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WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

TIME TO MOVE FROM UN RESOLUTIONS TO NATIONAL RESOLVE

FACTSHEET



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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council adopted the landmark resolution SCR1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' to uphold women's rights in conflict and their roles in peace and security in 2000. Since then, six additional UN Security Council resolutions on the same question have helped to develop a policy framework which is being implemented in more than 50 countries through their national action plans.

While this is good news, it is not enough. More is needed on the international, regional, national and local level to highlight the key role of women as advocates for peace and security. This is especially crucial given ongoing conflicts and violence in many parts of the world and current geopolitical volatility and turbulence.

This fact sheet looks at the importance of including women in international peace and security negotiations, the role of women in peace efforts undertaken by civil society and local community networks and different ways in which women are linked to the fight against extremism. The information contained in this publication is by no means exhaustive. We have relied on data from a range of sources, including UN Women, the World Resource Institute (WRI), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the World Economic Forum.

This publication is linked to our event on ["Women, peace and security"](#) in March 2018, focusing on the benefits of including women in national in international peace and security negotiations; the need for increased female participation in the security sector and the role women play in combating radicalisation.

1. WOMEN IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY NEGOTIATIONS

Despite growing recognition of women's effectiveness at promoting peace and awareness of the disproportionate impact conflict has on them, women and girls continue to be left out of peace negotiations. Progress has been made in the last 30 years – but it has been slow and difficult. Continued failure to include women in peacebuilding ignores their demonstrated effectiveness and weakens current strategies to respond effectively to global security threats. Below are some striking facts:

- In peace processes between 1992 and 2011, women made up only:
 - 2% of Chief Mediators
 - 4% of Witnesses and Signatories
 - 9% of Negotiators
- The majority of peace agreements signed from 1990 to today include **0** female signatories.
- From 2008 to 2012, women were signatories in only 2 of the 61 peace agreements.
- From 1990 to 2010, only 92 of 585 peace agreements contained references to women.
- Only two women in history, Miriam Coronel Ferrer from the Philippines and Tzipi Livni from Israel, have ever served as chief negotiators, and only one woman, Coronel Ferrer, has ever signed a final peace accord as chief negotiator.
- The vast majority of peace agreements reached since 1990 fail to reference women and address their concerns, including gender-based violence.

There is of course a broader issue of low female representation in government.

- As of October 2017, 11 women are serving as Heads of State and 12 are serving as Heads of Government.
- As of June 2016, only 22.8% of all national parliamentarians were women, a small increase from 11.3% in 1995.
- Globally, as of June 2016, there are 38 States in which women account for less than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including 4 chambers with no women at all.
 - Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide. Women there have won 63.8% of seats in the lower house.

WHY SHOULD THERE BE A BIGGER ROLE FOR WOMEN IN PEACE AND SECURITY NEGOTIATIONS?

- The participation of civil society groups, including women's organisations, makes a peace agreement 64% less likely to fail.
- Higher levels of gender equality are associated with a lower propensity for conflict, both between and within states.
- When women are included in peace processes, there is a 20% increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 2 years, and a 35% increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 15 years.
- Women working in the security sector frequently have access to populations and venues that are closed to men, which allows them to gather intelligence about potential security risks.
- The effects of excluding women go even further: a 174-country study by Harvard University found that the greater the gender gap in a country is, the more likely the country is to experience war internally or with its neighbours.
- Women help broaden the agenda of discussion and are more likely to raise social issues helping societies reconcile and recover. Evidence suggests that women frequently raise issues in conflict resolution processes beyond military action and introduce political and legal reforms, social and economic recovery priorities and transitional justice concerns, which can make peace agreements more durable.

2. FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN PEACE EFFORTS BY CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- The role of civil society in peace-building – particularly that of women's civil society organisations (CSOs) – is vital. Yet it often is unrecognised, marginalised and under-valued. The significant work of women's CSOs in conflict situations is all the more extraordinary because as underlined above, they are frequently excluded from formal conflict resolution processes, political dialogue and post-conflict peacebuilding systems, including the mechanisms and institutions responsible for the implementation of peace accords and post-conflict planning processes.
- When women are empowered as political leaders, countries often experience higher standards of living with positive developments in education, infrastructure and health, and concrete steps are taken to make democracy deliver. Using data from 19 member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), researchers found that an increase in women legislators results in an increase in total educational expenditure.
- In India, research shows that the West Bengal villages with greater representation of women in local councils saw an investment in drinking water facilities that was twice as big as that of villages with low levels of elected women, and that the roads there were almost twice as likely to be in good condition. Studies also revealed that the presence of a woman council leader reduces the gender gap in school attendance by 13 percent points.
- Involvement in civil society also gives women the opportunity to influence government, gain visibility, credibility and respect, and to help mitigate barriers to women's political participation.
- Women's civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations play a critical role in realising change and commitments to women, peace and security. The organisations implement conflict resolutions; they fight to make decision-making inclusive; they document; they respond; they organise; and they make a difference in the lives of those affected by conflict.
- Women often advance peace-making by employing visible and high-profile tactics to pressure parties to begin or recommit to peace negotiations as well as to sign accords. Women's groups have successfully staged mass actions and mobilised public opinion campaigns in many countries to encourage progress in peace talks. In recent times, women's groups have organised more mass action campaigns in support of peace deals than any other social group.

BARRIERS OF PROGRESS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN CIVIL SOCIETIES

Women's organisations, in contexts of conflict and post-conflict situations, are often subject to specific security threats. Even when taking part in peace processes and post-conflict implementation of peace agreements, women civil society leaders and activists are subjected to intimidation and harassment, notably in societies where these women are playing non-traditional roles.

- National laws still fall short of international commitments. For instance, nearly 95% of 30 middle-and low-income countries that recognise community-based forest tenure – the legal right to own or manage forests collectively – constitutionally guarantee equal protection under the law and prohibit gender discrimination. Yet only around half of those countries have laws that affirm women's property rights.
- Out of 80 community-based tenure regimes, only 23 explicitly recognise women as members of the community. Another 9 tenure regimes acknowledge membership rights of all persons in the community, and at least 3 tenure regimes define the household as a unit of membership. In 22 regimes community membership rights are not mentioned.
 - Only Colombia and India have tenure regimes that explicitly ensure women's voting rights in community general assemblies or similar decision-making bodies. This is achieved through a quorum requirement.
- While laws grant equal land rights to men and women, gender-neutral language like “villagers” or “local community” can unintentionally exclude women from community decision-making, especially when patriarchal traditions dictate that decisions on land use are made in meetings exclusively reserved for males. While women can attend such events, they remain silent and follow cultural practices that permit men to speak on their behalf.
- Without strong regulations and implementation, even the best laws will fail to ensure that women can participate in community decision-making and guarantee equal land rights.
 - For instance, Tanzanian law mandates gender quotas for village governance bodies to guarantee minimum representation of women, but it does not dictate quorum or voting requirements. Because women are a minority, decisions can be made without their presence or votes.
 - Likewise, in Ethiopia, the law mandates spouses' joint ownership of land but fails to require both spouses' names on the land registration forms.





CASE STUDY

Security, reconstruction and peace are some of the main focuses within the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH's work around the world. On behalf of the German Government and organisations such as the European Union, GIZ is implementing projects to contribute to the creation of a secure environment and to the maintenance or restoration of stability aimed at making sustainable development a reality for all sections of society. As gender equality is a goal and principle that shapes the values and work of GIZ, the promotion of gender equality, women's rights and equal opportunities is part of all its efforts.

- In Ghana, GIZ provides support to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). More than 16,500 participants – one quarter of them women – have completed over 460 courses on topics such as crisis prevention, conflict resolution, human rights protection and reconstruction. With GIZ's support the Centre has also developed and adopted a Gender Policy, and gender-related topics are being integrated into the curricula of all courses.
- The 'Peace support project' in Yemen empowers local civil society organisations, among them state and non-governmental women's organisations, to develop and implement non-violent conflict-reducing and peacebuilding measures as well as to strengthen women's participation in the peace process. One success story is 'Games for Peace' that raises awareness of the importance of human rights, democracy, state building and gender issues. Especially targeted at the young population, the mobile app was downloaded 10,000 times during three months.
- The 'Peace Security and Good Governance Programme' that supports the Southern African Development Community (SADC) promotes women participation and their full involvement in accordance with the UN SCR1325; in fact, 30% of all participants in SADC mediation trainings and trainings for civilians were women, and women's share of mediation experts in SADC-led regional and national mediation processes also stands at 30%. Thanks to the programme, SADC was also able to facilitate the development of a Regional Action Plan, endorsed by 15 SADC member states.

3. WOMEN'S ROLES IN COMBATING RADICALISATION

Women play a dual role in both countering and facilitating terrorism and violent extremism. Because women are often highly influential in families, communities and governments, their proactive participation in counter-terrorism efforts can lead to positive change. However, an increasing number of young girls and women also become radicalised or are recruited in terrorist activities.

Women at the forefront of preventing violent extremism

- United Nations Security Council resolution 2178 of September 2014 recognised the direct influence of women in stopping the spread of extremism, encouraging states to engage relevant local communities and non-government actors — including women — to ‘counter the violent extremist narrative than can incite terrorist attacks’
- Women are considered ideally positioned to spot early warning signs of radicalisation. As wives and mothers, women have the most intimate knowledge of their kin and are able to detect any attitudinal or behavioural changes competently. Indeed, radicalisation starts in homes, with most processes of terrorist radicalization take place between the ages of 12 and 20, when personalities and values are shaped.
- In the United Kingdom, a recent study showed that amongst 11 to 25% year olds, 86% have declared preferring speaking to their mothers when they need to share information about a difficult and political topic.

OVERVIEW OF EU POLICY ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENT EXTREMISM INCLUDING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The basis of the EU's prevention work concerning radicalisation and violent extremism is the **EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism**, adopted in 2005. Draft Revised Guidelines proposed in May 2017 finally mention “gender aspects of radicalisation” as an issue to be considered. The Guidelines further call for integrating a gender dimension into counter-radicalisation efforts.

The EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh Threat, from March 2015, highlights the empowerment and active participation of women as essential for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of all PVE/CVE actions.

The **European Agenda on Security 2015-2020** highlights that EU actions against terrorism should address the root causes of extremism through preventive measures and that a strong and determined counter-narrative is crucial to eliminate terrorism's support base. There is, however, no specific gender reference in the Agenda.

In its **Resolution of 25 November 2015 on the Prevention of radicalisation and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organisations**, the European Parliament drew specific attention to the gender aspects of radicalisation.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN COUNTERING RADICALISATION

- Terrorism is still very much considered to be “a man’s world” and the radicalisation of women remains underestimated. Yet, 17% of Islamic State fighters are women. In France, 30% of the 13,000 people identified as “radicalized” in France are female. They also represent nearly half of the French Youth aged under 18.
- In Europe, the percentage of converts who are radicalised appears to be higher for women compared to men. In Germany, one-third of all the female departees are converts, compared to 17% of the male departees. The situation in the Netherlands is similar. Female departees also tend to be younger than their male counterparts
- As a matter of fact, the misconception that women are not involved in violent extremism or terrorist radicalization has often shaped counter-terrorism strategies, exacerbating women’s exclusion from decision making processes and their significant underrepresentation among law enforcement officers and security personnel.
- Compared to men, women are less often known to the police. Their profiles rarely trigger law enforcement alarms and women less often hold criminal records
- The very image of the peaceful woman has been used by terrorist groups to recruit women and to claim an innocent and nonviolent character by highlighting the involvement of women in their organizations.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women is inexorably linked to advancing peace, prosperity, human development and democracy. The way in which a country taps the talents and capacity of its women determines, in large measure, its progress in the economic, social and political sectors. As underlined above, women bring unique perspectives, networks, skills and abilities into their leadership roles and broaden the scope of policy agendas.

However, as the continued near-absence of women in peace talks shows, overall progress in fulfilling the UN SCR1325 resolution has been limited. Indeed, women are still deprived of their basic rights in many nations and as such are unable to play a more active and more prominent roles in decision-making procedures, security and peace-building projects as well as at a community and civil society level.



FURTHER READING

[Facts and figures: Peace and security](#)

UN Women

[Women, Peace and Security, Security Council resolution 1325](#)

United Nations

[Promoting Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and Peace Processes](#)

Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

[Women and Foreign Policy Programme](#)

Council on Foreign Relations

[Why women need a bigger role in peace negotiations](#)

World Economic Forum

[Global Rights, Local Struggles: Barriers to Women's Participation in Community Land Decision-Making](#)

World Resource Institute

[Radicalisation and violent extremism – focus on women: How women become radicalised and how to empower them to prevent radicalisation](#)

European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

[Security and Gender : Women's place in the fight against radicalisation](#)

FONDAMEDA Foundation

[Women and Terrorist Radicalisation](#)

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Castillo Diaz and Tordjman (2012). Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence.

Laurel Stone (2015). Study of 156 peace agreements, controlling for other variables, Quantitative Analysis of Women's participation in Peace Processes in Reimagining Peace-making: Women's Roles in Peace Processes, Annex II

Our work on international development issues is led by the Development Policy Forum (DPF), which was set up by Friends of Europe in partnership with development actors such as Germany's Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), France's Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the United Nations and the World Bank. Reflecting the growing role of the private sector in development, the DPF has now welcomed Coca-Cola to the forum.

The DPF contributes to the global and European conversation on inclusive development. Through its activities and publications, the DPF reflects the rapidly-changing global debate on growth and development and seeks to encourage a multi-stakeholder, fresh, up-to-date thinking on the multiple challenges facing the development community.



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