



Resolution 1325 at 20 Years

Peace and Security for Women with Disabilities

Issue Brief – January 2020

Summary

- ▶ UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is the most important cornerstone for the protection of women in situations of conflict, peacebuilding and security.
- ▶ Women and girls with disabilities are disproportionately affected by war and conflict. Yet, their rights are seldom protected and their specific needs rarely recognised.
- ▶ The 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325 in October 2020 offers an opportunity to assess the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and its gaps.
- ▶ The UN System, its Member States and all stakeholders should ensure an intersectional WPS Agenda that fully includes women and girls with disabilities.

A) Resolution 1325 in a Nutshell

Security Council Resolution 1325 was unanimously adopted in October 2000.¹ Together with nine subsequent resolutions², it is the cornerstone for the WPS Agenda of full and active involvement of women in all aspects of peacebuilding. The resolution addresses the serious impact of armed conflict on women as well as their role in peacebuilding and reconciliation. It urges UN entities, the UN Member States and all other actors involved to:

- ▶ Increase participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making.
- ▶ Recognise and ensure specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict.
- ▶ Employ a gender perspective in post-conflict processes.
- ▶ Incorporate a gender perspective in UN staffing, programming, and in SC missions.

1 UN Security Council (2000): Resolution 1325. S/RES/1325. [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000)).

2 UN Women (no date): Global Norms and Standards – Peace and Security. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/global-norms-and-standards>.

The Security Council holds annual debates on Resolution 1325 on the basis of annual WPS reports by the UN Secretary-General.³ The upcoming 20th anniversary of this landmark text in October 2020 and several events in the lead-up to it provide an opportunity for a major stocktaking on gaps in its implementation.

B) Women with Disabilities and the WPS Agenda

20% of women have a disability.⁴ Conflict also increases the prevalence of disabilities, for instance through mine victims or traumatised ex-combatants. In line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), all stakeholders in the WPS Agenda must ensure the inclusion, protection and participation of persons with disabilities.⁵

And yet, in situations of risk and conflict, government breakdown and insecurity, women and girls with disabilities are repeatedly discounted and forgotten, both as women and as persons with disabilities.⁶

Women and Girls with Disabilities in Situations of Risk

There is little data on the situation of women with disabilities, which means that structural rights violations often remain unexposed.⁷ In general, women with disabilities in situations of conflict are exposed to danger, discrimination and inaccessible support systems.⁸

- ▶ In 2018, 70.8 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced by conflict, among them up to 14 million persons with disabilities.⁹
- ▶ In South Sudan, up to 70% of the women and girls in camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) camps report experiences of sexual violence. This means that more than 400.000 women and girls with disabilities are at risk of sexual violence.¹⁰
- ▶ A 2019 qualitative study from the Palestinian Territories identifies women with disabilities to be the most vulnerable group to violence and discrimination and the least likely to receive adequate support services.¹¹

3 WILPF (2020): Annual Open Debates. <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/annual-open-debates-and-anniversary>.

4 WHO (2011): World Report on Disability. https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/.

5 UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018): General Comment No. 7 on the Participation of Persons with Disabilities. CRPD/C/GC/7. para. 78. <https://undocs.org/en/CRPD/C/GC/7>

6 Cornelsen, K. (2012): Doubly Protected and Doubly Discriminated - The Paradox of Women with Disabilities After Conflict. William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law, vol. 19, no. 1. p. 110.

7 IDA (2011): Submission to CEDAW on Women in Armed Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations. <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/resources/submission-cedaw-committee-s-general-discussion-women-armed-conflict-and-post-conflict>

8 Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016): General Comment No. 3 on Women and Girls with Disabilities. CRPD/C/GC/3. para. 49 and 50. <https://undocs.org/en/CRPD/C/GC/3>.

9 Women's Refugee Commission (2020). Disability. <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/disabilities>.

10 Estimates according to figures from Light for the World programme partners in South Sudan.

11 UNFPA (2019): Needs of Survivors of Gender-Based Violence and Services Offered to Them. www.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Women%20and%20Girls%20with%20Disabilities_0.PDF

Women with disabilities are also largely excluded from post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. For instance, the 2019 intake for the UN Peace and Development Advisor programme was only 40% female and none of the advisors has a visible disability.¹²

Disability in the WPS Agenda

The UN Member States should prepare National Action Plans (NAP) as main steering tools for their implementation of the WPS Agenda. As of December 2019, only 43% of all UN Member States have such a NAP. Most NAPs hardly mention the situation of women and girls with disabilities and do not provide necessary strategies for their inclusion.¹³ Table 1 shows this for countries with a Light for the World presence.

Table 1: Disability in National Action Plans¹⁴

Selected Country	Year of First NAP	References to Disability
Austria	2007	1
Belgium	2009	0
Burkina Faso	2012	2
Ethiopia	-	-
EU	2008	1
Germany	2013	0
Mozambique	2018	0
Netherlands	2008	0
South Sudan	2015	35
UK	2006	3
USA	2011	0

The NAP of South Sudan 2015-2020 is a notable positive exception. Its 35 references are a testament to the active involvement of women and girls with disabilities as well as their representative organisations in the drafting process. As a result:



All interventions and activities to be undertaken under this NAP shall take into special consideration the unique conditions and the priority interests and the needs of women and girls with disabilities.¹⁵



¹² UNDP (2019): Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention – Annual Report 2018. https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/jointprogramme_annualreport_2018.pdf

¹³ Ortoleva, S. (2012): Who's Missing? Women with Disabilities in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 National Action Plans. *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law*, vol 18, no. 2, p 395-412.

¹⁴ Reference count on basis of most recent NAP. Source: Light for the World (2020) on basis of material at WILPF (2019): Member States. <http://peacewomen.org/member-states>.

¹⁵ Republic of South Sudan (2015): National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 2015-2020. p. 11: <http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/SS%20NAP%201325.pdf>

C) Our Work

Light for the World contributes to the WPS Agenda by increasing the security of persons with disabilities and strengthening inclusive government structures. We pay attention to the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities in conflict situations, including:

- ▶ **Displaced Persons:** In the prolonged humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, we work with local partner organisations to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities living in IDP camps and resettlement communities.
- ▶ **Interethnic Connections:** We support the National Women with Disabilities Network in South Sudan and the National Union of Organisations of Women with Disabilities in Burkina Faso. Such Organisations of Women with Disabilities create interpersonal connections across ethnic lines, which abets conflict prevention.¹⁶
- ▶ **Intersectional Programming:** In developing, executing and monitoring our programmes, we apply an intersectional approach. Our work recognises gender, disabilities, age, refugee or migration status, ethnic belonging, faith, sexual orientation, economic and educational status of our beneficiaries.
- ▶ **Training:** All our staff and project partners must complete training on our Safeguarding Policy, which includes specific clauses on the protection of women and girls with disabilities in vulnerable situations from violence and abuse.

D) Recommended Action

The WPS approach of limited accountability and weak resolution language undermines its goals.¹⁷ In addition, a WPS Agenda that sidelines women and girls with disabilities cannot ensure full peace and security for all. However, the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325 can be a turning point for an inclusive WPS Agenda.

This requires the following urgent actions by the UN System, the UN Member States and international NGOs active in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and reconciliation:

- ▶ Including consistent references to disability in all forthcoming WPS resolutions and reports. The CRPD and the CEDAW are interdependent instruments to ensure gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion in these documents.
- ▶ Applying a twin-track approach in all NAPs, with disability mainstreaming throughout as well as specific activities for women and girls with disabilities.
- ▶ Facilitating equal access to post-conflict justice for women and girls with disabilities, including to war crime trials, reconciliation processes and reparations.

16 Kandasamy, N. et al. (2016): Peace, Justice and Disabled Women's Advocacy: Tamil Women with Disabilities in Rural Post-Conflict Sri Lanka. *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 52-53.

17 Steinberg, D. (2019): Act Now to Celebrate the WPS Agenda in 2020. www.justsecurity.org/65858/act-now-to-celebrate-the-u-n-women-peace-and-security-agenda-in-2020/

- ▶ Guaranteeing meaningful participation of women with disabilities and their representative organisations in NAP drafting, implementation and monitoring.
- ▶ Recognising women with disabilities as experts and leaders, ensuring their participation in all peacebuilding processes.
- ▶ Providing adequate resources to ensure full accessibility of processes and information for participants with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation.
- ▶ Collecting high-quality data on people in situations of peace and conflict, which is disaggregated by disability, sex, age and other relevant variables.

Further Reading

- ▶ UN Security Council (2000): Resolution 1325. S/RES/1325. [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000)).
- ▶ Ortoleva, S. (2012): Who's Missing? Women with Disabilities in UN SC Resolution 1325 National Action Plans. ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law, vol 18, no. 2. www.nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1811&context=ilsajournal.
- ▶ Cornelsen, K. (2012): Doubly Protected and Doubly Discriminated - The Paradox of Women with Disabilities After Conflict. William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law, vol. 19, no. 1. <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmjowl/vol19/iss1/6>.
- ▶ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016): General Comment No. 3. CRPD/C/GC/3. <https://undocs.org/en/CRPD/C/GC/3>.

About Light for the World

Light for the World is a global disability and development organisation, breaking down barriers to enrich society and unlock the potential in all of us. Our vision is an inclusive society for all where no one is left behind. We enable eye health services and empower people with disabilities in some of the poorest regions of the world.

Contact

www.light-for-the-world.org
advocacy@light-for-the-world.org
@lftworldwide



LIGHT

FOR THE WORLD