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20 October 2000

## **REPORT**

on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution  
(2000/2025(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities

Rapporteur: Maj Britt Theorin



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## PROCEDURAL PAGE

At the sitting of 4 May 2000 the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had been authorised to draw up an own-initiative report, pursuant to Rule 163 of the Rules of Procedure, on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution.

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had appointed Maj Britt Theorin rapporteur at its meeting of 26 January 2000.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 11 July 2000, 13 September 2000 and 10 October 2000.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by 8 votes to 5. The following were present for the vote: Maj Britt Theorin chairman and rapporteur; Marianne Eriksson, Anne E.M. Van Lancker and Jillian Evans, vice-chairmen; ; Geneviève Fraisse, Fiorella Ghilardotti, Lissy Gröner, Rodi Kratsa, Christa Prets, Amalia Sartori, Miet Smet, Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco, Pasqualina Napoletano (for Elena Ornella Paciotti). The report was tabled on 20 October 2000

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

### **European Parliament resolution on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution (2000/2025(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, and to the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action resulting from the World Conference on Human Rights of 14-25 June 1993, in particular paragraphs I 28-29 and II 38 on systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy in situations of armed conflict,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979, to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 20 December 1993, and to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989,
- having regard to the General Assembly Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984, and to the General Assembly Declaration 3318 on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict of 14 December 1974, in particular paragraph 4 which calls for effective measures against persecution, torture, violence and degrading treatment of women,
- having regard to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1265 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict of 17 September 1999, in particular paragraph 14, requesting that United Nations personnel involved in peacekeeping and peace-building activities have appropriate training in human rights law, including gender-related provisions,
- having regard to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3519 on Women's Participation in the Strengthening of International Peace and Security of 15 December 1975, and to the United Nations General Assembly Declaration 37/63 on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation of 3 December 1982, in particular paragraph 12 on practical measures to increase women's representation in peace efforts,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action resulting from the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women of 4-15 September 1995, in particular critical concern area E on Women and Armed Conflict, and to the outcome document of the United Nations Beijing +5 Special Session on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of 5-9 June 2000, in particular paragraph 13 on obstacles to women's equal participation in peace-building efforts, and paragraph 124 on a 50/50 gender balance in peacekeeping missions and peace negotiations,
- having regard to the International Criminal Court resulting from the Rome Statute of

1998, in particular Articles 7 and 8 defining rape, sexual slavery, forced impregnation, forced sterilisation and any other form of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes, including as a form of torture and a grave war crime, whether they occur in a systematic or non-methodical manner, and whether these acts occur in international or internal conflicts,

- having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols of 1977, stating that women will be protected against rape, and any other form of sexual assault,
- having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, in particular Articles 3 and 4, which prohibit inhuman treatment or punishment and torture, as well as slavery,
- having regard to the European Council resolution on Integrating Gender in Development of 20 December 1995, in particular paragraph 19 stressing that a gender perspective must be paramount in emergency operations and crisis prevention,
- having regard to the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the United Nations Millennium Forum on the Strengthening of the United Nations for the 21st Century of 26 May 2000, in particular paragraph 11 of section B on gender training for all peacekeeping personnel,
- having regard to its resolution on women in decision-making of 2 March 2000<sup>1</sup>, in particular recital I and paragraph 14 on women's participation in peace-keeping, peace-building and conflict-preventing activities,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 April 1984<sup>2</sup> on the application of the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees, in particular paragraphs 1 and 2 on providing refugee status to women who face harsh or inhumane treatment because they are considered to have transgressed the social mores of the society in which they live,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 1992<sup>3</sup> on the rape of women in the former Yugoslavia, in particular paragraph 2 calling for the recognition of rape as a war crime and crime against humanity,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 1993<sup>4</sup> on the rape of women in former Yugoslavia, in particular paragraph 14 calling for proper medical support for women rape victims, specifically facilities for termination of pregnancy, where that is the woman's wish,
- having regard to the outcome documents of its public hearing of 26-27 June 1995 on gender specific human rights violations, and its public hearing of 18 February 1993 on rape as a war crime in Bosnia, in particular their recognition of the upheaval that refugee status brings to the lives of women, and the latter's call for financial compensation for victims of rape in armed conflict,

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<sup>1</sup> Not yet published in the OJ

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 127, 14.5.1984, p.137.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 21, 25.1.1992, p.158.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 115, 26.4.1993, p.149.

- having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0308/2000),
- A. Whereas the Geneva Convention does not refer to acts of sexual violence as a "grave breach crime" or as a specific form of torture thereby making it ambiguous whether sexual violence is always considered a war crime,
  - B. Whereas women develop strength, power and flexibility in certain situations, recognise abuses and are prepared to take initiatives for their families and for society, thereby bringing about positive changes ,
  - C. Whereas the United Nations General Assembly Declaration 3318 on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict is technically vague, failing to mention sexual violence or the specific needs of refugee women,
  - D. Whereas 4/5 of the world's refugees are women and children,
  - E. Whereas rape and sexual violence have been shown to be highly prevalent in refugee camps in, for example, Kenya and Tanzania,
  - F. Whereas rape as a weapon of war has been documented throughout history, most recently in the former Yugoslavia, Sudan, Liberia, Uganda, Peru, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Bangladesh, as well as in other conflicts,
  - G. Whereas a wide spectrum of studies demonstrate that the mobilisation of male soldiers - both warring factions and peacekeepers - contributes to the growth of prostitution around military bases and army camps, subsequently increasing child prostitution, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases,
  - H. Whereas armed factions in conflicts across the globe – from the Former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan to Japan – have captured young girls and women and forced them into sexual slavery,
  - I. Whereas women who are raped during war are often stigmatised by their local communities and often not provided with health care or psychological trauma services,
  - J. Whereas several peacekeepers from European Union Member States have been dismissed from United Nations missions for acts of sexual violence in Somalia and Mozambique,
  - K. Whereas only four European Union Member States – Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg - have ratified the Rome Statute out of the sixty states necessary to authorise the International Criminal Court (ICC),
  - L. Whereas, as a consequence of armed conflict, the breakdown of socio-economic systems

and increased levels of poverty, trafficking of women is a growing phenomenon in areas of conflict,

- M. Whereas women's peace initiatives often cross warring factions - as in the Middle East, Cyprus and Northern Ireland - and are often undertaken at great risk in areas of extreme conflict - as in Sudan, Lebanon and Russia,
- N. Whereas women are often marginalized or excluded from negotiation and diplomacy aimed at ending armed conflicts, as was the case in peace talks in, for example, Burundi, Tajikistan, and most recently in Kosovo,
- O. Whereas the rights, priorities and interests of women are frequently ignored in formal peace negotiations,
- P. Whereas women's full participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all peace initiatives is vital; whereas their participation in peacekeeping missions has not been numerically significant until the 1990s, the increased presence of women in the civilian, military and police components of peacekeeping operations has resulted in improved relations with local communities, which is essential to the creation of a sustainable peace,
- Q. Whereas donor attention during demobilisation of military forces and warring factions generally focuses on men, resulting in women often being excluded from aid and development programs associated with reconstruction,
- R. Whereas the needs of girl soldiers – who have often been raped, used as sex slaves, had unwanted pregnancies, have venereal diseases and/or AIDS – are generally not incorporated in demobilisation initiatives,
- Q. Stressing that sustainable peace is in many ways contingent on community-based involvement and ownership of the peace process – a process which can only be legitimate if women are equally involved – and that the role of the international community in supporting civil society networks that link local, national, and international initiatives is crucial to the peace process;

## **I. THE PROTECTION OF WAR AFFECTED POPULATIONS**

- 1. Condemns systematic rape, forced impregnation, sexual slavery, and all other forms of gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict;
- 2. Condemns the sexual misconduct of European soldiers involved in peacekeeping operations;
- 3. Condemns the use of child soldiers of both sexes;
- 4. Calls upon the Member States to take all necessary steps to amend Article 147 of the

Fourth Geneva Protocol to define rape, forced impregnation, sexual slavery, forced sterilization, and any other forms of sexual violence as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions;

5. Calls upon Member States to ratify the Treaty of Rome authorising an International Criminal Court, which formally recognises rape, forced impregnation, forced sterilisation, sexual slavery and any other form of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes, including as a form of torture and a grave war crime, whether they occur in a systematic or non-methodical manner ;
6. Calls on the Member States to take action at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and advocate the updating of the wording of the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict to include sexual violence and the specific needs of refugee women;
7. Calls on the Member States to take action at the United Nations to ensure the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on women in armed conflict situations;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to gender sensitise peace and security related initiatives, and to that end:
  - (a) provide training on the gender-aspects of conflict resolution and peace-building to staff engaged in policies concerning conflict at headquarters and in field offices,
  - (b) utilise local gender expertise in field offices,
  - (c) foster research on the development of gender-based violence during and after armed conflicts, including male aggressiveness in the military, and peacekeeping missions, as well as increased levels of domestic violence in post-conflict environments,
  - (d) provide gender training at an early stage in the training of military personnel so that respect for women becomes a matter of course and a female-friendly atmosphere prevails in the army,
  - (e) ensure that actions against trafficking in women in conflict affected areas form part of such initiatives;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate a gender perspective in the planning of refugee camps under their funding auspices, and to that end:
  - (a) make sure that all the initiatives they fund are in line with international agreements and norms concerning refugee women, such as the UNHCR guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women and on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence against Refugees,
  - (b) protect refugees and internally displaced women and children from sexual abuse through gender sensitive placement of latrines and lighting, safe routes to collect supplies, water and firewood, and the appropriate location of accommodation for single women,
  - (c) secure the right of women refugees to self-determination through appropriate

- economic opportunities and equal representation in refugee committees and other decision-making bodies in refugee camps,
- (d) secure safe conditions of return for women and girls returning to their geographical areas of origin;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make available adequate financial resources so that victims of rape and assault in areas with an armed conflict can receive psychological counselling and have the choice between terminating the pregnancy or giving birth discreetly and so that victims of these outrages can be protected;
11. Calls on the Commission to set aside a certain percentage of the €16 million refugee fund for the training of reception centre civil servants, police officers, and health staff to meet the particular needs of refugee women;
12. Calls on the Member States to introduce a gender perspective in their asylum and immigration policies, and to that end:
- (a) under specific conditions grant asylum to women who have been raped or have been subjected to other forms of sexual violence during armed conflict, occupation and/or transition,
  - (b) provide rape victims with treatment for trauma and the possibility to discreetly give birth or terminate the pregnancy according to the woman's wish,
  - (c) provide support to adoption services for a baby born out of rape, in case the mother chooses not to keep the baby,
  - (d) ensure that detention/reception centres for refugees include separate facilities for non-related men and women, concurrent with the appointment of gender trained staff in the women's section;

## **II. INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND SOLVE ARMED CONFLICTS**

13. Calls on the Member States to promote equal participation of women in diplomatic conflict resolution and reconstruction initiatives at all levels, and to that end:
- (a) recruit more women to the diplomatic services of Member States,
  - (b) train women within the diplomatic corps of Member States in negotiation, facilitation and mediation skills, creating rosters of qualified women for peace and security related assignments,
  - (c) nominate more women to international diplomatic assignments, specifically to senior positions (UN special representatives, peace commissions, fact-finding missions, etc.),
  - (d) increase the percentage of women in delegations to national, regional and international meetings concerned with peace and security, as well as in formal peace negotiations,
  - (e) require international diplomatic peace teams to systematically consult with women's community-based peace groups and organisations, ensuring that their problems and priorities are reflected in the official peace process;
14. Calls on the Council and the Member States to promote the gender sensitisation of peace,

security and reconstruction operations in which they participate, and to that end:

- (a) make a gender analysis an automatic element in the planning and practice of external interventions. Specifically, analysing the extent to which women's social, economic and political marginalization increase as a result of the conflict, as well as the opportunities for improving women's position as a result of the changed situation,
  - (b) ensure that all military personnel – male as well as female – and specifically peace-building, peacekeeping, and peace-enforcement personnel have thorough gender training,
  - (c) have magistrates and human rights observers accompany peacekeepers to ensure that international law is upheld;
15. Stresses that current conflicts demand the increased use of non-military crisis-management, which means that new non-military skills are required of peacekeepers, resulting in enhanced opportunities for women, and calls on the Member States and the Council to:
- (a) include at least 40% women in all reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, peace building, and conflict preventive posts – including fact-finding and observer missions – in which Member States participate,
  - (b) secure that women participating in peacekeeping operations are bound by United Nations norms and international human rights principles and not by discriminatory local restrictions,
  - (c) promote the use of all female fact-finding and assistance teams to respond to sexual violence and other situations where demanded by the cultural context;
16. Stresses that reconciliation of deep-seated conflicts present an unequalled opportunity to create the framework for a democratic and equal society, and to that end, calls on the Commission and the Member States:
- (a) to promote constitutional protections of women's equality in the design of the peace accords,
  - (b) to promote, as part of the peace accords, the establishment of national machinery for gender equality within the government through a Ministry for Women's Affairs, a Gender Desk, or an Office of the Status of Women;

### **III. COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATION IN THE PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION OF ARMED CONFLICTS**

17. Points out that most women are traditionally associated with non-violence, while their lives and value systems are interwoven with the protection of life, dialogue, reconciliation, negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, values which may provide an alternative solution to the modern culture of violence and lay the foundations for a new culture, the culture of peace, the strengthening of dialogue at all levels, the equitable distribution of the planet's resources and respect for racial, religious and cultural differences;
18. Stresses the importance of local involvement and ownership of the peace and reconciliation process; and calls upon the Member States and the Commission to support politically, technically, and financially:

- (a) the creation and strengthening of non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations, that focus on conflict prevention, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction,
  - (b) the education and training of members of grassroots women's organisations in non-violent conflict resolution, mediation, advocacy, and leadership;
19. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to systematically promote the participation of women in the official conflict resolution process, and to that end:
- (a) encourage that warring factions incorporate women into their peace negotiation teams,
  - (b) ensure that gender inequalities and repercussions are discussed systematically in each area of negotiation,
  - (c) ensure that the peace process is deeply rooted, through requesting that warring factions incorporate civil society representatives – 50% of whom should be women – into their peace negotiation teams,
  - (d) support public awareness raising campaigns and debates about the contents of the peace negotiations;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that women who are frequently the most vulnerable, and who often have a crucial role in the rebuilding of their societies, are not marginalised by inappropriate demobilisation and reconstruction initiatives, and to that end:
- (a) promote a public debate in post-conflict regions concerning gender-based abuses in order to avoid a repetition of violence,
  - (b) ensure that both women and men benefit from reconstruction initiatives, specifically that female ex-combatants are not excluded or made worse off from demobilisation programs,
  - (c) set aside a specific percentage of demobilisation and reconstruction funds for women's political and economic empowerment,
  - (d) pay particular attention to the specific rehabilitation needs of girl soldiers within demobilisation initiatives;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Council to inform the European Parliament on an annual basis on the progress, programmes and initiatives undertaken as a consequence of this resolution
21. Calls on the Council, Commission, and the UN Secretary General to in all reporting on peace and security related initiatives include a chapter covering gender related aspects;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the UN Secretary General.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

### Background

To date almost all analyses and policies regarding conflicts have been gender blind. Politicians, policymakers, and practitioners have assumed that questions of gender were not relevant to this area of policy. War, however, is a "gendered" activity. The vast majority of the fighters are men. Armed forces and military factions are generally male institutions – in numbers and in culture. Alternatively, women as civilians are more likely than soldiers to be killed during armed conflict.<sup>1</sup> While all civilians suffer when war breaks out, it is women and girls that face the most risk and danger – not just the risk of being killed or injured, but also of being raped, sexually assaulted, or abused.

Yet, women are generally absent from official initiatives to end conflicts and their voices are missing from decisions on priorities in peace processes. This gender-based exclusion has detrimental effects on the long-term sustainability of a settlement, because when the experiences, perspectives, and needs of 50% of the population are ignored, there is danger that key ingredients necessary for building a sustainable peace are omitted or overlooked.

While official peace-processes remain almost exclusively a male domain, a number of international agreements assert the significance of women's active participation in conflict resolution and peace-building processes. The 1985 Forward Looking Strategies of the Third United Nations Conference on Women recognised the role of women in peace and development. This principle was reaffirmed in the 1995 Platform for Action of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women. The platform highlights that "women are increasingly establishing themselves as central actors in a variety of capacities in the movement of humanity for peace. Their full participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all peace initiatives is essential to the realisation of lasting peace."<sup>2</sup>

### The Protection of War Affected Populations

Sexual attacks and the mass rape of women – as systematic weapons of war – have been documented throughout history.<sup>3</sup> In recent times they have been observed in the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Liberia, Peru, Somalia, Mozambique, Sudan, and Uganda.<sup>4</sup> Estimates of wartime rape include, for example, 110-800,000 women in Berlin 1945,<sup>5</sup> 20-50,000 women in the former Yugoslavia during the civil war

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<sup>1</sup> J. Turpin "Many Faces: Women Confronting War" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Fourth World Conference on Women – The Beijing Platform for Action*, Beijing, 1995, Article 23.

<sup>3</sup> C. Niarchos "Women, War, and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia" in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 17, pp. 659-68.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. J. Seager, *The State of Women in the World Atlas*, London, 1997, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> C. Niarchos "Women, War, and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia" in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 17, pp. 665-6.

of the 1990s,<sup>1</sup> and 250-500,000 women in Rwanda in 1994.<sup>2</sup>

Perpetrators of these crimes include various groups of men, ranging from regular armed forces, paramilitary units, and rebel groups to religious sects, fundamentalist groups, and peacekeeping forces.<sup>3</sup> The aim of sexual attacks on women is generally to humiliate the enemy men, and destroy the base of the family and the community – a raped woman is regarded as dirty and as a symbol of shame.<sup>4</sup> In fact, "many women who have been subjected to sexual violence are ostracised by their families and communities. "This has been the case at least since the classical period, when a husband was required to divorce a wife who had been raped."<sup>5</sup> Women today continue to be unjustly persecuted. In many cases, they have had to flee their countries for fear of their lives."<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, forced impregnation – which has been documented in many recent conflicts – is enormously damaging. The mothers may be emotionally unable to care for children born as a result of rape, safe abortion services are often unavailable, and these children may become an undesired burden on the community. Estimates of rape pregnancies as a military strategy include, for example, 2-5,000 women in Rwanda in 1994.<sup>7</sup> While numbers are not as high in the former Yugoslavia, forced impregnation has been documented as a characteristic of the war. The affected women of this conflict have been under strong pressure to carry their pregnancies to term.<sup>8</sup>

While sexual slavery has always been a consequence of war, it gained international attention through the recent revelation that 200-400,000 women were victims of Japan's militarised system of sexual slavery during World War II.<sup>9</sup> The Japanese experience was no anomaly, however, women and girls continue to be kept as sex slaves in recent conflicts. The conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, witnessed the development of camps of sexual slavery.<sup>10</sup> During the civil war in Liberia, girls as young as ten years of age were taken captive and used as sexual slaves by the conquering commanding soldiers.<sup>11</sup> In Sudan, it is estimated that at least 50,000 girls, from the southern part of the

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<sup>1</sup> M. Valentich, "Rape Revisited: Sexual Violence against Women in the Former Yugoslavia" in *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, vol. 3(1) Spring 1994, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, *Women and Armed Conflicts*, Oslo, 1999, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. C. Niarchos, "Women, War and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia" in *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 17, 1995, p. 657; and I. L. Sajor, "Violence against Women in Times of War" in International Alert (ed.) *Women, Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: Global Perspectives*, London, 1999, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> J. Stojavljevic, "Women, Conflict, and Culture in former Yugoslavia" in *Gender and Development*, Oxford, vol. 3, No. 1, 1995, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> C. Niarchos "Women, War, and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia" in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 17, p. 667.

<sup>6</sup> I. L. Sajor, "Violence against Women in Times of War" in International Alert (ed.) *Women, Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: Global Perspectives*, London, 1999, pp. 21-2.

<sup>7</sup> C. Twagiramariya and M. Turshen "Favours to Give and Consenting Victims" in C. Twagiramariya and M. Turshen (eds.) *What Women do in Wartime*, London, 1998, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup> V. Nikolic-Ristanovic, "War, Nationalism, and Mothers in the Former Yugoslavia" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 236.

<sup>9</sup> R. Copelon "Surfacing gender" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> E. Hague " Rape, Power, and Masculinity; and the Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in R. Lentin (ed.) *Gender and Catastrophe*, New York, 1997, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia, "Hundreds of Victims Silently Grieving" in C. Twagiramariya and

country, have been captured by government forces and are kept as slaves in the north.<sup>1</sup> In both Algeria and Sierra Leone, rebel groups enslaved women and girls for sex and labour, often as punishment for their political and religious opinions.<sup>2</sup>

While the European Parliament has condemned the rapes of women in recent conflicts and has called for possibilities to abort – where that is the woman's wish<sup>3</sup> – the Commission and the Member States have failed to provide sufficient funding for trauma and abortion services even in their own backyard. Refugee organisations in Croatia report that: "due to lack of funds and lack of awareness by the international community, we are unable to continue to provide regular financial support and humanitarian aid to women as we did before."<sup>4</sup> The international community appears to have forgotten that one of the most effective means of preventing conflict from recurring, is to provide increased funding to organisations responding to the needs of post-conflict populations.

Finally, to effectively determine the extent and nature of sexual assaults in situations of deep-rooted conflicts, Member States should also promote the use of all female fact-finding and assistance teams. And, to design effective preventive programs, the Commission needs to foster research on the development of gender-based violence during and after violent conflicts, including male aggressiveness in the military – particularly male gang behaviour – as well as increased levels of domestic violence in post-conflict environments.

#### *Peacekeeping and Gender-Based Violence*

The mobilisation of male soldiers contributes to the growth of prostitution, rape, and sexual abuse around military bases and army camps.<sup>5</sup> Even the arrival of United Nations peacekeepers has been associated with a rapid rise in child prostitution, rape, and sexual abuse – as has been documented in Cambodia, Somalia, Mozambique, the former Yugoslavia, and other regions.<sup>6</sup> In fact, soldiers from European Union Member States have been dismissed from several missions for these acts.<sup>7</sup> As the United Nations has no jurisdiction over these troops, it has requested the governments concerned to punish them, but there have been few convictions.<sup>8</sup>

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M. Turshen (eds.) *What Women do in Wartime*, London, 1998, p. 131.

<sup>1</sup> A. Abdel Halim "Attack with a Friendly Weapon" in C. Twagiramariya and M. Turshen (eds.) *What Women do in Wartime*, London, 1998, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Women's Human Rights" *World Report*, New York, 1999,

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament Resolution on the Rape of Women in former Yugoslavia of 11 March 1993, §14; and European Parliament Resolution on the Rape of Women in former Yugoslavia of 17 December 1992, §2.

<sup>4</sup> R. Boric, "Against the War" in R. Lentin (ed.) *Gender and Catastrophe*, New York, 1997, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Kirk G. and Okazawa-Rey M. "Making Connections" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 311-2.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. United Nations *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children: Note by the Secretary General*, New York, 1996, §91-110, p. 29; C. Nordsrom "Girls Behind the (Front) Lines" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, pp. 80-4; T. Deen "A Hard look at UN Peace Keeping" in *Mail and Guardian*, 3 July 1997; E. Hague "Rape, Power, and Masculinity; and the Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in R. Lentin (ed.) *Gender and Catastrophe*, New York, 1997, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> B. Fetherston "UN Peacekeepers and Cultures of Violence" in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 19.1, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Janes Defense Weekly "Human Rights Code for Unethical UN Soldiers" 19 February 1997.

To make matters worse, "wartime rape appears to be accepted as inevitability by political and military leaders."<sup>1</sup> The head of the United Nations mission in Cambodia demonstrated this tendency when he was asked about the sexual violation of women and girls by United Nations peacekeepers. He responded by stating that he was "not a puritan: eighteen-year-old, hot-blooded soldiers had a right to drink a few beers and chase after beautiful things of the opposite sex."<sup>2</sup> The negative impact of this policy is well documented – including increases in sexually transmitted diseases – particularly HIV/AIDS – increased exposure to violence, and declining self-esteem of women and girls.<sup>3</sup>

The Geneva Conventions, however, prohibit rape as a crime against dignity and honour. Likewise, the recently established code of conduct for United Nations peacekeepers stipulates that "UN personnel must not abuse or exploit individual members of the local population, in particular, women and children."<sup>4</sup> Clearly, both codes are being ignored by some European and other peacekeepers.

To make this code of conduct an effective set of rules for individuals participating in international peace operations, Member States must make gender awareness-raising a central component of training for peacekeepers and their commanders. Member States should also follow the suggestion made by the Italian Government, and require magistrates and human rights observers to travel with peacekeepers in order to ensure that international law is upheld. Only through doing so will the European Union avoid repetitions of embarrassing incidences, such as the abuse of Somali women and children by European peacekeepers.<sup>5</sup>

### *Ending Impunity*

Unfortunately, the vast majority of the perpetrators of sexual attacks on women do so with impunity.<sup>6</sup> Historically, international humanitarian law treaties have failed to sufficiently address sexual and gender-based violence. Neither the Hague Conventions with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War, nor the Nuremberg Charter for the prosecution and punishment of major war criminals after World War II mentioned sexual violence.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the subsequent 1977 protocols on

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<sup>1</sup> C. Niarchos "Women, War, and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia" in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 17, p. 651.

<sup>2</sup> B. Fetherston "UN Peacekeepers and Cultures of Violence" in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 19.1, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. C. Twagiramariya and M. Turshen "Favours to Give and Consenting Victims" in C. Twagiramariya and M. Turshen (eds.) *What Women do in Wartime*, London, 1998, pp. 110-11; and G. Kirk and M. Okazawa-Rey "Making Connections" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Guidelines for Conduct of Personnel in UN Peace Keeping Operations and Related Missions in the Field*, New York, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. T. Deen "A Hard look at UN Peace Keeping" in *Mail and Guardian*, 3 July 1997; and Associated Press, "Photos Reveal Belgian Paratroopers' Abuse in Somalia," *CNN Interactive*, 17 April 1997.

<sup>6</sup> I. L. Sajor, "Violence against Women in Times of War" in International Alert (ed.) *Women, Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: Global Perspectives*, London, 1999, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War and Land – Hague Convention II*, The Hague, 29 July 1899; *Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War and Land – Hague Convention IV*, The Hague, 18 October 1907; and *Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of Major War Criminals of the European Axis*, London, 8 U.N.T.S. 279, Nuremberg Charter, 8 August 1945.

the laws of war did not place sexual violence on the same scale as crimes such as terrorism and torture. These crimes are considered "grave breaches," acts that are so serious that they affect the entire international community. Rape, on the other hand, is defined as a crime against dignity and honour – not as a crime of violence.

Similarly, the statutes of the recent tribunals created for crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia were seriously deficient. While both defined rape as a crime against humanity neither considered rape a "grave breach" crime. Concurrently, these two tribunals failed to even acknowledge other sexual crimes, such as forced impregnation and sexual slavery, as war crimes. Despite tough rhetoric from the European Union, concerning the prosecution of individuals accused of using rape as a weapon of war, emphasis was placed exclusively on attaining indictments – not convictions. Demonstrating a lack of gender sensitivity, no witness program was developed for these tribunals, and in both cases there was a lack of female representation in the judicial system.<sup>1</sup> As a result, few indicted war criminals have been tried, and even fewer convicted for committing gender crimes.

To become an effective instrument against gender-based violence, Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Protocol urgently needs to be amended to define rape, forced impregnation and sexual slavery as war crimes comparable to torture.

Likewise the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict needs to be amended, to specifically address gender crimes and the gender specific needs of women and girls. Crimes that should be addressed in this international consensus document should include: rape, sexual torture, forced impregnation, sexual slavery, and gender based persecution. Similarly, gender specific needs for refugee and displaced women – which need to be spelled out in the document – include proper lighting, trauma counselling, safe distribution of supplies, hygienic products and separate housing for single women at refugee camps.

A permanent international criminal court that considers sexual violence a war crime – on par with torture and terrorism – is a must for ending the use of rape as a war strategy. Such a court must be able to prosecute perpetrators regardless of whether they belong to a warring faction, a fundamentalist group, or to a peacekeeping force.

The permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) – agreed upon in 1998 – can fill this gap in the international legal system. The ICC defines rape, forced impregnation, and sexual slavery all as 'grave breaches' of international law. But, to enter into force it must be ratified by 60 states. To date, only 21 nations have ratified it. Only four of which are EU-states.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Refugee and Asylum Policy*

Eighty percent of the world's refugees are women and children.<sup>3</sup> Despite this reality,

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Genocide and its Aftermath*, New York, 1996, pp. 89-90; and K. D. Askin, *War Crimes against Women: Prosecution in International War Crimes Tribunals*, New York 1997, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup>"International Criminal Court: The Signatories State" on *The ICC web-page*, June 2000.

<sup>3</sup> J. York "The Truth About Women and Peace" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*,

initiatives to support refugees often ignore the basic needs of women. In 1993, the rape of Somali refugees in Kenyan camps was well documented by the international community, but inadequate funding and a lack of gender sensitive planning continues to be the norm in camps across the globe.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the placement of proper lighting and safe access to firewood and water are often forgotten in the design of campsites.<sup>2</sup> As a result, rape and domestic violence continues at an alarming rate in refugee camps – the United Nations reports that upwards of 80% of girl and women refugees are sexually assaulted.<sup>3</sup>

Inadequate gender planning also manifests itself in a lack of economic and educational opportunities for female refugees, particularly for those who head households. Lack of employment opportunities has been found – not only to force their dependants into poverty – but also to push female refugees into prostitution on or around the camps.<sup>4</sup>

A related problem for refugee women is the inequitable distribution of resources within camps. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that despite having gender guidelines in place, refugee men continue to dominate the distribution of goods in camps – often leaving women to suffer from malnutrition – and that the specific needs of women continue to be ignored by staff. Family packs for refugees in the former Yugoslavia, for example, did not contain sanitary towels. When this absence was pointed out, the response from high level international staff was "imagine opening up a family pack and finding sanitary towels!" as though the majority of the population needed something abnormal.<sup>5</sup> To make matters worse, "women often need protection also from those organising the distribution of food, blankets and other scarce resources. Women are expected to provide sexual favours in exchange for essential items or safe passage."<sup>6</sup>

The Commission and Member States should take a leadership role in gender sensitising global responses to refugees. Both should make sure that all the initiatives they funds are in line with international agreements and norms concerning refugee women, such as the UNHCR guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women and on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence against Refugees.

Similarly, in detention facilities for asylum seekers in the Member States, there are no special "protection measures for women who are vulnerable to aggression and sexual exploitation on the part of male asylum seekers and male staff."<sup>7</sup> To begin to remedy this situation, a certain percentage of the planned €16 million refugee fund for reception

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New York, 1998, p. 24.

<sup>1</sup> R. Marshall, "Refugees, Feminine Plural" in *UNHCR Refugees*, Issue 100, Geneva, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. S. Smith "Hope in the Fight to Reduce Gender Violence in Tanzania Refugee Camps" in *Refugees International Bulletin*, Washington D.C., 26 May 1999, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> C. Nordstrom "Girls Behind the (Front) Lines" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> T. Wallace, "Taking the Lion by the Whiskers" in T. Wallace and C. March (eds) *Changing Perceptions*, Oxford, 1991, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> R. Marshall, "Refugees, Feminine Plural" in *UNHCR Refugees*, Issue 100, Geneva, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> T. Wallace, "Taking the Lion by the Whiskers" in T. Wallace and C. March (eds) *Changing Perceptions*, Oxford, 1991, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> European Women's Lobby, *Beijing+5 Regional Alternative Report for the European Union*, Brussels, 2000, p. 29.

centres, should be allocated to gender training for reception centre civil servants, health staff, and police officers, as well as to providing separate accommodation for single women.

Moreover, while the European Parliament has called on the Member States to give refugee status to women based on gender-based persecution,<sup>1</sup> they have failed to do so in practice. In Britain, for example, women seeking asylum "on the basis of gender-based persecution, are often rejected on the grounds that being raped is a side-consequence of war, arbitrary meted out, and so does not amount to persecution on the grounds of political beliefs."<sup>2</sup> In fact, most European Union states deport victims of rape and sexual assault, even sometimes after they have testified against their rapists.<sup>3</sup>

### **International Efforts to Prevent and Solve Armed Conflicts**

Gender is an important variable that has often been overlooked in peace processes. It is crucial that international bodies do more than verbally acknowledge gender as a critical concern. A gender analysis should be an automatic element in the planning and practice of external interventions in situations of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. This would secure that those who are generally the most vulnerable, and who often play a central role in the reconstruction of their societies, are not further marginalized by inappropriate interventions.

Moreover, Commission and Member State staff responsible for international security and development related areas, should be trained in how to conduct a gender analysis of conflict situations. The lack of gender training has led to faulty interventions, which fail to recognise the needs of a majority of the war-affected populations.<sup>4</sup> Namely, women and girls who have been sexually assaulted, who are involved in combat, who have become primary earners and care-takers in their families, who have taken on new leadership roles in their communities, or who have been widowed and left without financial support.

However necessary, studies indicate that specific gender divisions are by themselves not enough to guarantee that the problems, needs, and priorities of women are addressed.<sup>5</sup> Thus training must be provided to staff at all levels, at both headquarter and in field offices. If management, in particular, is not prioritising gender, women and girls are bound to be marginalized by an inappropriate intervention. The negative effects of gender illiterate leadership were demonstrated recently by the actions of Bernard Kouchner, special representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Kosovo. When the interim Kosovo Transition Governing Council was appointed by Mr. Kouchner, there

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament, *Resolution on the Application of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 13 April 1984, §1-2.

<sup>2</sup> J. Stojavljevic, "Women, Conflict, and Culture in former Yugoslavia" in *Gender and Development*, Oxford, vol. 3, No. 1, 1995, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> European Women's Lobby, *Beijing+5 Regional Alternative Report for the European Union*, Brussels, 2000, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> L. Abdela, "Men With a Mission-No Women" in *The Guardian Newspapers*, 3 February 2000.

<sup>5</sup> C. O. N. Moser, *Gender Planning and Development*, London, 1993, p. 112.

were no women designated – despite outcry from local non-governmental organisations. Only through the efforts of an OSCE employee who brought the matter to the attention of the Secretary General of the United Nations was one woman finally allowed to become a member.<sup>1</sup> According to the OSCE employee, she was subsequently dismissed for "being too zealous in advancing the needs and roles of Kosovan women."<sup>2</sup>

Alternatively, when operations are under the command of gender-sensitive leadership the results are striking. In the United Nations mission in South Africa, for example, the female mission-chief was determined not only to appoint and support female peacekeepers, but placed them in charge of the areas with the highest levels of electoral violence.<sup>3</sup> The world has seen the positive results of the United Nations involvement in South Africa's first democratic election.

While female leadership does not guarantee that gender issues are addressed, research indicates that a critical mass of women in peace and security related organisations change the priorities of these bodies, and raise issues previously ignored.<sup>4</sup> Although the European Union on several occasions has called for women's equal participation in decision-making, reality has generally not caught up with this rhetoric.

To secure women's equal right to influence diplomatic conflict resolution and reconstruction initiatives, the European Union Member States must train women within the diplomatic corps of Member States in negotiation, facilitation and mediation skills, creating a roster of qualified women for peace and security related assignments. Member States should also recruit more women to diplomatic services, nominate more women to international diplomatic assignments – UN special representatives, peace commissions, fact finding missions, etc. – and increase the percentage of women in delegations to international meetings concerned with peace and security, as well as in formal peace negotiations.

### *Female Peacekeepers*

Conflicts within states – between various factions – have come to dominate international peacekeeping operations in the post-cold war era. As a result, international bodies have begun to implement new forms of interventions, in addition to traditional peacekeeping and diplomacy. These new undertakings have included democracy, development, and equality initiatives, together offering a new means of maintaining security. The expansion from strictly military operations to civil initiatives means that new, non-military skills, are required of peacekeepers, resulting in enhanced opportunities for women. Indeed, in recent peacekeeping operations women have served as political and legal advisors, police officers, election monitors, and development coordinators.

Although women's participation in peacekeeping missions has not been numerically significant until the mid-nineteen nineties, there is evidence that increasing the number of

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<sup>1</sup> L. Abdela, *Kosovo: Missed Opportunities, Lessons for the Future*, London, February 2000, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> L. Abdela, "Men with a Mission – No Women" in *The Guardian Newspaper*, 3 February 2000.

<sup>3</sup> J. Beilstein "The Expanding Role of Women in United Nations Peacekeeping" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> S. Naraghi Anderlini, *Women at the Peace table: Making a Difference*, UNIFEM, New York, 2000, p. 31-42.

female peacekeepers has positive benefits.<sup>1</sup> Research indicates that when female peacekeepers are involved, they are "perceived to be compassionate, unwilling to opt for force over reconciliation, willing to listen and learn, and contributors to an environment of stability and morality" which is essential for a peace process to be successful.<sup>2</sup>

Female peacekeepers have also been found to serve as role models to local women and inspire them to participate in post-conflict reconstruction, in particular democracy building and economic development. The presence of female peacekeepers in South Africa, for example, was one of the keys to an increase in women's political participation, both as voters and as members of parliament.<sup>3</sup> This operation was one of several recent peacekeeping operations to have a significant female presence (53%) – other missions include Guatemala and Namibia.<sup>4</sup>

As meaningful, female peacekeepers are more readily able to serve as a resource to women who have been sexually assaulted – in many cases by men in uniform. The widespread use of sexual assault as a war strategy, in conflicts from around the globe, testifies to this need. Specifically, in the cases of Rwanda and Bosnia it was negligent of the international community not to send more female peacekeepers in response to the reports of massive numbers of sexual attacks.

Finally, an increased presence of female peacekeepers could raise the awareness of their male counterparts toward the vulnerable situation of civilian women and girls. Since the sexual misconduct of male peacekeepers has often been explained as a function of male gang behaviour, further increases in female peacekeepers has the potential of deterring the abuse of women by male peacekeepers.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps more female peacekeepers would have made a difference in Cambodia, where male peacekeepers were notorious for sexually abusing and mistreating women and girls in general and prostitutes in particular. In fact, one investigating agent suggests that a critical mass of female peacekeepers would have improved the image of the peacekeeping operation from that of being "an army of occupation."<sup>6</sup>

Despite some European Union Member States actively promoting an increase in the number of female peacekeepers,<sup>7</sup> the actual percentage of female peacekeepers contributed to international operations is dismal. While the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, recommends a target of 50% women in field missions,<sup>8</sup> the

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. J. Beilstein "The Expanding Role of Women in United Nations Peacekeeping" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 145; and SOU, *Police in the Service of Peace*, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm, 1997, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, *Overview: Gender Equality and Emergency Assistance/Conflict Resolution*, Stockholm, 1997, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, *Women and Armed Conflicts*, Oslo, 1999, pp. 85-6.

<sup>4</sup> J. Beilstein "The Expanding Role of Women in United Nations Peacekeeping" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 142.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. J. C. Hood, "Let's Get a Girl" in M. S. Kimmel (ed.) *Men's Lives*, Massachusetts, 1995, p. 308-9; and E. Hague " Rape, Power, and Masculinity; and the Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in R. Lentin (ed.) *Gender and Catastrophe*, New York, 1997, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> J. Beilstein "The Expanding Role of Women in United Nations Peacekeeping" in Lorentzen and Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York, 1998, p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, *Women and Armed Conflicts*, Oslo, 1999, p. 101.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, *Advancement of Women: Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat*, Report of the

minimum should be at least 40%. Women should hold 40% of all reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, peace building, and conflict preventive posts – including fact-finding and observer missions – in which European Union Member States participate.

To ensure that female peacekeepers do not themselves become victims of sexual attacks and gender-based discrimination, it is crucial that peacekeeping operations are bound by United Nations norms and international human rights principles and not by discriminatory local restrictions.

#### *National Machinery for Gender Equality*

Successful experiences from South Africa and Guatemala demonstrate that "transitions from deep-rooted conflicts offer a unique opportunity to lay the foundation of a democratic and equal society. Central to any transition process is the need to examine closely the gendered aspects of nation building and to institute concrete mechanisms to ensure that all people – women and men, girls and boys – can enjoy freedoms and participate equally in society."<sup>1</sup> Reconstruction processes offer an opportunity for the European Union to promote the establishment of gender equality structures in governments and societies across the world.

Apart from having a critical mass of women partaking in all conflict resolution efforts, there are two fundamental tools that can be used to ensure that gender issues are not marginalized from the reconstruction process. First, the protection of women's rights should be imbedded in the constitution – which was successfully done during the South African reconciliation process. Second, gender equality and non-discrimination should be ensured through the establishment of national machinery for gender equality. This machinery could appear in the government – in the form of a separate ministry for women's affairs as in Uganda, a gender desk, an Office of the Status of Women – or as an independent statutory commission for gender equality. When these two approaches are effectively combined, gender is addressed – not merely as a separate women issue – but as a structural question.<sup>2</sup>

### **Community-Based Participation in the Prevention and Resolution of Armed Conflicts**

Women are often portrayed as passive victims in violent conflicts, obscuring the reality that they play a significant role as agents for peace in war-affected regions. Women's groups and organisations often attempt to explore various conflict resolution alternatives.<sup>3</sup>

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Secretary General, New York, 1995, §59.

<sup>1</sup> N. Gasa, "National Machinery for Gender Equality" in P. Harris and B. Reilly (eds.) *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, IDEA, Stockholm, 1998, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> N. Gasa, "National Machinery for Gender Equality" in P. Harris and B. Reilly (eds.) *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, IDEA, Stockholm, 1998, p. 330-3.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. M. Hendersson, *All Her Paths are Peace: Women Pioneers in Peace Making*, New York, 1994; H. Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the US Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights*, New York, 1993; and S. Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli-Palesinian Conflict: The Politics of Women's Resistance*, New York, 1995.

With their peace building experiences at the grassroots and community levels, women have alternative perspectives on peace and security; and can offer complementary, as well as practical, strategies and solutions regarding the implementation of peace agreements.

These peace initiatives are regularly ignored or responded to with violence. Recently, Russian women organised against the war in Chechnya, while women in Israel called for the removal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon. Similarly, despite facing probable imprisonment and shelling, women in Cyprus and Lebanon crossed lines of conflict, seeking to end their respective conflicts.<sup>1</sup> And, in Sri Lanka, women peace activists have criticised the government and argued for non-violent solutions to the civil war.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the international community seldom provides adequate funding for these efforts or incorporates women's peace initiatives into official peace processes. To begin to remedy this situation, international diplomatic peace teams should systematically consult with women's community-based peace groups and organisations, ensuring that their problems and priorities are reflected in the official peace process.

Member States and the Commission must involve the majority of the war-affected population in peace processes if they expect to have any chance of achieving sustainable peace. That is, it is necessary to move beyond a focus on women merely as a vulnerable group toward recognising women as agents of peace. Women's groups and organisations should be supported – politically, technically, and financially – in their attempts to explore different conflict resolution and peace building options. Practically this means training in leadership, conflict resolution, and advocacy, access to communication technologies, and when necessary that they be provided with physical protection.

### *Women at the Peace Table*

Just as grassroots women's peace initiatives often are ignored and neglected, women are generally excluded from official negotiations and diplomacy aimed at ending violent conflicts. No women were involved in the 1995 Dayton Peace talks that ended the conflict in Bosnia. A similar picture was painted at the Rambouillet talks – prior to the NATO bombings of Kosovo – with only one Kosovar woman participating in the discussions. Despite the brutality and infamous nature of the sexual attacks in Sierra Leone, the interests of women were ignored throughout the recent peace accords. Similarly, women only composed 4% of the members of the national reconciliation commission in Tajikistan.<sup>3</sup>

The systematic exclusion of women from official peace processes "has detrimental effects on the long-term sustainability of a settlement, because vital voices and interests are not heard."<sup>4</sup> In El Salvador, for example, gender-based discrimination in the peace accords – barring women to various degrees from reconstruction programs – has "far-reaching

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<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, *Women and Armed Conflicts*, Oslo, 1999, pp. 26-7.

<sup>2</sup> S. Naraghi-Anderlini and R. Manchanda, "Women Building Peace" in International Alert (ed.) *Women, Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: Global Perspectives*, London, 1999, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> S. Naraghi Anderlini, *Women at the Peace table: Making a Difference*, UNIFEM, New York, 2000, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> D. Bloomfiel and B. Reilly "Characteristics of Deep-Rooted Conflict" in P. Harris and B. Reilly (eds.) *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, IDEA, Stockholm, 1998, p. 24

financial, political, legal, and psychological implications for women and their dependants."<sup>1</sup>

While all European Union Member States have signed the Beijing Platform for action, pledging to "increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels,"<sup>2</sup> the absence of women from the peace talks concerning the former Yugoslavia demonstrates that they failed miserably in this respect.

To live up to this international commitment, the Member States of the European Union should systematically encourage warring factions to incorporate women into their peace negotiation teams. To ensure that the peace process is deeply rooted, they should also demand that warring factions incorporate civil society representatives – 50% of who should be women – into these teams.

### *Demobilisation and Reconstruction*

In post-conflict situations, donors generally focus their attention on the demobilisation of military forces and reintegration of young men – they are given priority in the creation of employment and educational opportunities.<sup>3</sup> Women may even be made worse off, than they were before the conflict, if they are marginalized or displaced from social reconstruction programs. When, for example, new training opportunities or micro credits are only open to men, women, who become competitively disadvantaged, find their ability to earn a living severely threatened. Such gender-blindness is particularly absurd considering that women and girls have fought alongside men in numerous conflicts, including Eritrea, Sri Lanka, South Africa and across Latin America. Indeed, female soldiers have special needs as they "have often been raped, used as sex slaves, had unwanted pregnancies, and sometimes even lost their babies. Most of the time, they have venereal diseases and/or AIDS."<sup>4</sup> All too often, allowing men to develop and implement post-conflict reconstruction efforts results in the needs of women being ignored.

Indeed, the systematic exclusion of women and girls from reconstruction processes has been documented in several recent peace processes. In the Salvadoran peace process the exclusive focus on young men deprived large segments of the population from the benefits of peace-building programs.<sup>5</sup> Similarly it is unjust that in, "many independent states in Africa where women contributed as much as men to the overthrow of colonialism" they have been systematically excluded from the reconstruction processes and "find themselves still oppressed, discriminated against, and treated as second-class citizens."<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, in the former Yugoslavia, a spectrum of sources confirms that women have

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<sup>1</sup> E. Näslund, "Looking at Peace Through Women's Eyes: Gender-Based Discrimination in the Salvadoran Peace Process" in *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, Princeton, vol. 10, Spring 1999, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Fourth World Conference on Women – The Beijing Platform for Action*, Beijing, 1995, Strategic Objective E1.

<sup>3</sup> Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, *Overview: Gender Equality and Emergency Assistance/Conflict Resolution*, Stockholm, 1997, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> InterACT, "Girl Soldiers" in *InterACT Bulletin*, South Africa, No. 4, November 1999, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> E. Näslund, "Looking at Peace Through Women's Eyes: Gender-Based Discrimination in the Salvadoran Peace Process" in *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, Princeton, vol. 10, Spring 1999, pp. 16-32.

<sup>6</sup> M. Mathabane, *African Women: Three Generations*, New York, 1994, p. 346.

been excluded from democratisation and peace-building initiatives.<sup>1</sup> For example, Human Rights Watch reports that "donor governments and international agencies poured resources into reconstruction efforts, yet women were typically overlooked and in some cases deliberately excluded from the benefits of this assistance. Women throughout the country reported that preferences for demobilised soldiers significantly decreased women's employment opportunities. Despite criticism from women's organisations, training and jobs programs for women continued to focus on stereotypical 'women's work' including hairdressing, knitting, and sewing."<sup>2</sup>

The Commission and Member States must ensure that funds for demobilisation efforts be used in a gender effective manner and that a specific percentage of these funds are set aside for women's political and economic empowerment. This requires that implementing agencies conduct a gender survey to determine how the economic, social, and political status of women has altered due to the conflict. Such a survey would provide an understanding of how to ensure that women equally benefit from reconstruction efforts, whether they are small-scale credit, education, or vocational training programs. It would also suggest specific programs – such as awareness raising campaigns and community discussions – that may be needed to protect women against increases in domestic violence, gender based attacks based upon their new roles as heads of families, or being ostracised due to sexual assaults committed against them.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. L. Abdela, *Kosovo: Missed Opportunities, Lessons for the Future*, London, February 2000;

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Women's Human Rights" in *World Report*, New York, 2000.