candidates. Somalia is a success story on how to use money for something that is constructive instead of spending it on wars. The UN has to be held accountable for sexual abuse in relation to peacekeepers. If they abuse sexually, all the

credibility of the organisations is lost. A legal act is only as good as its implementation. In every place on earth, the UNSC must ask where the women are and include women in all areas of discussion. The UN is represented by men who go to different places and talk to other men. Women will not come to talk to male UN representatives. In Mali, because they put the language of gender into the resolution, they got to be represented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Where do we go from here?

The following remains to be done to ensure a successful implementation of the WPS agenda:

- I. Ensure that the implementation is based upon what the activists, grassroots and practitioners would like to give priority rather than what policy makers would like to do.
- II. Make the WPS agenda and its implementation utilitarian and avoid actions that increase competition between different groups within the community of practice.
- III. Resource the work with gender mainstreaming.
- IV. Make sure that security for women becomes resourced and gets a price tag that is in line with, for example, security for economic interests.
- V. Consider mandates and tenders that is primarily on women's security as well as the ones working for women's rights.
- VI. Focus on leadership (training and accountability).
- VII. Professionalise and strengthen the ones working with gender equality and WPS.

Political perspective: In Ukraine, gender mainstreaming, including gender perspective in all reforms, all programmes, in all government institutions.

Military perspective: Education – allocate money to women's education. Appoint leaders who are strong enough who have good advisers who can ask questions. Everyone comes to the table with the mandate of the organisation they represent. To improve the situation, all mandates have to be strong. Endurance and economy – it will take a long time.

Civil society perspective: We need prove that women's participation is not about just adding more women. It is not about ticking the box! It is about women setting the agenda, ensure they are listened to, and there should be a follow up on the information they give. Women should set agendas where real security happens. Money – if there is no budget, it is not a real priority. Less is going to women's rights organisations in terms of money. If there is not budget, there is no gender equality. We need a Feminist Security Think Tank.

Police perspective: National legislation should be reformed and have it in writing that women will participate. One person's crime can be a social disaster for others. If there is law but no action, law should become action. We should start to speak up because of cultural issue. SBV is not just culture.

Academic perspective: Let's spend money on development, on healthcare, education, livelihoods, cultural exchanges – in fact, let's ask women in those countries what would

make their lives more secure, hey, let's ask young men, too, and let's be sure to be asking across religious and ethnic lines, and rural and urban, and across class, and see what these different groups would want to do with the money. If we did that, it is at least arguable that people in those countries and in the US would be a whole lot more secure than they are now.

Rethink security institutions from the ground up. Invest in alternatives. Indigenous epistemologies are a way to go, they are not about state security but rather about lived experiences, women's lives. We should work interdisciplinary and intersectionally. Security is much broader than just state security. Funding should go to feminist security think-tanks which unite all feminists – politicians, activists, CSOs, academics worldwide. This will allow us to re-arrange the world. ■

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