

A Gendered Approach to Peace Building

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It is an honor for me to be invited to Clare Hall to give the Tanner Lecture on Human Values.

I have such fond memories of my last visit to Cambridge, a few years ago, when I delivered the Humanitas lectures. As was the case then, it is so once again, I find myself grateful to be in this intellectually stimulating environment—a world-class place of learning whose influence has been felt through the centuries.

I want to thank Professor Ibbetson, the President of Clare Hall, for his invitation and for the hospitality that he and his staff have extended to me.

The Tanner Lectures' focus is on human values and, to that end, my topic today is focused on advancing sustainable peace and security through a gendered approach. I believe it is both a moral imperative—rooted as it is in gender equality—and a policy imperative to achieve more effective outcomes in peace building.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WARFARE

The nature of warfare in the twenty-first century has changed. No longer are interstate conflicts the norm. Today, civil wars are more likely to occur. The design of institutions and alliances created to prevent full-scale war between the world's great powers is proving less effective in preventing and ending civil wars. We are also seeing violent extremist groups operating within states and across states.

Today, negotiations to end conflicts are less likely to occur between governments and more likely to be between a government and insurgent groups. One thing that has not changed is that they continue to be male dominated.

Civilians increasingly bear the brunt of these conflicts, and women are particular targets who pay the greatest price. Women also experience conflict differently, and they comprise the majority of the displaced. Women's definition of security is also different. They are more likely to die from the indirect effects of conflict and the long-term consequences: from the collapse of the social order; from ongoing—even increasing—sexual violence; from human rights abuses; sickness; economic deprivation; and health deterioration.¹

Many of today's wars are recurring conflicts. According to the World Bank, 90 percent of the last decade's civil wars occurred in countries already scarred by war.² More than half of the peace agreements fail within five years of being signed.³ Women comprise only an extremely small percentage of those involved in negotiations, even though they are directly

affected by the conflicts and possess vital knowledge and on-the-ground experience important to the outcome of the talks. Yet, they are in many ways the frontline activists for peace.

This reality calls for a reappraisal, or as Abraham Lincoln said at a time of great challenge in America, “We must think anew and act anew.” We need a reappraisal in the way that we address ending conflicts and build sustainable peace—processes in which women have too often been marginalized. The story is often the same: only men from both sides of a conflict participate in the resolution of the conflict.

A LESSON FROM ANGOLA

A friend who is a diplomat observed this firsthand when he was assigned to support the peace process at the end of a three-decade civil war in Angola. It resulted in the Lusaka Protocol. When he asked why no women had participated in the negotiations, he was told the agreement was “gender neutral.”

After the assignment (and in fairly short order), he returned to Angola as the US ambassador and as a member of the commission that was to implement the new peace agreement. He said it was then that he began to realize that what had been described as “gender neutral” proved to be discriminatory against women, and the protocol was not likely to succeed. Just as the negotiations had no women (only forty men representing both sides, as well as UN and other government representatives who had an interest in the outcome, like Russia and the US), so too the implementing commission had no women participating in the process.

That meant, the ambassador said, issues of war and peace—such as assistance to the victims of sexual abuse, accountability for abuses perpetrated by government and rebel security forces, decisions about where demining would occur, and demobilization disarmament and reintegration (DDR) plans—were made without any input from half the population of Angola. It turned out to be a major reason the agreement failed. Not many years later, Angola returned to conflict.

The combatants had given each other amnesty for the crimes of sexual violence they had perpetrated against women as a weapon of the civil war. The ambassador noted that this not only mattered to women, but also undermined a return to the rule of law and accountability, as well as efforts to rebuild and reform justice and the security sector. In efforts on DDR, women combatants (who served as cooks, messengers, and in other roles)

got no support, and men were sent back to their communities with no jobs. An uptick in violence soon resulted.

The ambassador said there were many challenges. Some of the implementers tried to resolve them with gender advisers and human rights officers to guide efforts, but it was too late. In the end, the implementing commission was seen by the people as serving the interests of the combatants and not the people as a whole, and they were back to war.⁴

We need to put this lesson from Angola into a broader perspective. Peace accords are all too often negotiated only between the small number of armed combatants who had originally fought the war—groups whose experiences on the battlefield are not easily transferable to the difficult task of peace building.⁵ Moreover, women are critical partners in stabilizing countries, and need to be engaged in the design and implementation of relief efforts.

In this lecture, I want to focus on an overlooked aspect of peace building—that is, the role of women in ending conflict and building lasting security. Too often this topic has been dismissed as soft or relegated to the margins. I believe the need to develop an inclusive approach to peace and security has never been more urgent.

Much of this discussion flows as much from the work of scholars and researchers who are engaged in this field as from my own experiences and those of others in government. Women are not just victims of war (as victimized as they are), they are also agents of peace (or, as an Afghan woman admonished me during a discussion in Kabul, “Stop looking at us as victims and look at us as the leaders that we are”). Incorporating their participation at all levels of society, including the High Peace Council, is not a favor to women, but essential for peace and security. Women in Afghanistan rightly worry that in an effort to end the war (something they strongly support) their voices will be silenced and their hard-won constitutional rights sacrificed. Should that happen, any potential for sustainable peace would be subverted.

Today there is a growing body of research—an evidenced-based case—that shows how women around the world have contributed to making and keeping peace. Indeed, there is a correlation between the abrogation of peace agreements and the marginalization of women in peace processes. Moreover, this is not just a women’s issue. The impact of women’s participation results in better outcomes for all of society. This goes to the heart of the security of people everywhere.

In the past twenty years, international laws focused on both humanitarian considerations and human rights recognized that women's rights are human rights, and established strong links between women's agency and peace and security.

In 1995, the UN Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Platform for Action by consensus. It embodied a commitment by the international community to the advancement of women, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in policies and programs at all levels. The platform contained twelve critical areas of concern, including one on "women and armed conflict." It condemned rape, sex slavery, and other abuses of women, and it laid out the obligations of states to protect women in conflict. It also stated, "Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved."⁶

THE ADOPTION OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

Five years later, the Security Council, the UN body that is responsible for upholding peace and security, for the first time officially acknowledged how women experience conflict and how vital they are to ending it. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, recognizing that women not only bear a disproportionate burden during violent conflict and must be protected, but also have an indispensable role in peace building. SC Res. 1325, at the same time, acknowledged the changing nature of warfare. The Security Council set out twin pillars. On the one hand, it acknowledged the need to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, and, on the other hand, it recognized the role of women as full and equal partners in all phases of conflict resolution, building peace, and enhancing security.

Among the precipitating events that catalyzed women's advocacy for the adoption of a Security Council resolution on women's participation in peace building was the process that had been created to end the Bosnian War in 1995. Women had no role in the Dayton talks, although tens of thousands had been sexually violated and raped during the war.

The UN had established the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in response to the mass atrocities committed, including systematic rapes. It gave the survivors a chance to testify about the horrors they had endured. Despite the risks to themselves and their families, Bosnian women survivors testified about their experiences. Their courage made prosecutions of wartime rape possible. The tribunal elevated systematic rape to the level of a crime against humanity.

The Bosnian peace agreement created one of the most complex systems of government: a tripartite presidency, two entities—one of which continues to refuse to recognize the wartime sexual violence as a crime. There remains little accountability, domestic violence is widespread, and women's participation in the economy and politics is low. Reconciliation among the ethnic groups remains largely illusive, and there are growing worries about the threats of radicalization and violent extremism.

On a recent trip to Bosnia, a woman asked to speak with me. Her head was downcast, and she spoke with difficulty, tears in her eyes. She told me that she had been raped during the war and her rapist is a policeman in her neighborhood. He is viewed with respect. On the other hand, she has difficulty living with the trauma and violent abuse that were inflicted on her during the war, and for which there has been no accountability. Her situation is not unique.

SC Res. 1325 rests on four pillars: prevention of conflict, protection of women and girls who are targets of sexual violence in conflict, participation of women in all aspects of peace building, and the role of women in relief and recovery.

CONFLICT PREVENTION

The UN Security Council recognized that the prevention of conflict is critical and that women have a key role to play. The condition of women can also be dispositive. Women are like canaries in the mine. Their condition can say a great deal about the future stability of a country and its potential for conflict. If women are robbed of their rights and oppressed; if violence against women is rampant; and if they are marginalized in decision-making, economic participation, and education, prospects for a peaceful and just society are diminished. On the other hand, as the US National Security Strategy stated, "Experience shows that countries are more peaceful and prosperous where women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunities."⁷

The security of women is one of the most reliable indicators of a peaceful state. At the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, we are currently working on a new global index to capture the gender dimensions of peace and security, justice and inclusion. Early warning systems should monitor increased violence and discrimination against women in all its forms.

Women can also prevent violence through their on-the-ground experience and knowledge. Some have been engaged through organizations in

their communities to counter potential radicalization. Others have been engaged as female engagement teams in military operations, working with women in more traditional societies, like Afghanistan, who are more alert to potential threats. Women are often aware of impending conflict before violence breaks out.

Another effective preventive tool is the so-called “Women’s Situation Room” (WSR). This mechanism has proven to be indispensable in places like Kenya, Liberia, Uganda, and Sierra Leone to combat potential violence and instability around elections, often caused by ethnic or political tensions. One of the leaders of this movement is Benita Diop, Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security for the African Union. When I met with her after the successful intervention to ease electoral tensions in Senegal in 2012, she remarked that “the peace table is the polling system.” Diop has worked to mobilize women from all walks of life, to mediate among different political parties, and to monitor elections at polling stations to prevent potential electoral violence.

In 2013, there was fear of another outbreak of post-electoral violence in Kenya. In the aftermath of an election in 1991, a thousand deaths resulted and hundreds of thousands had to flee the violence. No one wanted to see a repeat of what had occurred earlier. After the successful intervention of the WSR in 2013, one of the leaders said, “Women are usually the victims of the election violence and are rarely involved in observing or mitigating the violence. In terms of real-time observations, the WSR was very successful.”⁸

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

The second pillar of 1325 focuses on the protection of women and girls. Women’s low status and inequality make them more vulnerable. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are employed as a preferred strategic weapon of war. The “weaponization” of women is an intentional strategy that serves to divide families and communities, and enable the combatants to achieve their nefarious goals.

Protection is vitally important. As the US National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security points out: “No society can achieve peace or stability when its population lives in daily terror of rape or other sexual assaults. The perpetrators often act with impunity and victims lack access to justice. Acts of rape are used as a tactic of war and often calculated to humiliate, dominate, instill fear and forcibly displace women and their

families. Sexual violence in conflict is a serious security issue that must receive the same attention as threats to peace and security.”⁹

What has further compounded the problem in several instances is the sexual violence and abuse perpetrated by UN peacekeepers, soldiers, and police who are responsible for the protection of civilians, but who instead contribute to the violence. The UN has yet to fully implement its policy of zero tolerance and not just call for it. This is a scandal the UN must more vigorously address.

It is well known that in some places, women are most vulnerable when they leave their living areas to fetch water or firewood. Greater efforts have been made in recent years to target these situations and provide for more female peacekeepers. As of 2014, women make up only 3 percent of peacekeepers and 10 percent of police.¹⁰

Because actions to protect women and girls and to end impunity have been grossly insufficient, the UN Security Council adopted four additional resolutions related to sexual violence. One of the resolutions was introduced after Secretary Hillary Clinton’s trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where she heard chilling accounts from women of the sexual violence that they had endured. Security Council Resolution 1888 created a new position of special representative to the UN secretary-general to take up these issues at the highest levels and to have teams of experts ready to deploy as a preventive measure to places where sexual gender-based violence and related conditions were exacerbating the potential for conflict. An earlier resolution, Security Council Resolution 1820, affirmed that sexual violence is a deliberate tool of warfare demanding a security response.

In 2013, former United Kingdom Foreign Secretary William Hague used his office to put this issue on the G8 agenda, something never before done.¹¹ He wanted to make the point that the eight most highly industrialized nations needed to take greater action on this global scourge, which is also a threat to security. A year earlier, he urged the UN Security Council to get serious about ending rape in war, stressed that it was a crime, and said it can no longer be considered mere collateral damage from war. As an international community, he noted, “[W]e curbed the development of nuclear weapons. . . . We have outlawed the use of chemical weapons and imposed a ban on cluster munitions. . . . It is time to say that rape and sexual violence used as a weapon of war is unacceptable, that we know it can be prevented and that we will act now to eradicate it.”¹² In 2014, Hague

brought together more than 70 foreign ministers and representatives of more than 120 countries, along with non-governmental organizations and survivors, to catalyze commitments by governments and citizens at the grassroots level to stem sexual violence in conflict.

Accountability for crimes of sexual violence in conflict, ending impunity and bringing perpetrators to justice, has been scandalously inadequate. The International Criminal Court, in a precedent-setting case in 2016, convicted the DRC rebel leader, Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, for crimes committed in the Central Africa Republic. Although he was not personally implicated in the crimes against humanity—the mass rapes—he was brought to justice for being aware that his troops were committing the crimes and for not deterring them.

Reparations for conflict-related sexual violence have been few and far between. Reparations for survivors can be transformative and take various forms, such as compensation, rehabilitation, and restitution. Women in the DRC who carry the scars of rape told me they wanted to go “from pain to power.” When I asked them what kind of power, they said, “A market.” They wanted normalcy and control over their lives again.

Studies confirm that women offer distinctive and important contributions to peace and security, yet their inclusion in negotiations and other processes to end conflict and build the peace has been too slow.

PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES

The third pillar in the Security Council’s 1325 framework rests on women’s participation, and recognizes that their experience, knowledge, and perspectives are vital to ending conflicts, forging agreements, and sustaining peace.

Women who have been engaged in peace processes, from Northern Ireland to the Philippines, put issues on the negotiating table that are critical to creating lasting peace but are frequently overlooked—issues such as justice, national reconciliation, human rights, and economic opportunity. Moreover, data show that women are better at building trust across divided communities, ensuring the needs of marginalized groups are represented, forging compromise, acting as honest brokers, and catalyzing public support for agreements once they are reached. Inez McCormack was a civil society activist and human rights defender in Northern Ireland who epitomized the commitment to inclusion. She successfully led a coalition of organizations calling for inclusive equality and justice in the Good Friday

Accords, the peace agreement to end the conflict in Northern Ireland. As a strong advocate for inclusion of all segments of society across the sectarian divide, she would often ask, “Who is not at the table?” Exclusion would not lead to a sustainable peace.

The International Peace Institute and UN Women’s analysis of forty peace processes since the end of the Cold War shows that where women were able to influence negotiations, there was a much higher chance that agreement would be reached than when their influence was negligible. It is the quality of women’s efforts, not their representation alone, that is significant. Their inclusion in peace processes contributes to both the adoption of agreements and their durability.¹³

How do women participate? There are several ways they can influence a peace process, including at the grassroots level through civil society. They may be engaged in direct negotiations, or Track II negotiations that are not part of the formal process but can influence the formal negotiations. Another possible route is through commissions that are established to implement the agreement, as is taking place currently in Colombia. Others have engaged in mass actions to challenge negotiators to deliver results, as the women did in Liberia. Still others have worked to ensure the adoption of the negotiated agreement in a referendum vote, as in Northern Ireland.

In “Women Leading Peace,” a Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security study of four distinct processes—in the Philippines, Kenya, Northern Ireland, and Guatemala—we found in each case that the women were able to access the peace process directly or indirectly.¹⁴ They mobilized and organized; they tapped their existing networks or created new ones; and they shaped the agenda and set priorities. In Guatemala, their efforts were made through civil society via the Women’s Sector, a coalition of women’s organizations engaged in influencing the peace process; in Kenya, it took a mediator to reach out to the women and carry the issues on which they had lobbied. In Northern Ireland, women accessed the negotiations through political participation, by winning a seat at the peace table; and in the Philippines, women led the peace process for the government, and extensively engaged with civil society. In each of these ways, women influenced high-level negotiations but, more importantly, they enhanced the prospects for sustainable peace.

The experiences of the Philippines and Colombia provide two model gendered approaches for peace negotiations.

THE BANGSAMORO PEACE PROCESS

The Philippines had undergone forty years of armed conflict between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, who were fighting for independence. Peace efforts had been waged unsuccessfully for decades. Lessons were learned over time. In March 2014, a comprehensive peace agreement was reached—one that captured the attention of the world. What was different this time?

Women were involved in both the formal and informal negotiations, representing both sides in the high-level negotiations and in civil society actions that influenced the process and final agreement. All of the components of the peace process were designed not just to end the conflict, but also to create a peace that would last.

First, women were involved at the highest levels. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer led the negotiations for the government, and made history by becoming the first woman ever to serve as a chief negotiator and signatory of a major accord. In addition to her, the office of presidential advisor on the peace process was also for the first time headed by a woman. There were more women with influence than ever before on both sides, including members of the technical staffs.

Secondly, there was an intensive outreach to civil society to ensure their inclusion in the process and to garner support across the country. Women in civil society developed networks at every level of society, and shaped the agenda through participation in the open dialogues.¹⁵

Third, the government negotiating team established a public national consultation called “Dialogue Mindanao,” to ensure that the public understood the issues and had an opportunity to ask questions. They wanted to deal with any misperceptions of the process.

Fourth, a Transition Commission that included women from both sides was established to influence the negotiations and to work with neighboring communities who might be worried about the specifics of the agreement. It was an inclusive process that sought to ensure women’s participation in the transitional governance, employment, and access to resources and training.¹⁶

When Coronel-Ferrer was asked about the importance of a gendered approach to peace making, she said, “When you negotiate an agreement, there are a lot of compromises. So you can’t really have a perfect agreement, but you make an agreement more imperfect if you don’t have women’s perspectives in the agreement, or if you don’t have their interests and welfare also at the back of your mind as you negotiate all the different

components. . . . So it's that kind of very basic starting point, which may not be very obvious to everyone, but which will have to be made obvious basically by the women themselves."¹⁷

The Agreement on Bangsamoro was consummated on March 27, 2014, between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. When I first met Miriam, she said they had hoped to create a model peace process that could be of help to others. By all accounts, they succeeded.

COLOMBIAN PEACE ACCORD

The world's longest-running civil war may soon end if the Colombia Peace Accord that was negotiated with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the country's largest rebel group insurgency, is fully implemented. Talks have also begun with the National Liberation Army, the second-largest rebel group.

The war between the FARC and other rebel groups, paramilitaries, and the government during the last fifty years has taken a tremendous toll on the Colombian people. It extracted over two hundred thousand deaths, massive human rights violations, sexual violence, rape, enslavement, kidnappings, land displacement, and the largest internally displaced persons (IDP) population until the Syrian War.

There have been many peace efforts over the last half century. Women were largely on the periphery, but always struggling for peace and working to keep the impact of the war and the plight of the victims in the public eye. In 2013, they held a National Summit for Peace. It consisted of a consortium of Colombian women's organizations from different backgrounds. The summit had the support of the government and the United Nations.

The women's summit made three demands: First, they urged the parties to stay at the table until an agreement was reached. Second, they wanted a commitment that the experiences of women throughout the conflict would be considered during the talks. Third, they wanted women included at all stages of the negotiations.¹⁸

Women played a prominent role in the peace process. Several women held influential roles in the high commissioner for peace office; two served as negotiators. A Subcommission on Gender, a new innovation, was created and made clear the gendered dimensions of the war. Testimony by women victimized by the war was delivered in Cuba, where the talks took place, and other testimony was taken throughout Colombia and included in the peace commission's work. Victims were at the center of the process.

FARC women were also in the peace process. Moreover, women were also included in two additional key sub-commissions. As the lead negotiator for the Colombian government said at an event at Georgetown University, “The Colombian peace agreement without any doubt progresses women’s rights, but even more importantly, it guarantees a gendered approach to peace making.”¹⁹

The final agreement reached contains a gender perspective on a range of issues, like property rights, the truth and justice process, impunity, etc. A special unit to investigate sexual violence has also been established. The agreement explicitly denies amnesty or impunity for sexual violence and other crimes against humanity. The transitional justice process is based on restorative justice and dialogue, and, ultimately, decisions on reparations and punishment.²⁰

There is still a long road ahead. The agreement in some quarters remains controversial. The former president Álvaro Uribe has been an outright opponent of current president Juan Manuel Santos’s efforts for peace. The referendum on the agreement was defeated in October 2016, by 50.2 percent of the vote, when the agreement was brought before the public. Opponents believed that it was too lenient on the FARC. The agreement was revised, and in November 2016, it was ratified by the congress. When Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December, he entitled his address “Peace in Colombia—From the Impossible to the Possible.”

TRANSITION AND OPPORTUNITY

As Fragility Study Group notes, the collapse of the social and political order resulting in violence, displacement, and conflict can paradoxically provide opportunities for a more inclusive and stable society.²¹

Strides in gender equality that can produce long-lasting dividends for political, economic, and social progress and establish security and stability can be achieved during the transition from conflict to peace, if the moment is seized. This critical juncture can set in motion a women’s movement, establish new laws and constitutions to secure rights and accountability, and build democratic institutions.

The writing of constitutions is a pivotal time with enormous implications for the future. In Tunisia, after the revolution, a process was set in motion to write a new constitution. Retaining the existing commitment to equal rights for women in the constitution was challenged. Opponents wanted to substitute “complementarity” between men and women for “equality.” It took women in the constituent assembly and their male allies,

as well as a massive demonstration of citizens, to preserve the constitutional protection for women's rights.

Women's political participation is critical to transformative change. Countries like Rwanda, Afghanistan, and South Africa have reached a critical mass of 30 percent women in parliament. They were able to achieve the goal of greater women's political representation because quotas were adopted through the transition constitutional process. As a result, more women were in a position to advance democratic reforms and stabilize their countries. Women's participation before and during peace negotiations, as well as in drafting constitutions, is critical to charting a better future for all of society.

The promise of SC Res. 1325 remains largely unfulfilled. There are those who claim women's participation undercuts peace talks or delays the prospects for achieving an agreement. This, despite the evidence that shows women's participation contributes both to successful negotiations and more sustainable agreements. There is often a tension between the desire to end hostilities and an inclusive process that would ensure a sustainable peace. I saw this tension in Afghanistan, where steps to include women in nascent peace efforts were repeatedly thwarted, and where intensive advocacy and intervention were required to provide opportunities for women's engagement. Moreover, the very UN Security Council that adopted this framework and appoints envoys and mediators to conflict zones has not required the SC Res. 1325 mandate for women's participation as part of their charge.

Syria is a case in point. Lakhdar Brahimi, who served as UN special envoy for Syria from 2012–2014, was opposed to including Syrian women in any aspect of the Geneva peace talks, despite the fact that women had been disproportionately affected by the conflict and were side by side with the men during the earliest protests against Bashar al-Assad's repressive regime. In fact, women have been actively engaged throughout the conflict on the refugee issue and other important matters that affect the lives of the Syrian people. One of my last meetings as ambassador was with a group of Syrian opposition leaders—women who had been risking their lives every day and continuing with the hard work of addressing the desperate needs of their people. From the outset, local peace efforts were often led by women. Yet, women's participation in official peace talks was discounted.

On the other hand, Brahimi's successor, Staffan de Mistura, recognized the importance of Syrian women's engagement. From the outset of his appointment, he noted that involving women was a priority for him.

He created an innovative advisory board, composed of Syrian women from all sides of the conflict, to advise him on the situation in Syria. Despite their differences, these women have been working to reach consensus on recommendations to de Mistura. This is the only forum with Syrians from all sides. De Mistura has also been committed to women's representation in the "on again and off again" Geneva talks. Political will is essential to ensuring women's participation in peace building.

Mary Robinson, the former president of Ireland, served as the UN special envoy for the Great Lakes in 2013. No women had been named to a senior mediator role until her appointment. As envoy, Robinson recognized that women's participation is critical to building lasting peace in the region. She knew too that no society can progress economically, politically, or socially if half the population is marginalized and subjected to extreme violence, as is the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She also knew that women had been mobilized and organized for peace at the grassroots level.

As UN envoy, Robinson developed a new approach to integrating women's perspectives—to widening the window of opportunity in the region for women and civil society. The Great Lakes leaders of eleven countries in the region had signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to address violence in the DRC. Robinson saw the potential of the agreement to provide opportunities for women's leadership in the unfolding implementation process. We at the Georgetown Institute, at her request, provided a real-time analysis of the avenues created in the agreement for greater women's participation in its implementation.²² Under her leadership, women came together in official meetings across the towns and villages to support the process, and to engage in rebuilding and reshaping their society. Robinson demonstrated the power of mediators to advance women's participation.

Just as there have been resolutions to strengthen SC Res. 1325 in its response to sexual violence in conflict, there have also been Security Council resolutions to address the need to make greater progress on women's participation. Security Council Resolution 2242 was adopted in 2015. It addressed a number of important areas, including training for mediators on the impact of women's participation, and ways to ensure that inclusive processes are created.

SC Res. 2242 also marked the first time women's participation was expanded to prevent and counter violent extremism, including greater consultation with women's organizations affected by the violence and critical

to devising strategies to address it. As former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, “At a time when armed extremist groups place the subordination of women at the top of their agenda, we must place women’s leadership and the protection of women’s rights at the top of ours.”²³

Extremist groups like Boko Haram, ISIS, and the Taliban have targeted women and perpetrate crimes of sexual violence. The Yazidi women were captured and sold as sex slaves in auctions by ISIS, and Boko Haram has forced kidnapped girls to be suicide bombers. They have also radicalized and attracted women, including some in the West, to their cause of building a new caliphate. Women are engaged both in countering and promoting violent extremism.

Efforts to counter radicalization and violent extremism cannot be focused solely on military solutions. Women, in their families and acting through organizations in their communities, often act as an early warning in identifying and preventing radicalization. They have a vital role to play. However, their participation must be grounded in human rights, and they must not be used as instruments nor exposed to risk by being closely associated with government.

Women are also central to addressing related global challenges on the security agenda, like climate change. Security Council Resolution 2245 recognized that future conflicts are likely to come from tensions exacerbated by vanishing natural resources, especially water, as well as political instability. Although women are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, they are also critical to climate solutions, both in adaptation and mitigation. Moreover, women must be engaged in response efforts to address the challenges of displaced populations and refugees, the majority of whom are women and children.

POST-CONFLICT RELIEF AND RECOVERY

The fourth pillar on which SC Res. 1325 rests relates to relief and recovery efforts, including post-conflict reconstruction. Again, we see how relief and recovery intersect with the participation pillar. The failure to include women in post-conflict decision-making undermines the potential for sustainable peace. A range of critical investments and priorities—from creating economic opportunity to governance and building democratic institutions—should include the full participation of women.

Evidence shows that better outcomes in the public sector occur when women serve in leadership roles at all levels: services are more efficient; the design of programs is more responsive to community needs; land rights,

agriculture jobs, and education get priority consideration; and violence against women is often worse if plans on reintegration of combatants are not adequately considered, with the provision of economic and psychological support.²⁴ Ways to grow economies in post-conflict societies and fragile states can be challenging. Yet, providing for women's economic opportunities can yield significant human development gains as well as grow economies. Women spend their incomes in ways that create a multiplier effect by investing in their families—in education, health care, and nutrition—and raise the standard of living.

Economic opportunity is an important contributor to post-conflict stability. Investments in entrepreneurship at the micro, small, and medium enterprise levels create income and jobs. However, women entrepreneurs often face barriers, such as limited access to credit, markets, training, technology, and networks. These barriers must be overcome if women are to unleash their economic potential. Increasing agriculture productivity is also extremely important, particularly in agriculture-based economies. Land rights and closing the gender gap in resources for female small-holder farmers are essential to improving crop yields, enhancing nutrition, and creating markets with higher returns. Access to construction jobs is also important to post-recovery efforts. Women are often discriminated against in this market. Targeted training programs in construction, such as those created in the Indonesian province of Aceh in the aftermath of the natural disaster, are a good example of enabling women's participation in the economy. The gender gap in mobile technology must not be allowed to constrain women's access to a vital tool to enhance their economic prospects and well-being. In addition, the private sector can be vital in contributing to women's economic empowerment by tapping their supply and value chains.

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

The United Nations urged member states to take action at the national level to implement SC Res. 1325. By the end of 2016, sixty-three countries, as well as NATO and the European Union, created National Action Plans (NAPs) to advance women's participation in peace building—from prevention to recovery. NAPs provide a way to accelerate and institutionalize a country's goals. I was closely involved in the creation of the US NAP. It required intensive efforts and close collaboration on the part of key government agencies—such as the departments of State, Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, USAID, and others—as well as consultation with civil society, to put together a plan to ensure that women's perspectives

on and participation in peace and security will be integrated throughout relevant government policies and programs to achieve greater effectiveness. In launching the US plan and the accompanying executive order in December 2011, the White House noted that it represented “a fundamental change in how the U.S. will approach its diplomatic, military, and development-based support to women in areas of conflict, by ensuring that their perspectives and considerations of gender are woven into the fabric of how the United States approaches peace processes, conflict prevention, the protection of civilians, and humanitarian assistance.”²⁵

NAPs vary considerably—from those that are seriously implemented, evaluated on their progress, and updated, to others that function more as a “check the box” formality (“We have a NAP”). NAPs can and should make a difference. This often requires working with governments to enable them to more effectively implement their plans. Finland, for example, “twinning” with Liberia to create better outcomes for peace and security in the war-torn nation. For a NAP to be effective, governments engaged in diplomatic missions in fragile or conflict states, from Afghanistan to Ukraine, should fully integrate the NAP into their diplomatic and aid missions, as well as military training programs and other security-sector operations. The link between gender equality and international peace and security can only be strengthened by greater efforts to integrate women’s perspectives and engagement across the work of government.

CLOSING THOUGHTS ON THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

In reflecting on the future and the potential role for the academic community in this area, one key question is how to keep the limited progress on women, peace, and security that has been made with respect to both protection and participation from sliding back. With the rise of populism that is threatening democracy and global institutions and turning nations inward, there is a real risk that issues of women, peace, and security will at best be put on the back burner. I believe that our best case is to double down on the evidence-based case. It is important to show the difference women’s participation and leadership make as well as the risks and losses that are suffered by all of society when women are absent and a gender perspective is left out. It is the smart and strategic thing to do.

How can researchers and policymakers better collaborate for this purpose? If the academy is not best suited to translate research into terms policymakers will understand and better utilize, who can play that role?

We need hubs not only for knowledge production, but also for dissemination, sharing, and bridge building.

How do we conduct research in difficult places—places that are critical to the women, peace, and security agenda: Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan, Iraq, Syria, and other places? What role, if any, can our communities offer as a bulwark to new and old threats to women’s protection and participation?

Islamic fundamentalism is threatening secularism in places like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. This poses risks to peace and security. We should strategize more on this growing phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

In 2015, the United Nations undertook three landmark studies to improve progress on women, peace, and security. The conclusion reached: we need to more effectively accelerate the implementation of the SC Res. 1325 framework.

When the Nobel Peace Committee awarded the Peace Prize to three women in 2011, one from Yemen and two from Liberia, the committee noted: “We cannot achieve democratic, lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence development at all levels of society.”²⁶

Former US Secretary Clinton, speaking about the adoption of the US National Plan on women, peace, and security, stressed, “It is time . . . to change how the world thinks about conflict and how we stop it and prevent it; about security and how we provide it; about peace and how we realize it. And as we do, it is past time for women to take their rightful place, side by side with men, in the rooms where the fates of peoples . . . are decided, in the negotiations to make peace and in the institutions to keep it.”²⁷

The gendered approach to peace building can no longer be just an option. It is a necessity for “preventing conflict, transforming justice, and securing the peace.”²⁸

NOTES

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