

Issue Brief

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Cohort 3: Gender Responsive Peacebuilding

Implementing the women peace and security agenda in the post-negotiation phase of peace agreements

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What can be done to increase women's participation after a peace agreement has been negotiated and signed? The purpose of this issue brief is to contribute to knowledge on *accelerating the implementation of gender priorities in the post-negotiation phase*. Key illustrative findings from Mali will be presented in the latter half of this paper.

Women in conflict, peace-building and post conflict contexts

The world is facing multiple recurring conflicts that undermine human rights and development efforts. Women and girls often pay the highest price in conflict: it aggravates their pre-existing vulnerabilities, exacerbates poverty and reinforces gender inequalities and discrimination. Gender-based violence (GBV), particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict, are commonplace and often used as tactics of war. In some crisis settings, more than 70 percent of women have experienced GBV.

Access to education, water, sanitation and hygiene and health centres, including for sexual and reproductive health, are often compromised, with women and girls particularly affected.

Crises often hit women's livelihoods hardest, in part also because they tend to work in informal sectors, increasing their risk of engaging in poorly paid work or transactional sex.

KEY FINDINGS

- Despite women's contributions to preventing and resolving conflicts they are often excluded from negotiating tables.
- Through the effective implementation of the women peace and security agenda women's rights to participation and protection in the reconstruction phase can be guaranteed.
- Socio-cultural norms, low political commitment, lack of expertise and funding are among the many barriers that prevent female inclusion in peace negotiations.
- One approach found to be producing promising results is in Mali: after women were barred from peace negotiations a national action plan on UNSCR 1325 aligned with the peace agreement and with the aim of accelerating the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the post-negotiation phase was adopted.
- Cases from other contexts, lessons learned on integrating gender in the post-negotiation phase and mitigation responses to the frequent problem of women's exclusion from peace building need to be documented.

Girls are often the first to be pulled out of school as parents find ways to alleviate economic burdens, depriving them of the fundamental right to education and the realization of their full potential in life.¹

Studies have shown that women have enormous potential to contribute to establishing lasting peace: the participation of women and civil society in peace processes increases the chances of achieving lasting peace and makes a peace agreement 64 percent less likely to fail.²

Local women peace activists courageously tackle questions of social justice, human rights and GBV, which can be overlooked in many peace negotiations and agreements. The work of local women's organisations and individual women peace activists on GBV, social justice and other peacebuilding issues is very often not linked to the official peace process.

Through UN Security Council resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 under the Council's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the UNSC recognized the importance of the equal participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from GBV, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

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Since the adoption of the resolution and its seven follow-up resolutions from 2009 to 2015,³ there have certainly been improvements in women's participation in peace processes and in the inclusion of their specific peace-building and security needs. However, unfortunately, progress remains slow and the number of women negotiators, witnesses and signatories to peace agreements still remains astonishingly low. Analysis of 1,187 peace agreements signed from 1990–2017, reveals that only 19 percent made reference to women, women made up two percent of mediators, five percent of witnesses and signatories and eight percent of negotiators.⁴

One way to help overcome the slow progress on increasing women's participation in peace processes globally is to promote full realization of women's peace and security commitments. In the case of failed efforts to involve women fully in peace negotiations and final agreements one possible approach is to *develop a national action plan on UNSCR 1325 (2000) as a "Plan B" to accelerate the*

implementation of gender priorities in the post – negotiation phase.

There are many testimonies, case studies and guidelines on women's participation in peace negotiations and mediation and on inclusion of gender in peace agreements. However, there is less focus and research on what happens after the negotiation phase. It is crucial to ensure that gender is at the heart of post-conflict interventions and it has been shown⁵ that the post-conflict context offers many opportunities to advance gender equality and women's rights. While some peace agreements can include specific gender provisions that will need a close follow-up to ensure their implementation, there are many situations where peace agreements are gender-blind.

Complexity of implementing the women, peace and security agenda in post-conflict contexts

the full realization of the women, peace and security agenda in a country affected by war implies considering the specific needs of both women and men in all stages of a peace process. Although the guidelines on gender in peace processes are clear, their implementation is difficult because of several challenges, including:

- The contradiction between integrating gender as a cross-cutting theme and the approach of targeting women and their specific needs only;
- The need to involve multiple stakeholders in the peace process and simultaneously hold them accountable for how their decisions and actions affect women and men differently;
- The need to ensure the gendered dimension is included in all four pillars of the UNSCR 1325 (2000): prevention, participation, protection and post-conflict recovery;
- Ensuring gender mainstreaming in the peace process while addressing the structural gender inequalities that existed in the country even before the crisis;
- Socio-cultural resistance and lack of political will to pursue gender equality and lack of technical skills in the field of gender;
- Huge security, economic and political challenges in post-conflict contexts which result in gender priorities often being neglected.

Despite these complexities, post-conflict contexts still represent opportunities to enhance the acceleration of gender equality and women's empowerment in many countries.

1 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/humanitarian-action/facts-and-figures>

2 <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>

3 UNSC Resolutions :1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242.

4 <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>

5 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, 2015

Women and conflict in Mali

The conflict in Mali has had specific impacts on women, with a reported increase in sexual violence, including rape, gang rape, forced marriage and other forms of sexual violence. Some women became widowed and therefore the sole breadwinner for their families, others fled their homes with their children to live among host communities elsewhere in the country or to refugee camps outside the country.

Women have had different and complex roles in the Malian crisis (as combatants, associated to combatants, mobilisers, victims, peace mediators etc.). Ethnicity, geography, class and other factors intersect with gender identities and determine different levels of power and influence. Despite limited formal decision-making powers, women in the north of Mali, which has a matriarchal tradition, have greater access and standing to

influence their sons, brothers and husbands as “guardians of war and peace”. Older women in particular can inspire young men to take up arms and demand revenge, or they can promote peace: their influence has been, and still is, crucial for the development - or resolution - of conflict in the north of Mali.

UNSCR 1325 as a tool for engendering the peace process: the case of Mali

The rocky path to conflict resolution in Mali

Mali is still struggling with a political and security crisis that erupted in 2012 following the resurgence of an armed rebellion in the north of the country, combined with a military coup. This rebellion is the fourth since independence, following those of 1963, 1990 and 2006. Efforts have been made by the Government of Mali, with the support of the international community, to achieve lasting peace and to break the vicious circle of national discord.

International mediation resulted in the signing of a peace agreement by all parties in Algiers in mid-2015. There was hope for a gradual return to peace. But the security situation continued to deteriorate with regular sporadic threats and terrorist attacks in various regions, including in the capital Bamako. Efforts are underway to accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement but lasting peace cannot be achieved without the participation of half of the population in the implementation of this peace agreement.

Female participation in the dialogue was extremely marginal and women's priorities were not taken into account in the discussions leading to the 2015 peace agreement. Women's representatives were not invited to the first round of negotiations and only to the second round after intensive advocacy by women themselves, supported by partners at regional and international levels.

At the end of the second round, the lead mediator, at the request of the warring parties, concluded that it would no longer invite representatives of women and civil society to subsequent rounds. The reason given was that some of them were not impartial but directly supported either the government or the armed movements. However, the negotiating parties recognised that women made good proposals for lasting peace. Only two women continued to participate regularly in the other rounds of negotiations (one from the Government delegation and a second in the coordination group of the so-called Azawad armed movements). There were no women in the 100-strong mediation team. At the end of the process, the agreement for peace and reconciliation that was signed by all parties contained certain references to women and youth but no systematic gender mainstreaming.

Gender equality gaps in Mali

Mali has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), without any reservations. The Malian constitution of 1992 guarantees equal rights to all citizens regardless of sex, and Mali adopted a national gender policy in 2010 (Politique Nationale de Genre).

Although women constitute more than 51 percent of the population,

there is a wide equality gap between men and women in most socioeconomic and governance sectors. For example, women hold 9.5 percent of the seats in Parliament; around 90 percent of women have been subjected to female genital mutilation; nearly half of all girls marry before 18 years and only one in four women knows how to read and write.¹

Due to lower education levels, higher formal unemployment, and poorer social positioning, women lack access to basic social services, despite their role in the reproductive and

household economy. The maternity mortality rate is among the highest in the world.

Economically, women's businesses are confined to the informal sector and mostly to rural areas. They lack technology, management and marketing tools and have poor access to flexible financing and lucrative markets. Rural women are also more exposed to climate change impacts and wage disparity.

Mali ranks 182 out of 189 countries in the global Gender Inequality Index.

¹ Union Interparlementaire et ONU Femmes (2017): *Femmes en politique : 2017*, Institut National de la Statistique du Mali (2017): *Enquête Modulaire et Permanente auprès des ménages (EMOP)*, Gouvernement du Mali

4 "Plan B" to integrate gender in the post-conflict phase in Mali

15 years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, which calls for equal participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, women were excluded from Mali's peace negotiations. Several efforts were made to correct the shortcomings of the negotiation phase and implement UNSCR 1325 (2000) and other standards on women, peace and security in the post-negotiation phase. For instance:

- A national women's forum identified women's priorities in the implementation of the peace agreement. These priorities were shared with the Head of State and disseminated through the media;
- Women leaders of civil society organisations held several meetings with key actors of the peace process in Mali to present their priorities;
- Women participated in the development of a national action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 for the period 2015-2017. The priorities of this action plan were aligned with the priorities of the peace agreement and aimed to integrate gender in all the mechanisms foreseen in the agreement;
- A coordination unit for the implementation of the national action plan on UNSCR 1325 was set up.

Even though the peace accord is facing many challenges, the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 national action plan has started to have an impact on gender responsive peacebuilding and more results could be achieved in the coming years. Some successful results, which were not included in the initial peace agreement, include:

- All members of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR) were trained in gender, and a gender sub-commission was created in 2017 to make sure gender would be integrated in all stages of the transitional justice process. Thanks to a gender sensitive way of working the majority of cases submitted so far are from women;
- A law guaranteeing the representation of at least 30 percent of each sex in both elected and nominated political positions was adopted in 2015;
- The representation of women increased by 9 percent at the municipal elections in 2016 and as a result women now make up 25.6 percent in decision-making at local level;
- A law forbidding violence against women has been drafted and a national programme to combat violence against women and girls is being finalized;
- The police have developed a three-year national action plan (2018-2020) to combat GBV;
- Holistic care centres for survivors of GBV have been constructed and equipped, for example « DJIGUIYA » One Stop Center at the National Police in Bamako in 2018;
- Programmes to enhance the economic resilience of women affected by the conflict have been implemented. For example 20,490 women have developed income generating activities through a UNDP project;

- Women's initiatives for peace and reconciliation at the community level have been launched (through peace huts, community dialogue etc.).

Despite these encouraging achievements, the path to achieving them was rocky and many challenges still need to be addressed. The establishment of the UNSCR 1325 Coordination Unit and the mobilization of resources for its implementation took a long time. It has been difficult to agree on a mechanism for channeling funds for the implementation of this plan. While some commissions of the peace agreement such as the Transitional Justice Commission (CVJR) have been more open to integrating women this has not been the case for all. Women's overall participation in mechanisms of the peace agreement is today only 3 percent. The increasing influence of extremist groups and delay in implementing the peace agreement are serious threats to peace in Mali and have had a negative impact on the implementation of some activities of the national action plan on UNSCR 1325, such as women's integration in the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration process.

Conclusion

Heightened and appropriate attention must be paid to gender perspectives and the participation of women in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements if women are to fulfil their potential to help build lasting peace.

Even though it has been difficult to integrate gender during peace negotiations in Mali, the systematic integration of the women, peace and security agenda in the post-conflict phase has contributed to increasing gender equity and women's empowerment.

The development and implementation of national action plans on UNSCR 1325 can accelerate gender mainstreaming in the post-negotiation phase and offer a "Plan B" in cases where gender has not been integrated into the actual peace agreement phase. While introducing gender mainstreaming into the post-negotiation phase via a UNSCR 1325 national action plan seemed to be effective in Mali, where women and their needs had been excluded from the negotiating table initially, other alternatives should be explored too. These include setting up a permanent committee made up of a range of partners including the government, the United Nations, donors and civil society organisations, to monitor the integration of gender in the post-negotiation phase.

Although it is feasible to integrate gender priorities in the post-negotiation phase, there is little documentation and guidelines as to how this could be done. Documenting cases of other countries, specific approaches adopted, good practices and results achieved is vital. Lessons learned from various contexts could be used to propose mitigation responses to the frequent problem of women's exclusion from peace processes.

- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security>
- http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/making_women_count-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5712
- <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking-rev.pdf>
- <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>
- Jamille Bigio and Rachel Vogelstein: How Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention and Resolution Advances U.S. Interests.





About the PDA Fellowship:

UNDP's Oslo Governance Center in partnership with the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme has established a PDA Fellowship Programme in 2016 consisting of several cohorts, each involving between 4-6 PDA's and/or PDA like conflict prevention specialists over a period of two weeks. The Fellowship Programme involves guided reflections to help draw out the Fellows' experience on pre-identified conflict prevention and peacebuilding issues.

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www.prio.org/
www.undp.org/oslocentre
<https://dppa.un.org/en>

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UNDP Oslo Governance Centre:

The Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) is one of six UNDP Global Policy Centres, established in 2002 and working since May 2015 with a renewed mandate. It is part of the UNDP Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) and works closely with its New York based Headquarters and other relevant UN and UNDP units strengthening the overall analytical and learning ability in the area of Governance and Peacebuilding. It supports policy development and applied research with an overarching focus on democratic governance and peacebuilding in crisis, conflict and transitional contexts.

Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention

Since 2004, the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) have partnered to strengthen support to the UN's work in building national capacities for conflict prevention. Often times, such support is extended through the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors (or PDAs), a growing cadre of UN staff who support Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams adapt and respond to complex political situations and to develop and implement strategic conflict prevention initiatives and programmes.