

This issue features:

UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security celebrates its 15th anniversary

Women's organisations demand women's participation in future Syrian peace negotiations

Different organisations denounce the levels of sexual violence in Darfur and South Sudan

Impact of conflicts

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina identified substantive challenges and obstacles in the fight against impunity for sexual violence related to the war in the 1990s, while noting the commitment of the judicial authorities of the two entities that make up the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brcko District. This was stated in a report issued in the second half of 2015, following the 2014 report focused on the work done at the federal level. According to the document, in the last decade there have been more than 170 prosecutions for war crimes against 260 defendants in the entities and the Brcko District, of which 35 involved charges of sexual violence against 45 defendants. Of these, 34 people were convicted of 27 cases. To this are added cases that had not yet been finalised and were still under investigation when the report was published. However, the report stresses that these proportions are low compared to the estimated 20,000 women and girls

who were victims of sexual violence during the conflict. The investigation takes various obstacles into account, including the difficulty of submitting evidence, the lack of gender expertise when managing and conducting judicial investigations and adjudicating cases of sexual violence, an insufficient prioritisation of war crimes cases that include gender as one of the bases of the indictment and varying degrees of support from law enforcement agencies to prosecutors of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brcko District. The report also concludes that there is a different level of awareness about what constitutes crimes of rape and other forms of sexual violence, including some very restrictive and outdated approaches. Moreover, the portal Balkan Insight reported that an investigative new book documents the levels of sexual violence committed during the war in Bosnia, again indicating that 20,000 Bosnian women suffered sexual violence in 73 different municipalities.

- OSCE, [“OSCE launches report on combating impunity for wartime sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina”](#), OSCE, 13 July 2015
- OSCE, [“Combating Impunity for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Progress and Challenges: An analysis of criminal proceedings before the courts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brcko District BiH between 2004 and 2014”](#), OSCE, June 2015
- Balkan Insight, [“20,000 women sexually assaulted’ During Bosnian War”](#), Balkan Insight, 29 September 2015

NORTH CAUCASUS

In an alternative report on non-compliance with CEDAW presented for the 62nd session of the UN committee, the Russian Justice Initiative (IJR) and the Chechnya Advocacy Network (CAN) denounced the Russian authorities' responsibility for violations of the rights of women and girls on a massive scale in the North Caucasus region. They warned of four areas where Russia violated CEDAW in the North Caucasus: violence against women, discrimination against women in family life and marriage, harmful traditional practices and the enforcement of dress codes. The report notes

that although the problem of violence against women is not unique to the North Caucasus, women in the region face a greater risk of violence, including domestic violence, honour killings (which occur with regularity), bride kidnapping and child marriage. According to the report, violence against women has become worse due to the general atmosphere of impunity, misgovernment and corruption prevalent in the North Caucasus region. It also warned of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov's imposition of dress codes for women, which enjoy the tacit approval of the federal authorities.

- Russian Justice Initiative and Chechnya Advocacy Network *Submission from Russian Justice Initiative (RJI) and Chechnya Advocacy Network Concerning the Russian Federation's Compliance with the CEDAW Convention in the North Caucasus Region*, CEDAW, 62nd session
- Caucasian Knot, "Rights Defenders specify major women's rights violations in Northern Caucasus", CK, 16 October 2015

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Following allegations of sexual abuse and rape by soldiers under French command during Operation Sangaris, on 17 December 2015 a report was published by a group of independent experts appointed in June by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to determine the organisation's responsibility. Although the French soldiers accused of committing the abuse were not under UN command, the report shows that the organisation, which discovered the abuse, did not manage the case with the speed, attention or sensitivity required afterwards. Led by the Canadian judge Marie Deschamps, the group of independent experts denounced a "gross institutional failure" by the UN staff in Bangui and the UN agencies and senior officials in Geneva and New York in the way they handled the accusations of child rape by French soldiers in the CAR. The highly anticipated report especially criticised the former head of the UN mission in the country, Senegalese national Babacar Gaye, who resigned at the UN Secretary-General's request in August. The report also questions the UNICEF officials in Bangui and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for failing to notify

their superiors of the allegations and for not taking the necessary measures to protect and assist the children as quickly as possible. According to the report, "information about the allegations was passed from desk to desk, inbox to inbox, across multiple UN offices, with no one willing to take responsibility to address the serious human rights violations". In addition to demanding the resignation of his representative in the country in August, Ban Ki-moon began to suspend the part of the salary that the UN pays to the soldiers of the contributing countries. The UN is unable to punish UN peacekeepers, as that is the responsibility of the contributing countries. Meanwhile, in November 2015 fresh reports were made public about the rape of five women and three girls (minors) by UN peacekeepers. A UN mission travelled to Bambari to gather evidence that would implicate peacekeepers from the DRC. It is the second time that soldiers from the DRC have been accused of abuse during the UN mission. Finally, 17 cases of sexual exploitation or abuse involving UN civilian or military staff were reported to MINUSCA in mid-September.

- Jeune Afrique, "Viols d'enfants en Centrafrique : «échec flagrant de l'ONU», selon des experts indépendants", *Jeune Afrique*, 17 December 2015
- UN, *Statement of the Secretary-General on the External Independent Review of the UN Response to Allegations on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and other serious crimes by Members of Foreign Military Forces not under UN command in the Central African Republic*, UN, 17 December 2015
- Jeune Afrique, "Centrafrique : des Casques bleus une nouvelle fois accusés de viols, notamment sur mineures", *Jeune Afrique*, 12 November 2015

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

According to a report published on 25 November by the child protection division of the UN mission in the country (MONUSCO), 76% of the women recruited by armed groups between 2009 and May 2015 were 15 years old or younger at their time of their recruitment and over half have been subjected to sexual violence, including rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage. The report refers to an investigation conducted with 7,646 children recruited by armed groups during the period, 600 of which were girls. The division director, Dee Brillenburg Wurth, said that the children spent an average of 190 days in captivity, which is equivalent to six months, during which they witnessed

and suffered many atrocities or were forced to commit atrocities. The groups cited as recruiters of children during the period include the Ugandan LRA, the Rwandan FDLR, the group FRPI and various militias (Mai Mai Simba, Nyatura, Raïa Mutomboki, APCLS, Yakutumba, Lafontaine, Kata-Katanga and Tcheka). Previously, the same MONUSCO division had said that no child had been registered in the Congolese Armed Forces in the first half of 2015, congratulating the government and military for the zero tolerance policy they have implemented by demobilising all minors in the Congolese Army between 2009 and 2014.

- Radio Okapi, [“Groupes armés : 76% des filles recrutées depuis 2009 avaient au plus 15 ans”](#), *Radio Okapi*, 25 de November 2015
- Radio Okapi, [RDC: zéro enfant au sein des FARDC au premier semestre 2015](#), *Radio Okapi*, 22 July 2015

SUDAN (DARFUR)

In November, the British NGO Waging Peace published a report entitled *Rape in Darfur: A History of Predation* that denounces how the practice of sexual violence in the conflict in Darfur had become “rampant”. All the armed groups, including the Sudanese Army, have been implicated in the clearly deliberate practice, with gang rapes occurring on numerous occasions, like in the community of Tabit, North Darfur, where at least 221 women and girls were raped between late October and early November 2014. Given this situation, the report denounces the total defencelessness of the women of the region, where neither the justice system nor the security forces of UN mission in the country, UNAMID, have been able to respond to protect the population. An NGO based in the United Kingdom, the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO), reported that 38 rapes of women, including 9 children, were reported in the region in October. In November, Radio Dabanga counted at least 24 rapes committed in different attacks by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Sudanese Army and the Janjaweed militias in all regions of Darfur. In Jebel Marra, East Darfur, different attacks were reported on civilian communities, where rape was employed as a weapon of war. On 4 November, in a joint attack by the Sudanese Army and the paramilitary RSF

on six communities in East Jebel Marra, two women were raped. One of them, an 18-year-old, committed suicide days later. Three women were kidnapped and sexually abused by 30 Janjaweed militia fighters on 9 November. On 12 November, new attacks were reported and at least two women were raped by the pro-government militia. On 21 and 22 November, six other rapes committed by the RSF were reported in the area. Rapes also occurred in other parts of Darfur. On 3 November, two women were abducted and raped by the Janjaweed militia in the southern part of Tabit in the locality of Tawila, North Darfur. In the same area, another attack and the rape of two women were reported on 16 November. In Gireida, South Darfur, on 4 November, six girls were abducted and raped for hours by armed militias. On 8 November, another woman was beaten in Tabit, North Darfur. These events took place while UNAMID organised different working sessions with local stakeholders on measures to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which deals with women, peace and security. The meetings tried to emphasise the importance of women’s effective participation in mechanisms of conciliation, decision-making institutions and the peace process under way in Darfur, in addition to addressing the need to take steps to prevent violence against women in the area.

- Crowther, Madeleine and Chalaby, Odette, [Rape in Darfur: A History of Predation](#), Waging Peace, November 2015
- UNAMID, [Unamid Organizes Open Day On SCR 1325 On Women, Peace and Security in Nyala, South Darfur](#), *All Africa*, 11 November 2015 and [El Fasher, North Darfur](#), *All Africa*, 17 November 2015

SOUTH SUDAN

The report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, presided over by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, was made public in late October, accusing the government and rebel forces of committing mass murder, torture, mutilation, rape and forced cannibalism during the civil war. The report, which was completed in October 2014, took one year to go public because of fears that its contents could negatively affect the peace negotiations. In it, the AU Commission of Inquiry highlighted the practice of tremendous cruelty by both sides against civilians, stressing all types of violence committed, particularly against women of all ages, who have suffered all sorts of harassment, attacks and rape by both sides. These war crimes are not new to the conflict, since before the report was released there had been many complaints about the brutality of the war

against the civilian population and especially against women and girls. In June 2015, the UN mission in the country, UNMISS, had accused the South Sudanese Army of many instances of rape and then of burning the women and girls alive in their homes. Other reports had continued to document the systematic practice of rape as a weapon of war, even documenting the existence of camps of women for use as sex slaves by the South Sudanese Army. In October 2014, the UN special representative on sexual violence in armed conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, visited Bentiu, the capital of Unity State, and described the situation as the worst she had seen in 30 years. She gathered many testimonies of rape there, as well as accusations that local radio stations had incited their audiences to rape women and girls based on their ethnic origin in their broadcasts.

- African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, [Informe Final](#), October 2015
- UN News, [UN envoy, Government agree on steps to tackle widespread sexual violence](#), 13 October 2014
- Al Jazeera, [UN: South Sudan army raped girls and burned them alive](#), 30 June 2015

Peacebuilding

SYRIA

On the verge of a new round of negotiations aimed at addressing the armed conflict in Syria, different voices have insistently called for a significant presence of Syrian women in the process planned for late January. The idea is to avoid the exclusion that occurred in the last round of formal negotiations, known as Geneva II, which did not have relevant participation from Syrian women, despite their demands. Activists have emphasised that Syrian women have not received guarantees of their involvement in the new round of negotiations, held at the behest of various international players that stepped up pressure to try to reactivate the dialogue between the warring parties in Syria in the closing months of 2015, especially after the ISIS attacks in Paris. In this context, some analysts warned of the consequences of giving voice only to armed actors and ignoring the different groups that should take part in the talks about the future of Syria. Before the date of this new round of negotiations was set, Syrian women's groups like the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy (SWIPD) had urged the need for a political solution with substantial participation from women and in recent months had asked the UN special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, and other UN officials to incorporate the gender perspective into conflict resolution so that

the experiences and priorities of women are taken into account at the negotiating table. Along these lines, they had raised some proposals, like a 30% quota in the working groups set up by De Mistura in 2015 to try to reconcile the views of the different Syrian actors and the development of a feminist national assembly to ensure that women's rights and participation will be a central aspect of the transition process. In this context, it was also reported that Scotland had assumed the commitment to provide capacity building and training in negotiation and communication to Syrian women involved in peacebuilding activities. The initiative allegedly emerged from a meeting between Scottish Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon and Staffan de Mistura, who has recognised that women's leadership and participation in resolving conflicts are crucial to achieving sustainable solutions. Meanwhile, a study conducted by the Badael Foundation and Kvinna till Kvinna highlighted the different peacebuilding initiatives that Syrian women are carrying out during the armed conflict, which are aimed at lowering the levels of violence, promoting dialogue and preparing the ground for the post-war period. These initiatives include activities to prevent child recruitment and raise awareness about the impact of violence and the use of weapons, as well

as mediation initiatives to facilitate the exchange of prisoners and promote ceasefires. It bears mentioning that the priorities identified by the Syrian women's groups analysed in this study include an unconditional cessation

of hostilities, inclusive negotiations that take local peace experiences into account and a peace process comprising mechanisms of transitional justice and reconciliation that lead to a new social contract in Syria.

- Libby Brooks, "[Scotland to train female Syrian peacemakers in conflict resolution](#)", *The Guardian*, 29 November 2015
- Lisa Davis, "[John Kerry, where are women's voices in the Syria peace talks?](#)", *Open Democracy*, 18 December 2015
- Peace Women, "[Local to Global: Syrian Women Leaders Launch Campaign for Peace in Syria](#)", *Peace Women E-News*, Issue 177, 5 October 2015
- Razzan Ghazzawi, Afra Mohamad and Oula Ramadan, "[Peacebuilding defines our future now](#)" *A study of women's peace activism in Syria*, BBadael and Kvinna till Kvinna, 2015

JAPAN and SOUTH KOREA

The governments of Japan and South Korea reached an agreement related to the issue of comfort women, whereby the Japanese government apologised to the former sex slaves and pledged 8 million USD to a fund managed by the Korean government to provide different services to the victims. There are no plans for the victims to receive any economic compensation directly. Around 200,000 women (different investigations have collected figures ranging from 45,000 to 410,000), most of them coming from South Korea, but also from other countries like China, the Philippines and the Netherlands, among others, were turned into sex slaves in Japanese military brothels during the Second World War. However, since this issue has received more attention since the 1990s, only 238 women have publicly acknowledged that they were victims and only 46 of these are still alive. In exchange for the apologies and the money, the South Korean government promised to end the diplomatic dispute and study the withdrawal of a statue erected in memory of the victims in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul. Victim's organisations rejected the terms of the

agreement, pointing out that they were not consulted during the negotiating process and stressing that a crucial aspect for them was Japan's admission of legal responsibilities and offer of formal reparations, since the compensation promised by Tokyo takes the form of humanitarian aid but not legal reparation. Moreover, the joint declaration by both countries omits the circumstances in which the sexual slavery took place, without referring to its systematic, forced and organised nature. The signing of the agreement must be understood in the context of the geo-strategic relations between both countries and other extremely important actors in the region like China and the United States. Thus, the agreement seeks to strengthen diplomatic relations between both countries as part of the continued confrontation with North Korea and to pave the way for South Korea's integration into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) economic association. Furthermore, the United States had pressured for the agreement to be signed, as the strengthening of relations between Korea and Japan provide a counterpoint to China's power in the region.

- Tisdall, Simon, "[Korean comfort women agreement is a triumph for Japan and the US](#)", *The Guardian*, 28 December 2015
- Song Jung-a, "[What Tokyo-Seoul 'comfort women' deal means for the region](#)", *Financial Times*, 30 December 2015
- Choe Sang-Hun, "[Japan and South Korea Settle Dispute Over Wartime 'Comfort Women'](#)", *New York Times*, 28 December 2015

1325

Fifteenth anniversary of Resolution 1325

October 2015 marked the 15th anniversary since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (USNCR) 1325 and the beginning of what is known as the agenda on women, peace and security, consisting of eight UN

Security Council Resolutions (1325 in 2000, 1820 in 2008, 1888 and 1889 in 2009, 1960 in 2010, 2106 and 2122 in 2013 and 2242 in 2015). Throughout this time, the agenda has been providing regulations and policies on how to address peacebuilding and conflict prevention from a gender perspective. As part of the anniversary, a review of the implementation of the agenda has been conducted in different spaces, events and publications.

One of the central aspects of this review was the presentation of the Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, created by Radhika Coomaraswamy with the support of a high-level advisory group. The Global Study, which is independent, evaluates the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and analyses the impact it has had on the different areas that make up the women, peace and security agenda, tackling issues like participation, protecting the rights of women, justice, peacekeeping, post-war reconstruction and the fight against terrorism, among others, while also presenting a list of recommendations for all stakeholders involved. A crucial aspect of the study is the fact that it provides evidence of and investigates the positive impact of both the presence of women and the inclusion of a gender perspective on the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. The study highlights critical issues that should guide the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the future, like the rejection of growing militarisation and the importance of prevention, consideration of the women, peace and security agenda as a human rights mandate and the proactive promotion of women's participation in peace processes.

On the institutional and government level, on 13 October an open debate was held in the UN Security Council during which the participating states reviewed their commitments to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions and UNSCR 2242 on women, peace and security was adopted unanimously. Regarding the review of the commitments, most of the governments outlined the main actions carried out. Although some new commitments were reported, there were no announcements of great significance revealing a substantive change in the states' position concerning implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Some states announced financial commitments to what is known as the Global Acceleration Instrument, which aims to improve funding for the women, peace and security agenda even though its definitive operations have not yet been established.

The adoption of UNSCR 2242 was the subject of intense debate. Although it was unanimously approved with the support of 71 states and provided elements that should strengthen the women, peace and security agenda, some aspects of the text caused concern among civil society organisations. UNSCR 2242 includes different issues like the urgency to fund implementation adequately and the importance of genuinely integrating the gender dimension in the analysis and work of the different bodies of the United Nations, while stressing the significance of strengthening the involvement of civil society, urging greater funding for the women, peace and security agenda and calling for greater integration of the women, peace and security agenda in what is called the fight against terrorism and the fight against violent extremism. The issues that led to the greatest disagreement were related to the latter, since there is a fear among civil society organisations that the women, peace and security agenda may be used to justify armed action by governments in an international context that has produced constant human rights violations as part of anti-terrorist policies around the world.

So, while 2015 was a watershed year for the visibility of the women, peace and security agenda, it is clear that 15 years after its launch, women's organisations stress the little progress made over this period and the lack of commitment from governments to strategies that pursue peacebuilding from a truly transformative gender perspective. The commitment to demilitarisation, disarmament and conflict prevention, identified as central by countless women's organisations that work for peace locally and internationally, is not on most government agendas, proving that the commitment to the women, peace and security agenda is more rhetorical than real. A study conducted by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders with the participation of organisations from over 70 countries found that civil society believes the progress has been moderately effective and identifies local implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and support for local women's organisations as a top priority.

- Coomaraswamy, Radhika, *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the Peace. A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325* UN Women, October 2015

- Goldberg, Danielle B., *Civil Society Organization (CSO) Survey for the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security CSO Perspectives on UNSCR 1325 Implementation 15 Years after Adoption*, GNWP, Cordaid, ICAN, NGOWG on WPS, October 2015
- Villellas Ariño, María, *15 años de la resolución 1325. Una evaluación de la agenda sobre mujeres, paz y seguridad*. ICIP, October 2015

INDIA

Various Indian civil society organisations participated in a seminar organised by the Control Arms Foundation India to call for the creation of a National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 by the Indian government. As a result of the seminar, a draft National Action Plan was created and delivered to the Indian government. The country does not have its own plan, despite the serious impact that different active armed conflicts in several Indian states are having on civil society, and especially on women. Its creation is a recurring demand of women's organisations that work on peacebuilding in areas affected by violence. The participants complained that armed conflicts have exacerbated sexual violence, the trafficking of women and the increase in households headed by single women,

increasing poverty and the social exclusion of women in areas affected by the violence. Moreover, existing legislation on the fight against terrorism in these areas has given cover to serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions and forced disappearance. Representatives of women's organisations from other countries in the region like Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and the Philippines also attended, sharing their experiences in their countries in preparing National Action Plans and in influencing negotiations and other spheres of peacebuilding. The main challenges they stressed included the impact of militarisation and the build-up of weapons, with serious consequences for the lives of the civilian population and women.

- Manipuri Women Gun Survivors Network, *Draft action plan on women's peace, security prepared*, 1 October

Gender and Peace is a quarterly publication of the Escola de Cultura de Pau with information and analysis on conflict and peace-building from a gender perspective.

The School for a Culture of Peace is a peace research academic institution that was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through its research activities, parallel diplomacy, training and sensitization. Its main areas of work include conflict analysis, peace processes, gender, human rights and transitional justice and peace education.

To receive this publication and other information on gender and peace you can subscribe [here](#).

You can read our publications at: <http://escolapau.uab.cat>

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Escola de Cultura de Pau

Edifici MRA (Mòdul Recerca A)

Campus de la UAB - 08193 Bellaterra

(Cerdanyola del Vallès) Barcelona, Spain

Tel.: +34 93 586 88 48 / Fax: +34 93 581 32 94

pr.conflict.escolapau@uab.cat

<http://escolapau.uab.cat>

This publication has received the support of:



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS