# CONFLICT TRENDS

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Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping

TfP TRAINING FOR PEACE

# CONTENTS

COVER PICTURE: UN PHOTO/OLIVIER CHASSOT

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

The international community has progressively realised the importance of gender perspectives in peace processes, not only because of the gendered nature of conflict – which has a differential impact on women and girls, men and boys – but also due to the added value of women's agency in these processes. As such, an issue that has become pivotal in peacekeeping is that of gender mainstreaming. Over time, normative frameworks have evolved. These aim for gender equality, and include United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 and attendant resolutions of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. The emerging view is that the inclusion of gender perspectives in the work of peacekeeping has a central role in the continued credibility for peacekeeping operations, and in the overall achievement of sustainable peace and security.

Advocacy for the improved engagement of women in peace processes has been undertaken by civil society organisations and academia. Due to socially ascribed gender roles that place them in a subordinate position in relation to males, women and girls have increased vulnerability to violence; in post-conflict situations, the most common form is sexual violence. As a result, 'women and armed conflict' was identified as a critical issue at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), prompting the adoption of gender-sensitive language in conflict resolution work. Progress culminated in the adoption of the landmark UNSC Resolution 1325 in 2000. With the emergence of the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000), peace operations have become instrumental in ensuring equality in addressing the needs of women and men in the local population.

Achievements by the United Nations (UN) in its peace operations include the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming with the gender focal points and units at headquarter and field levels; an increase in the number of female personnel in line with the UN's system-wide goal of gender balance; deployment of all-female police units in countries such as Liberia, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; gender training for military, police and civilian peacekeeping personnel; and incorporation of gender perspectives in planning and programme budgets. The African Union (AU) has also demonstrated increasing commitment to gender mainstreaming, as reflected in the AU's Constitutive Act; the AU Women and Gender Development Directorate; the AU's Gender Policy; the Gender Training Manual for peace support operations; and the salience of gender offices in the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).

Nonetheless, successful implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in peace operations remains limited and inconsistent. There is a need for further reflection on the central role of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations in Africa to increase operational effectiveness. In particular, the opportunities for further gains in the implementation of the WPS Agenda within peace operations must be highlighted. This Training for Peace (TfP) in Africa Special Issue of *Conflict Trends* further contributes to this discussion. It provides a forum for reflection from academics, policymakers and practitioners on key gender issues within peacekeeping operations, going beyond an approach that presents women only as victims, to reflect women's active roles as agents in peace and security issues. Some of the articles present timely analyses of peace operations, and the practical ways in which the WPS Agenda has been implemented in Africa. Others focus on the gendered impact of conflict to encourage transformation rather than reinforcement of power structures. This Issue also embarks on a conceptual understanding of the normative and policy frameworks for gender mainstreaming in peace operations. 🛡

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# THE GENDERED IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA

BY **DYAN MAZURANA**

Patterns of violent conflict and war are changing in Africa, and one of the reasons for this may be improved and more robust peacekeeping operations. It is important to rethink what conflict and transitions out of conflict look like in today's Africa. It is equally important to understand those changes through gender analyses.

**Gender and Armed Conflicts**

The term gender refers to the social differences among females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned and, though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. Other key factors that intersect with gender – and are always shaped by gender – include ethnicity, race, religion, class or caste, sexual orientation and disability.

Yet gender and its intersecting factors are more than people's identities. Gender determines the roles, power and resources available to females and males in any culture. Gender is a system of power that rests upon a central set of distinctions between different categories of people; values some over others; and organises access to resources, rights, responsibilities, authority and life options along the lines demarcating those groups of people. A gendered system of power requires political, social, economic, cultural, legal

**Above: Women's and girls' already-marginalised status within their societies, coupled with the violence of conflict and its gendered dimensions, often leads to their increased vulnerability.**

and educational institutions that actualise and underpin it and, at times, justifies people's unequal access and treatment. Gender analysis pays close attention to power dynamics within these aforementioned identities, resources, institutions and systems, and the results on people's lives.

Men, boys, women and girls experience many of the same phenomena during armed conflict, including loss of livelihoods and assets, displacement, physical and mental injury, torture, the death and injury of loved ones, sexual assault and enforced disappearance. Yet how they experience these phenomena during and after conflict is influenced by different aspects of gender relations and their gender roles. When we take these factors into account, we see that conflict affects men, boys, women and girls in different ways, because they:

• are differently embodied;
• symbolise different things to their communities and those that attack them;
• are targeted differently and their injuries have different social and livelihood impacts;
• have different responsibilities in their families and communities and thus end up in harm's way differently; and
• have different livelihoods, access to the cash economy, and ability to own and inherit property – all of which impact the resources they can access to aid their survival and recovery.

Women's and girls' already-marginalised status within their societies, coupled with the violence of conflict and its gendered dimensions, can often lead to their increased vulnerability and particular kinds of loss. We can clearly see the trends in women's and girls' reduced access to resources, livelihood inputs and basic services; increased family and social responsibilities; restricted mobility; unequal access to protective services and legal mechanisms; and inadequate political power at local and national levels.[1] All of these factors influence women's and girls' ability to survive and recover from armed conflict.

**Wars in Africa Today**

In the 21st century, both the volume and characteristics of armed conflict are changing. The world's premiere tracking system of war and armed conflict – the Uppsala Armed Conflict Data Program – shows that the numbers of wars peaked in the early 1990s and are down significantly in the 2000s.[2] In Africa today, there are half the number of wars there were in the mid-1990s.

As of early 2013, worldwide, there are 10 armed conflicts in 12 countries that have reached the threshold of war – in other words, at least one of the parties is a state and there have been more than 1 000 battle deaths in a calendar year. Of these wars, three are in Africa: 1) the Somali civil war in Somalia; 2) Sudanese nomadic conflicts in both South Sudan and Sudan; and 3) the northern Mali conflict. There are also

**Women carry their ration of food, after fleeing their homes in a village in Abyei, Sudan. Their village was caught in the midst of heavy fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (May 2008).**

32 other ongoing armed conflicts around the world that are not wars – that is, they have not produced 1 000 battle deaths in the last calendar year. Of these, 12 are in Africa. These include armed conflicts involving the Central African Republic, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Egypt, The Gambia, Libya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda. In addition, armed insurgencies in the Western Saharan conflict involve the countries of Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco, while armed uprisings in the Maghreb region involve Algeria, Morocco, Mali, Tunisia, Chad, Mauritania and Niger.

Scott Strauss's recent article in *African Affairs*[3] concludes that wars in Africa do not last longer or occur more frequently than wars in other regions – that ignoble distinction belongs to Asia. Compared to the 1990s, the majority of today's armed conflicts in Africa are smaller; do not entail state armies directly fighting one another; and are funded by illicit trade, banditry and international terrorist networks. Most of today's armed conflicts in Africa involve factionalised and divided armed groups. They have strong cross-border elements. They often occur on

states' peripheries and may not necessarily be a serious threat to the state. They have ideological foundations. And they involve fighting over access to key resources and livelihoods (such as agriculturalists and herders or semi-nomadic people).

Strauss contends that the reasons for these shifts in African wars and armed conflicts have to do with geopolitics, the lack of external state support to insurgents sufficient to overthrow states, and stronger peacekeeping operations. On peacekeeping, he points to the near-ubiquitous use of the more robust Chapter VII mandate in the last decade, more frequent deployment and much larger forces, and more sophisticated and responsive mandates. The rise in African regional mechanisms for mediation and peacekeeping seem to have also played key roles, as perhaps have the international tribunals in Rwanda and the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

## IN SOCIETIES WHERE WOMEN ARE ALREADY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN TERMS OF ACCESSING FOOD, RESOURCES AND SERVICES, VIOLENT CONFLICT EXACERBATES SUCH DISCRIMINATION AND CAN MAKE IT EVEN MORE DEADLY

### Gender Discrimination and Death in Armed Conflicts

Just like the people fighting within it, armed conflict is not gender-neutral; in fact, it is deeply discriminatory.[4] Armed conflict directly kills and injures more males than females, since combatants and those they target for killing are predominately male youth and adults. But direct fatalities "do not provide a remotely adequate account of the true human costs of conflict".[5] It is the so-called "indirect consequences" of war and armed conflict that have the biggest role in shaping people's lives and livelihoods.

Thomas Plumber and Eric Neumayer, in a study of 14 ethnic conflicts and four non-ethnic conflicts that lasted at least for 10 years, found that over the span of the entire conflict period, interstate and civil wars (and, in particular, ethnic conflicts and conflicts in failed states) affect women more negatively than men.[6] They found that both the direct and indirect consequences of armed conflict kill more women, and/or kill those women younger, than their male counterparts; it is the indirect effects of war that are, in fact, the most deadly. In particular, the effects of militarised conflict include limited food and water access; poor sanitation and hygiene; weak or collapsed health services; and increased displacement, family dislocation, family stress and domestic violence. These effects have a greater impact on women. For example, when food access is reduced – due to male preference for food intake – women's health deteriorates more rapidly, as they are physiologically more susceptible to vitamin and iron deficiencies. Declines in health services due to conflict has a greater impact on women because of their reproductive and caring roles, decrease in obstetrical care, and increase in child and maternal mortality. In societies where women are already discriminated against in terms of accessing food, resources and services, violent conflict exacerbates such discrimination and can make it even more deadly. The authors conclude that this reality requires a response by governments, the United Nations (UN) and humanitarian organisations that recognise that the indirect effects of the war are killing many more women overall. There is a need to focus on strengthening health infrastructure, enabling return from displacement, helping to support women's food access and food security, and working to prevent domestic and sexual violence and addressing its effects when it does occur. Notably, five of the seven current peacekeeping missions in Africa (discussed later) have gender-explicit mandates that focus on these very issues.

### Sexual Violence and Armed Conflicts in Africa

Sexual and gender-based violence during – and after – conflict takes on numerous forms and is recognised in international law to include rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced impregnation, forced miscarriage, forced

Women carry placards with messages of peace during the United Nations Secretary-General's visit to Heal Africa in Goma, an organisation that provides health services and other support to women and children affected by the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (23 May 2013).

**Many peacekeeping mandates now include gender-specific references, including increasing women's presence in peacekeeping forces.**

termination of pregnancy, forced sterilisation, trafficking, forced nudity and other forms of assault.

There is a common misconception that armed conflicts and wars in Africa (and elsewhere) always involve rape and sexual violence. A new study by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) looked at all 48 wars and armed conflicts in Africa between 1989 and 2009, and all 236 armed forces and groups that participated in those conflicts, and found that 64% of armed forces or groups were reported to have used sexual violence, while the other 36% did not.[7] Furthermore, mass levels of rape are not ubiquitous to armed conflict in Africa. Between 1980 and 2009, sub-Saharan Africa experienced the highest number of civil armed conflicts, and 10 of the total 28 armed conflicts (36%) showed evidence of the highest levels of wartime rape. During this same time period, eastern Europe had nine armed conflicts, four of which (or 44%) reported the highest levels of rape – thus making eastern European wars more likely than those in sub-Saharan Africa to feature massive levels of rape during the 1980–2009 time period. Finally, another myth-buster from this analysis is that armed state actors are more likely than rebel groups to carry out high levels of sexual violence during armed conflict.[8]

At the same time, because of the high stigma against victims of sexual violence, actual rates of sexual violence are likely significantly higher than those reported, particularly when the victims are men and boys.[9] While women and girls face the brunt of much of the sexual violence committed in armed violence, female members of armed forces and groups can also be perpetrators of sexual and other forms of violence against both males and females.

### Women and Girls in Fighting Forces

Over the last two decades, women and girls have been present in armed opposition groups in 22 African nations (Table 1), and today many African nations allow women to join the state armed forces. Women and girls participate in armed conflict for many reasons: some join willingly, others join when they believe no other options are available to protect and provide for themselves, others are tricked and forced. In many instances, women and girls decide to join for a combination of reasons, including protection, revenge and access to resources or political ideology. Economic and social factors – including access to food, shelter, education, revenge, escape from forced marriage, or abusive family relations – may also contribute to women's and girls' participation.

### Table 1: Females in Armed Opposition Groups in Africa

| Women and Girls Present in Armed Opposition Groups in Africa 1990–2011[10] |
|---|
| Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zimbabwe |

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes are notoriously poor at attracting and meeting the needs of women and girls associated with fighting forces when the fighting ends, and most women and girls "self-demobilise".[11]

## Women in Peace Processes

According to a recent study by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), women's participation in peace processes remains one of the most unfulfilled aspects of the women, peace and security agenda. UNIFEM's review of 31 major peace processes since 1992 shows a low number of women negotiators (9%) with little increase since the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, which called for increasing women's participation in peace processes. Only 4% of women were signatories in peace processes, and women were completely absent in chief mediating roles in UN-brokered talks.[12] The reasons for women's continued near-absence from peace processes include that they do not hold high-level cabinet positions; they do not represent powerful religious or ethnic groups; they do not have access to the necessary financial and business interests; they do not control men with weapons; they do not have the technical expertise nor trust of the national and international men facilitating the peace processes; and they are confronted with cultural elements and sexism that disadvantages their participation.

While there has been no significant improvement in the past decades with regard to women's participation in official positions (chief mediators, signatories), their representation within mediation teams and the number and frequency of consultations between mediation teams and women's groups have been increasing. Higher numbers of consultations are correlated with greater inclusion of women's rights issues in the final peace settlements. Furthermore, mediators and negotiators who are supportive of women's rights and gender justice can make significant impacts during the peace process and in the resulting peace accords. The results include greater civil society representation in negotiations; changing the language and nature of peace agreements, often with profound implications for the post-conflict period (if implemented); and maintaining pressure on the negotiations to focus on women's experiences, needs and rights.

## Gender and Peacekeeping in Africa Today

Due to pressure from women's movements and state supporters of women's equality and rights, peacekeeping missions came under scrutiny in the 1990s and early 2000s for their lack of female personnel and staff, and their lack of gender mandates and analysis to guide and inform their actions. Increasing women's presence in peacekeeping forces has been promoted by the UN since 1994, with express calls by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1325, and most recently in Resolution 1820 (2008).

Currently, there are seven peacekeeping missions operating in Africa: the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI); United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO); United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); United Nations Assistance Mission in Darfur (UNAMID); United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA); United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); and United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The first six missions are mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which deems the situations pose a threat to international peace and security, and enables peacekeeping troops "to take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security".[13] The largest current mission is UNAMID, with over 20 000 uniformed personnel, approximately 4 500 civilian staff and a current-year budget of US$1 511 892 200. The smallest mission is MINURSO, with 206 uniformed personnel, 276 civilian staff and a current-year budget of US$60 796 600.

Many peacekeeping mandates now include gender-specific references. In the current seven peacekeeping missions operating in Africa, five – UNOCI, MONUSCO, UNAMID, UNMIL and UNMISS – have gender-specific references in their mandates. These include addressing and preventing violations against women, and raising awareness nationally of the need to combat violence against women. There are mandates to ensure women's

**The Indian contingent of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), consisting mostly of women, arrives in Monrovia to begin its tour of duty (30 January 2007).**

protection and access to humanitarian assistance, and mandates that call for addressing the needs of women and girl combatants in DDR. Other mandates highlight the role of the peacekeeping mission in ensuring women's participation in decision-making forums to resolve conflicts and build peace. According to senior staff in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Nobody is questioning the relevance [of addressing gender in peacekeeping] anymore." A senior gender adviser in Liberia maintained that it is nearly impossible for any peacekeeping staff "to do [their] work without paying some attention to the gender dimensions in peacekeeping operations whether they fall under the civilian, military or police component".[14] The reason for this progress is due, in part, to extensive efforts both inside and outside of peacekeeping operations; mandates for gender-specific responses by peacekeeping missions; the increased presence of gender experts on peacekeeping missions and at headquarters; extensive efforts to train, monitor and evaluate peacekeeping personnel and missions on gender perspectives; human resource requirements and evaluations on staff gender analytic skills; and requirements for gender/sex balance in hiring.

In terms of gender balance in staffing, the civilian side of peacekeeping is where most of the women are located. Today, women still make up less than 3% of all military peacekeeping forces, and 10% of police peacekeeping personnel.[15] This is primarily due to the fact that there are few women in the military and police forces from troop-contributing countries. Importantly, while women's numbers may be higher in police forces in general, women are often not in anti-insurgency police forces that are, at times, requested as formed police units by peacekeeping missions. To date, only three all-female formed police units have been deployed in peacekeeping missions: in 2007, an anti-insurgent all-female police unit was deployed to Liberia from India; in 2010, an all-female police unit was deployed to Haiti from Bangladesh; and, in 2011, an all-female unit from Bangladesh was deployed to the DRC. Some argue that women make different and, in some ways, better uniformed peacekeepers, citing studies from around the world that show female police are less likely to engage in corruption, draw their weapons or have complaints or cases filed against them, and female victims are more willing to talk with them, and they have better skills at defusing tense situations without the threat or use of force.

### Conclusion

While there is still much to improve, peacekeeping missions have changed in important ways regarding gender mandates, analyses, staffing and expectations over the last decade. Perhaps most importantly, peacekeeping missions are now being mandated to address some of the central factors that studies show are resulting in high death rates among women and girls, and their continued marginalisation in political decision-making in the future of their countries. The impact of these more robust peace-enforcement mandates, and the actions of peacekeepers on the lives of women and girls, are areas to which we should all be paying attention. ▲

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### Endnotes

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# AN OVERVIEW OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA: RESOLUTION 1325

BY **SEUN ABIOLA** AND **ZINURINE ALGHALI**

## Introduction

At the foundation of engagements by the international community in peace and security matters are numerous principles espoused with regard to gender equality. These include the United Nations (UN) Charter, which states in Article 1 that the "[p]urposes of the United Nations [include]... promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion",[1] and Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, which perceives the ignorance of gender equality in emergencies as supportive of discrimination. Nonetheless, there has been a need for better incorporation of specific women's issues on the international peace and security agenda – a process that has been gradual and has required awareness of the gender dimension of conflict among policymakers and practitioners alike.

Over the years, there have been developments in the number of policy frameworks and mechanisms of practice to address various gender-related issues within post-conflict settings. The body of international frameworks that have emerged encompass the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Such frameworks take note of the experiences of women as both victims of, and participants in, armed conflict, as well as their role as agents of change in the post-conflict phase. Acknowledging the link with long-term successes in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the frameworks have been crucial to ensuring effectiveness in conflict resolution,

**Above: The United Nations Security Council votes and adopts Resolution 1325 on 31 October 2000, urging an enhanced role for women in preventing conflict, promoting peace and assisting in post-conflict reconstruction within United Nations operations.**

by equally addressing the needs of women and men in the local population. This is exemplified by various UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions – such as Resolution 1325 – which have played a role in widening the mandates and scope of multidimensional peace operations so that gender perspectives are incorporated into all areas of a mission's programme cycle and policies. The increased focus on improving the social condition and position of women to achieve gender equality has since improved the work of peace operations in the implementation of mandates to better social conditions and protect the rights of civilians.

This article provides an overview of the frameworks for the incorporation of gender perspectives in peace operations, including UNSC Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960, which comprise the international agenda on WPS. It looks at the rationale for the development of this agenda, and tracks the historical developments that have led to such specific Resolutions. It also highlights the use of these instruments for gender mainstreaming in peace operations.

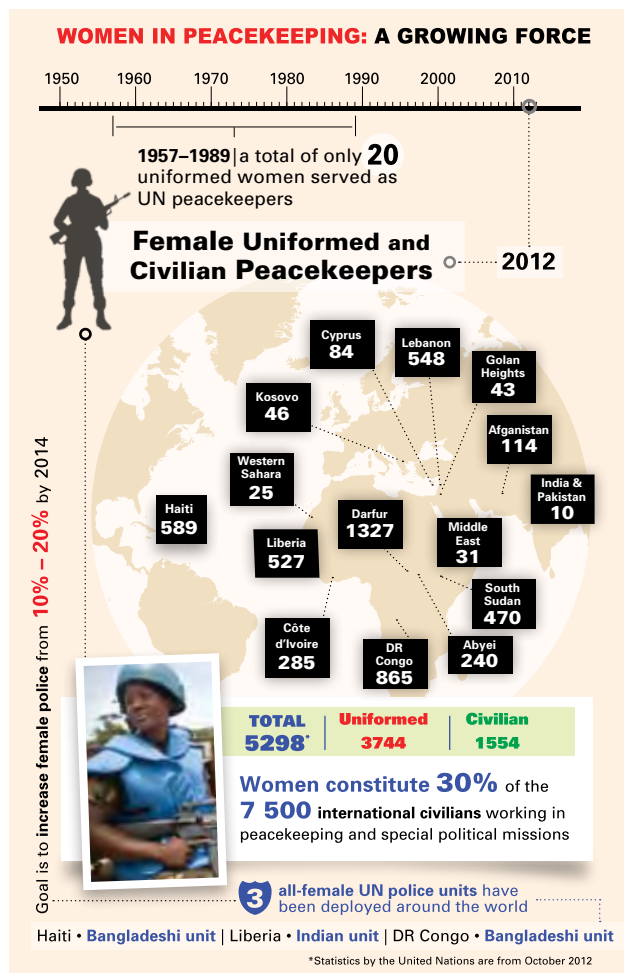## Historical Development of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

An understanding of gender issues in conflict and violence has increased in recent decades, due to progressive advocacy by women's organisations, other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, international women's conferences and the UN Commission on Women. This culminated in the adoption of the landmark UNSC Resolution 1325 in 2000 on women, peace and security. However, acknowledgement of gender issues by the UN began long before this. As far back as the 1970s, there had been "a growing feminist analysis of the patriarchal nature of the state and the ways in which it ignored the interests of women".[2] In particular, in development policy circles, feminist analysis shed light on the problem of women's absence in development plans and policies, and gender mainstreaming became an important concept in an effort to integrate women into existing development paradigms.[3]

Over time, gender mainstreaming has evolved in the development field from an earlier approach known as women in development (WID) – which entailed the "add and stir" of women for their "integration" into the current system – to the gender and development movement (GAD), involving the participation of women as decision-makers in determining development priorities as a key strategy.[4] This shift in the late 1980s from integration to what has been called 'agenda setting' was in response to the failure of the WID approach to take into account the power relations between women and men, as well as in institutions and the development system itself. It highlighted the need to transform the existing development agenda to empower women.[5]

During the 1970s and 1980s, the international community also realised the importance of highlighting gender issues in the international peace and security agenda. The UN was active in passing treaties, general assembly resolutions and declarations, and sponsored three world conferences on women and the issue of gender mainstreaming in the international system.[6] The discourse motivating such activity emphasised the differential impact of violence on women and girls in relation to boys and men before, during and after armed conflicts and, in particular, the different and increased vulnerabilities of women due to socially ascribed gender roles, which place them in a subordinate position in relation to males. In particular, women and girls have increased vulnerability to violence. In conflict and post-conflict situations, physical, sexual and psychological harm – which reinforces male-dominated power dynamics – is more pronounced. Such discourse also stressed the necessity of women's equal participation in peace processes, and the link between women's rights and international peace and security.[7] Remaining 'gender blind' and not taking into consideration the different experiences of women and men will continue to result in the development and implementation of narrow policies.[8]

During the 1980s and 1990s, the global women's movement proved instrumental in placing the issue of gender-based violence firmly on the international policy agenda by demonstrating its prevalence all over the world, both in times of war and during peace. Experiences documented in conflicts such as in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone were



WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING: A GROWING FORCE

1950   1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

**1957–1989** | a total of only **20** uniformed women served as UN peacekeepers

**Female Uniformed and Civilian Peacekeepers**      2012

Goal is to **increase female police** from **10% – 20%** by 2014

Cyprus **84**
Lebanon **548**
Golan Heights **43**
Kosovo **46**
Afghanistan **114**
Western Sahara **25**
India & Pakistan **10**
Haiti **589**
Darfur **1327**
Middle East **31**
Liberia **527**
South Sudan **470**
Côte d'Ivoire **285**
DR Congo **865**
Abyei **240**

| TOTAL | Uniformed | Civilian |
|-------|-----------|----------|
| 5298* | 3744 | 1554 |

Women constitute **30%** of the **7 500** international civilians working in peacekeeping and special political missions

**3** all-female UN police units have been deployed around the world

Haiti • **Bangladeshi unit** | Liberia • **Indian unit** | DR Congo • **Bangladeshi unit**

*Statistics by the United Nations are from October 2012

BASED ON THE INFOGRAPHIC FOUND AT WWW.UN.ORG/EN/PEACEKEEPING/ISSUES/WOMEN/WOMENINPK

**An inter-agency event led by United Nations Women was held at headquarters, with the theme, "A Promise is a Promise: Time for Action to End Violence against Women", in observance of International Women's Day (08 March 2013).**

evidence of the vulnerability of women, men, boys and girls to sexual and gender-based violence.[9] For example, between 250 000 and 500 000 Rwandan women were raped during the 1994 genocide.[10] Other examples reflect how sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, such as forced incest and public rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; rape used as a deliberate vector of HIV in Rwanda; forced impregnation camps used as a tool of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina; and the rape of women participating in public life in Guinea-Conakry as a deliberate tool of political repression.[11]

It was only in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which brought together almost 50 000 men and women representing 189 governments and 2 100 NGOs, when gender issues gained momentum within the UN.[12] During this conference, women and armed conflict was identified as one of the critical areas of concern, prompting the adoption of gender-sensitive language in conflict resolution.[13] The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that emerged stated: "Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development…. The equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security."[14] It also stated that: "… Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively." A number of strategic objectives to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels were identified, with three references made to women and peacekeeping.[15] From this point forward, the issue of women and armed conflict remained on the international peace and security agenda.[16]

With the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the term 'gender mainstreaming' came into widespread use. In the Agreed Conclusions of the Economic and Social Council of 17 September 1997, gender mainstreaming was defined as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."[17] Also in its agreed conclusions, the UN Economic and Social Council encouraged the General Assembly to ''direct all of its committees and bodies, and draw the attention of other bodies of the United Nations system, to the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of their work, in particular in such areas as macroeconomic questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security and legal and political matters''.[18] Emphasis was placed on the need for a coordinated and coherent policy for gender mainstreaming that would integrate a gender perspective into all aspects of the UN, which the General Assembly welcomed, and endorsed the conclusions of the Economic and Social Council in the Assembly's resolution 52/100 of 12 December 1997.[19] Other developments during this period included the 1998 Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, and recognising rape and other sexual violence occurring within the context of war as crimes of humanity.

Although gender issues remained on the international peace and security agenda and gender mainstreaming was endorsed by the UN as a strategy to achieve gender equality, there was still a lack of coordination within the UN system and limited efforts in implementation, which motivated a renewed movement by NGOs for the greater

inclusion and participation of women. What followed was a thorough review of the UN's activities, undertaken by a high-level panel convened by the Secretary-General from 29 to 31 May 2000 in Windhoek, Namibia. This review, known as the Windhoek Declaration, recognised that women had been denied their full role in peacekeeping efforts, and that the gender dimension in peace processes had not been adequately implemented. It also stressed the importance of women's participation in the peace negotiation process that precedes any peace operation. This review led to the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations in June 2000, which provided specific recommendations on mainstreaming gender perspectives in peace operations, emphasising actions to be taken at ''pressure points'' such as their mandates, negotiations, leadership, recruitment, structure, training, monitoring and evaluation.[20] Such actions were deemed necessary to permeate the principles of gender equality in the entire mission.

## UNSC RESOLUTION 1325 HAS SINCE BEEN STRENGTHENED BY OTHER RESOLUTIONS: 1820, 1888, 1889 AND 1960. THESE FIVE RESOLUTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TOGETHER, AS THEY COMPRISE THE WPS THEMATIC AGENDA OF THE UNSC AND THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

Thereafter, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which makes gender issues central to international peace and security. Among other things, it calls for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all activities of the UN, including peacekeeping missions.[21]

### United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Adopted by the UNSC on 31 October 2000, Resolution 1325 addresses the gendered impact of conflict to further incorporate women's experiences of conflict into the international peace and security agenda, acknowledging women's peacemaking and peacebuilding roles as well as the disproportionate impact of violent conflict to which they are often subjected. It provides an overarching international policy framework for the UN, member states, other actors and all parties to the conflict to incorporate gender considerations in their activities; in particular, the specific needs of women and girls. In Resolution 1325, the UNSC recommends that gender perspectives become integral to all conflict prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and stresses the importance of ensuring the protection of women's rights and the full involvement of women in all aspects of promoting and maintaining peace and security, with a strengthened role in decision-making.[22]

The Resolution makes specific recommendations for peacekeeping operations, which have an obligation to implement and to report on progress in specialised training for peacekeepers on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children; greater representation of women at all levels in peacekeeping operations; the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls; the Secretary-General to include in his reporting to the UNSC, where appropriate, progress on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions; and all other aspects relating to women and girls.[23] The UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has a twofold responsibility for gender mainstreaming: "(a) incorporating gender perspectives into its own work in all phases of peacekeeping operations; and (b) assisting the efforts of the affected population in post-conflict situations to incorporate gender perspectives into work on reconstructing administrative structures, institution-building, combating organized crime, enforcing the rule of law and implementing other post-conflict activities, including nation-building."[24]

Resolution 1325 is part of the UN's wider WPS Agenda, which has a focus on protecting the human rights of women and girls, with special consideration for sexual violence; incorporating a gender perspective in conflict prevention activities and strategies, and recognising the role of women in preventing conflict, including addressing risks and vulnerabilities; and recognising the important role women already play in all aspects of peace and security, and enhancing women's meaningful participation. As part of the WPS Agenda, Resolution 1325 applies a three-pillar approach of 'Protection', 'Prevention' and 'Participation'. This is a holistic approach, involving both integration through the "add and stir" of women, as well as agenda-setting through the participation of women as decision-makers in peace processes, making for a comprehensive strategy in targeting the transformation of the social structures and processes that have allowed gender inequalities to persist.[25] This aligns with the argument that in order to mainstream gender, "women not only become part of the mainstream, they also reorient the nature of the mainstream".[26] Resolution 1325 also employs a gendered understanding of violence and security, which does not simply highlight women's victimisation, but also women's agency in conflict and peace, both as perpetrators of violence and as peacemakers, and views both men and women as victims of gender-based violence.

### Other Supporting Resolutions

UNSC Resolution 1325 has since been strengthened by other Resolutions: 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960. These five resolutions should be considered together, as they comprise the WPS thematic agenda of the UNSC and the international security policy framework. The obligations in the Resolutions extend from the international to the local level, as well as from intergovernmental bodies, such as the UN, to national level governments.[27]

**Women world leaders discuss gender equality in politics at an event titled, "Women's Political Participation: Making Gender Equality in Politics a Reality", organised by United Nations Women (19 September 2011).**

Adopted in June 2008, UNSC Resolution 1820 reaffirms the UNSC's commitment to the full implementation of Resolution 1325, and directly places the issue of sexual violence on its agenda. The Resolution not only addresses the inordinate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace.[28] Amidst what has been addressed in Resolution 1325, Resolution 1820 recognises that conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare, and constitutes a war crime. It places emphasis on the need for the UN Secretary-General to continue strengthening efforts to implement the policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations, and urges troop- and police-contributing countries to take appropriate preventive actions, including pre-deployment and in-mission awareness-raising training, and other actions to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving UN personnel.[29] Furthermore, it advocates that all parties to armed conflict must immediately take appropriate measures to protect civilians, especially women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence. This could include training peacekeepers on the categorical prohibition of all forms of sexual violence against civilians, upholding the principle of command responsibility, erasing myths that fuel sexual violence, enforcing appropriate military disciplinary measures and vetting armed and security forces to take into account past actions of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and the evacuation of women and children under imminent threat of sexual violence to safety.

Adopted in September 2009, UNSC Resolution 1888 follows up on the issue of sexual violence, mandates that peacekeeping missions protect women and children from sexual violence during armed conflict, and makes specific requests in this regard, including the appointment of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict to coordinate UN efforts to address sexual violence. UNSC Resolution 1889 was then adopted in October 2009, with the objective of addressing obstacles to women's participation in peace processes, calling for the development of global indicators to track the implementation of Resolution 1325, and improvement of international and national responses to the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings. Resolution 1889 thus shifted attention back to the central role of Resolution 1325 by requesting better reporting and resources to support gender equality, and is thus a potentially enabling tool for Resolution 1325. UNSC Resolution 1960, adopted in December 2010, calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly against women and girls, and provides measures aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, including through sanctions and better reporting measures.

Together, Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 comprise the WPS Agenda, along the existing international legal frameworks guiding member states on legislative, policy and other measures to ensure compliance to protect women's rights before, during and after armed conflict. These include the UN Charter; the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; CEDAW and its optional protocols; the Rome Statutes; and relevant Geneva Conventions. Regional frameworks in the African context include the African Union (AU) Protocol on Women's Rights, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

## Impact of Resolution 1325 on Gender Mainstreaming in Peace Operations

Mainstreaming gender perspectives in all aspects of peace operations ensures that peace and security interventions are relevant to all stakeholders, responsive to their needs, and effective in the promotion of equality. However, it is essential to understand the gender dimension of conflict – not only for the promotion of gender equality, but also for peacekeeping and peacebuilding to succeed in the long term.[30] This is because incorporating gender perspectives into peace processes makes them more reflective of the societies in question, and integrating – as opposed to fragmenting – different understandings of a complex situation and of conflict resolution, will inevitably increase the possibility of achieving sustainable peace.[31] In the context of peacekeeping missions, having an in-depth understanding of the different needs, priorities and potential of women and men, and girls and boys, in a particular country should ultimately lead to better-informed decisions and more effective implementation of the mission mandate. This is important as it assists missions in redressing social inequalities in the host country, and ensures that the mission does not make matters worse for the local population or reinforce past discrimination.[32] Thus, incorporating gender issues through UNSC Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda is not only fair, but also beneficial.

Gender mainstreaming has become a "central strategy" for the UN and its member states to counter the increasingly common criticism of past and present approaches to conflict resolution in general and, in particular, UN peace operations, that they reflect the limited capacity of the UN to deal effectively with the complexity of contemporary global problems[33], due to the exclusive nature of its structures and processes. However, there is a need to highlight the opportunities within both the UN and AU peace operations for further progress in gender mainstreaming, including enhancing the work of such operations, as they assist the host country to incorporate gender-specific norms and customs within their societies. ▲

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# GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES AND PRACTICE IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

BY **OLIVIA VICTORIA DAVIES**

### Introduction

By definition, gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations is the full incorporation of gender perspectives into all peacekeeping activities: from the initial stages of ceasefire negotiations and the establishment of mandates for peacekeeping operations, to implementation in post-conflict situations.[1] For the host country of any operation, mainstreaming gender goes beyond the empowerment of women; it involves a process to build the workforce of societies. The United Nations (UN) National Economic and Social Council defines mainstreaming gender perspectives as the "process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated."[2] In the last 13 years, gender has increasingly been conceptualised, operationalised and mainstreamed into peacekeeping operations by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), highlighting a renewed

**Above: Graduates of the thirty-third class of police officers of the Liberian National Police, including 104 female officers, are pictured during a swearing-in ceremony (January 2009).**

**A wide view of the United Nations Security Council at its day-long debate on the role of women in peace and security, held on the eleventh anniversary of landmark Resolution 1325 on the issue (October 2011).**

commitment specifically to address the vulnerabilities of women in conflict and post-conflict environments in countries hosting peacekeeping operations.

The DPKO is charged with the planning, preparation, management and direction of UN peacekeeping operations. In the wake of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the DPKO has worked towards the establishment of The Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action to mainstream gender into its work. The DPKO ensures that policy guidelines, knowledge and relevant processes are implemented or in place to provide direction for mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations. As a critical actor in the early stages of post-conflict recovery processes, the DPKO has a particular responsibility to influence the channelling of resources and the determining of laws, institutions and processes to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in countries hosting peacekeeping missions. A guide has been established to mainstream gender into its operations at the policy and strategic level. This assists implementation at the tactical level for the promotion and empowerment of women and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls in post-conflict societies. This article assesses the DPKO's efforts to translate policy frameworks into concrete actions visible at field missions. It highlights the challenges that the DPKO has encountered in

translating and communicating its policy recommendations to the field and among the missions as it integrates and implements gender perspectives in its work.

**Overview of Gender Mainstreaming at the DPKO: Before and after UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000)**

Before 2000, awareness of increased incidences and reporting of violence against women in conflicts was minimal. Women were partially – or, in most cases, not – involved in negotiations and conflict resolution processes. There was little or no analysis of the differential impact of conflict on women and men by international actors engaged in humanitarian and peacebuilding processes. As a result, a standard perception of women as victims of conflict rather than agents of change became embedded in societies. Frameworks for responding to the impact of conflict on women and men, as well as to monitor progress and processes, were in place but were not robust – for example, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).[3] As a consequence there was an increase in the calls made by women in conflict societies for a greater role in peace processes. Following the emergence of UNSC Resolution 1325 in early 2000, gender work within the DPKO improved minimally, with no guidance or direction to broaden gender mainstreaming into the work of DPKO. There were only a handful of individual actors within the DPKO working on women's issues[4] and,

**United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses an induction ceremony welcoming the first-ever all-female class of security officers, at the United Nations headquarters in New York (August 2007).**

by 2000, the DPKO lacked a coherent approach, with limited training and financial resources to advance its gender work and engage fully with the missions. Overall, the DPKO was overwhelmed by the scope of peacekeeping mandates and had limited resources on the ground, making it difficult to respond to SGBV and to promote the equal representation of women in peace and security issues.

UNSC Resolution 1325 called specifically for the following:

•    the incorporation of gender perspectives in peace negotiations;

•    measures to prevent SGBV;

•    the inclusion of gender components in field operations;

•    provision of training guidelines to member states on the protection of women;

•    the appointment of more female Special Representatives;

•    the expansion of women in field operations such as military observer courses, Civilian Police International and humanitarian personnel; and

•    including gender mainstreaming in the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council.

Over the years since the adoption of Resolution 1325, the DPKO has made considerable progress in establishing structures and policies to foster balanced peacekeeping

opportunities for both women and men. Some of these measures include:

•    establishing departments working specifically on gender, and appointing specialist gender advisers in the missions;

•    developing better reporting systems through the DPKO gender quarterly report, and including gender in the UN Secretary-General's reports;

•    building a knowledge base of good practices on gender mainstreaming, through a web-based practice community and online network;

•    developing policy and operational tools, such as the Gender Mainstreaming Policy Guidelines (2006) and Guidelines for Gender Focal Points (2008);

•    developing partnerships with member states and UN system partners on gender mainstreaming approaches;

•    promoting a gender balance among peacekeeping personnel through outreach to troop- and police-contributing countries and specifying the minimum number of women required; and

•    developing and providing gender awareness training.

In March 2005, DPKO Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno released a policy statement on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations.[5] These policy directives support the development of a substantive

framework for mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations. This policy guidance is available directly to member states that contribute personnel to peace operations and field missions. The policy statement includes:

- developing a UN-DPKO department-wide action plan for implementing UNSC Resolution 1325 to help define objectives, actions, targets and indicators;
- developing guidelines by all thematic and functional units within peacekeeping missions to provide staff with the skills for integrating gender in their work;
- initiating training programmes on gender main-streaming in the mission component, for staff in all offices;
- monitoring and reporting to track sex-disaggregated data and progress;
- systemising and elaborating strategic partnerships to develop a cooperative framework among partners to facilitate information-sharing, policy discussions and best practices on mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations; and
- institutional support in terms of improving gender balance and enhancing the role of gender advisers to facilitate implementation of the policy framework.[6]

The Policy Directive on Gender Equality in Peace-keeping (2006) and Guidelines for Gender Advisors/Gender Focal Points (2010), along with the Under-Secretary-General's Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Operations (2005), are key policy frameworks that have advanced the mainstreaming of gender significantly in peacekeeping. Most importantly, they define and describe the requirements for ensuring equal participation of women in peacekeeping activities, and serve as a strategy to advance the goal of gender equality in post-conflict societies. The policies advocate the need to promote a greater awareness of gender issues and create a gender-sensitive work environment at headquarters and mission level. These policies were implemented through the development of the Gender Resource Package, which incorporates gender into mission planning, reporting and programming that deals with human rights, child protection, HIV/AIDS and humanitarian assistance.

The DPKO's specific role in mainstreaming gender has been articulated further to ensure that gender perspectives

MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEY DEFINE AND DESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ENSURING EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES, AND SERVE AS A STRATEGY TO ADVANCE THE GOAL OF GENDER EQUALITY IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

are integrated into all functional areas of peacekeeping, with specific emphasis on:

- facilitating women's participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict decision-making mechanisms, including constitutional and electoral processes;
- addressing gender disparities around access to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, and addressing the specific concerns of women in all aspects of security sector reform;
- incorporating gender perspectives in mine action initiatives and operations;
- promoting gender justice through enforcing the rule of law;
- ensuring the protection of women against SGBV and HIV/AIDS;
- addressing gender disparities in national reconstruction and community rehabilitation programmes;
- addressing particular vulnerabilities of men and boys in peacekeeping activities;
- providing targeted support for gender mainstreaming to governmental and non-governmental institutions in the immediate aftermath of war; and
- developing guidance and capacity-building tools to ensure that all DPKO staff successfully incorporate gender perspectives in the policy design, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of peace-keeping missions.[7]

### Assessing the Provision of Guidance by the DPKO for Gender Mainstreaming

The DPKO translates existing policies into practice through the development of specific guidelines for mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations.

#### Establishing Key Gender Units at Policy and Mission Level

To provide effective communication and policies to missions, in 2003 the DPKO established a Gender Advisory Team (GAT) at headquarters level. The team comprises gender advisers at headquarters and in peacekeeping missions. GAT mainly provides policy advice to missions and serves as a knowledge pool that guides more inclusive and effective peacekeeping practices at the strategic level. To translate policies to the field, GAT established a Gender Task Force (GTF), which consists of representatives from various missions and promotes effective mainstreaming at headquarters and mission level. The GTF has developed specific guidelines and action plans based on the policy frameworks, to enhance clear guidelines and effective mainstreaming efforts in missions. Tracking and reviewing of progress in gender implementation is regularly undertaken by the GTF at headquarters level. As such, GAT has concluded that an effective task force is critical for the integration of gender into all substantive areas of missions, and that the responsibility for mainstreaming gender should be shared by senior management.[8]

From 2006 to 2010, GAT made considerable progress in supporting women's access to political participation and

legislative reforms, and in promoting the integration of gender perspectives in the judicial and legal sectors of host countries such as Liberia, South Sudan (Darfur), Côte d'Ivoire and Afghanistan. In Liberia, GAT monitored and contributed to the implementation of Resolution 1325 in security and justice institutions, by strengthening the coordination and response of security and justice sectors to SGBV through training. This resulted in the completion of the Liberia National Gender Policy to strengthen the government's gender accountability systems and mechanisms; and the Liberia National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325, which was launched at the International Women's Colloquium in March 2009.

### Provision of Clear Guidance to Support Functional Units within Peacekeeping Missions

The DPKO developed specific guidelines on integrating gender in peacekeeping efforts to communicate strategic-level policy to the field. The guidelines, designed for all peacekeeping personnel, provide policy advice and operational guidance for mission components to undertake training and advocacy, through the development of the Gender Resource Package. This package is a detailed toolkit that supports gender mainstreaming efforts and integrates into all aspects of multidimensional peacekeeping. Training programmes were initiated for mission staff and relevant practitioners on required modules, including guidance on the monitoring and reporting of gender programmes implemented, based on sex-aggregated data. The package elaborates on the need for strategic partnerships to develop a cooperation framework among partners, to facilitate information-sharing, policy discussions and best practices in mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations.[9] However, there is a need for the evaluation of the utility and operationalisation of this package to ascertain how well it was received and how relevant it has been.

The goal for international support to post-conflict countries, especially through peacekeeping missions, is often to achieve the national priorities for peace. It is, therefore, important to include gender analysis of the host country's laws, policy frameworks and implementation mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. This is important for strategic planning and mandate implementation, and the expertise of the specific gender units is, therefore, important to support national processes for peace.

### The Development of Guidelines into Military Operations

The guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective in the work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations was launched in 2010. These guidelines practically translate existing mandates or recommendations on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into practical strategies for use by UN military peacekeeping personnel. They facilitate a more integrated response between military peacekeepers and partners working to implement UNSC mandates on women, peace and security at strategic, operational and tactical



UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

**United Nations police advisers present initiatives by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) calling for an increased representation of female police in peacekeeping operations and encouraging the recruitment of women in national police services.**

levels. The guidelines include a checklist of tasks to be undertaken – from the considerations of gender in force generation, and monitoring and reporting on progress, to supporting and operationalising advice to troop-contributing countries. This has contributed to gender education and awareness in troop-contributing countries where the UN has advanced the goal of the inclusion of women in force generation, and will likely increase the number of female troops contributed to peacekeeping missions.[10] Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa have increased their female representation in response to these guidelines.

## Increasing Women's Participation in Political Processes and Preventing SGBV

### Increased Political Participation of Women

To support women's political participation, the DPKO, through GAT, developed specific guidelines for field-based personnel, as well as for the DPKO/Department of Field Support (DFS) special political missions charged with the responsibility of delivering electoral assistance. The DPKO/DFS Joint Guidelines on Enhancing the Role of Women in Post-conflict Electoral Processes is a tool that enables UN field personnel to assist governments during elections and encourage women's political participation. Missions use these guidelines to work with women's organisations and parliamentarians in the host countries, through regular meetings on a broad range of innovative programmes and activities to advance women's political participation. In the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Gender Unit, with support from DPKO, provided support to women's groups in planning for the 2011 referendum. Terms of reference for the Referendum Women's Action Group were developed by the Gender Unit to support women to participate effectively in the process. This resulted in affirming the participation of South Sudanese women in leadership and economic development in the South Sudan constitution. Women now hold 25% of the seats in parliament.

In South Sudan, local customs and traditions prohibit rape, but have not prohibited early marriage to the same extent. As such, UNMISS is using gender policies to raise awareness on the negative impact of early marriage for girls, to influence positive change on such harmful cultural practices. Whilst some communities are still practising early marriage, most have established local laws that restrict such practices, due to sensitisation by gender personnel. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UN Stabilisation Mission (MONUSCO) implements coordinated programmes that focus on the reduction of SGBV. These programmes have enhanced the institutional and technical capacities of the Ministry of Defence through the ethical training of officers and sensitisation of troops.



UN PHOTO/ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN

**Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa have increased the number of female troops contributed to peacekeeping missions.**

### Combating Sexual and Gender-based Violence

As part of its efforts to combat SGBV, the DPKO supports national women's groups to develop action plans that eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence. Gender Units in peacekeeping missions, with guidance from the department-wide action plan for gender mainstreaming, often used quick impact projects – development initiatives, such as the building of water wells and provision of seed money to targeted groups – to decrease women's dependency on situations that put them at risk of abuse. The DPKO/DFS and GAT collaborate with the mission's Gender Unit/Task Force and the United Nations Country Team through workshops to share experiences on best practices. The Gender Units use existing guidelines, communicated to them at policy level during workshops, to engage directly with communities in the actual implementation of projects. An example of this is evident in the UN–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). In 2010, GAT worked with the UN and national partners to organise the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign – which focuses on the prevention of and response to SGBV[11] – with community leaders and internally displaced persons in Darfur. The recommendations from this campaign were presented to the South Sudanese government for inclusion in the state's 2011 work plan, linking government with communities on local awareness-raising. The recommendations called for the rebuilding of women's centres and the need for responses to cases of SGBV. The government provided immediate assistance in addressing specific cases of sexual violence and in rehabilitating women's centres.

**Staff members of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) march alongside Sudanese women for "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence", an annual campaign to end violence against women. El Fasher, North Darfur (25 November 2010).**

The DPKO's guidelines for Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations provided checklists for Formed Police Units (FPUs) to prevent and respond to SGBV. This ensures that all police – male and female – have basic training on SGBV and can act as first responders. It is also an objective for all police to have a specialised unit that is trained and equipped to investigate, counsel and facilitate treatment and referrals for victims of SGBV to appropriate support providers. This means that FPUs should ensure that a working link is established with the relevant justice system to prevent and respond to SGBV.

### Challenges in Translating and Communicating Policy Recommendations to Field Missions

An effective gender mainstreaming strategy should ensure that gender considerations are routinely included in the assessment of policy issues, options and impacts, along with other considerations such as socio-economic dimensions. It should also routinely have increased gender equality as one of the policy outcomes – along with growth, efficiency, poverty reduction and sustainability – which requires the inclusion of gender perspectives at several points in the policy process.[12] In its provision of policy

frameworks, operational guidance and training packages, the DPKO has been able to formulate a robust strategy for gender mainstreaming within its operations. There is no doubt that the DPKO has made considerable achievements in its commitment to specifically addressing the vulnerabilities of women in conflict and post-conflict environments.

Nonetheless, there are practical challenges that limit the effective translation and communication of the DPKO at field level. The DPKO also faces challenges relating to the implementation of policy recommendations at mission level because of several factors, including the lack of a qualified focal point; implementing its gendered approach into vastly different contexts during the planning and implementation of peace operations; the limitation of an institutional accountability mechanism; delays in the appointment of mission gender focal points; and the lack of skilled personnel to take on gender functions. Gender issues are well positioned at the strategic level of the DPKO's work. However, individual or departmental accountability mechanisms (like GAT) will likely limit policy practice within the Gender Unit at mission and headquarters level. An entire institution or organisation should be accountable for implementing gender policies. Also, ensuring a coherent approach in the implementation of a mission's gender action plans seems to be a difficult process, due to different cultural and security dynamics in host countries. This may affect the translation of key policy recommendations that feed into individual mission plans. Thus, senior management at the DPKO is challenged to develop consistent action plan templates for each mission, to communicate best practices and policies to missions. A consistent action plan template will ensure coherence in work methods and identify practical steps to be taken in implementing gender policies.

Often, missions are delayed in appointing gender focal points in their respective components. This makes it difficult for the DPKO and its strategic departments to communicate policies and recommendations to missions for effective implementation. In the case of UNAMID, most sections and units are yet to appoint their respective focal points, which has affected the overall gender mainstreaming efforts within the mission. Similarly, the rotation of military, police and civilian gender focal points presents a challenge at the strategic level – not only to integrate policies on the ground but also to maintain a sustainable pool of personnel with gender-related capacity. To address this, new gender focal points are appointed and trained, but the process can take a while, which can be challenging for the integration of gender perspectives during the implementation of a mission's programmes. Furthermore, applying policy recommendations to field missions requires optimal capacity of gender focal points. This means that focal points should have the required skills and capability functions for policies to be mainstreamed successfully, based on new guidelines developed at the strategic level. This will enable policy-translated guidelines to be applied in the field.[13] Most often,

Participants in the HIV/AIDS training of trainers workshop for the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) military staff discuss the workshop programme, in Juba, Sudan.

focal points, even though qualified, lack the required skills and capability to implement new policies and strategies communicated from the strategic level.

As part of the broader partnership needed to facilitate information-sharing and best practices to mainstream gender in peacekeeping, there is a challenge to get troop-contributing countries to increase the number of female personnel for peace operations. The responsibility to mainstream gender is not limited to the mission Gender Unit as such; however, it is difficult for other mission components that are not working directly on gender issues to accept the responsibility to mainstream policies communicated into their programmes. Moreover, although a department-wide action plan for gender mainstreaming is in place at mission level, measuring the results of gender mainstreaming activities of the DPKO's divisions and offices needs to be addressed.[14] Currently, gender mainstreaming is measured through reports and the analysis of data disaggregated by sex.

### Conclusion

The DPKO has made positive progress towards mainstreaming gender into all its operations, including deployment, training, policy and mission support. The existing frameworks for mainstreaming gender into peace operations are efforts by the DPKO to achieve peace based on equality. With the development of relevant training guidelines to develop skills and capacity, awareness has been raised to address SGBV and abuse, and the need for the equal representation of women in society. Also, irrespective of the challenges, the DPKO has managed to translate policies developed at the strategic level to the missions for actual implementation through the establishment of key gender departments at headquarters and mission level. To ensure future progress, the DPKO's policy outcomes should address women's empowerment at all levels of society. △

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### Endnotes

1    United Nations Department of Peacekeeping operations (UN-DPKO) (2005) 'Report of the Secretary-General on Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Activities' (A/57/731), p. 1, Available at: <http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/pbps/Library/policystatementrvs.pdf> Accessed on: 8 January 2013.

2    United Nations (1997) 'Gender Mainstreaming Report of the Economic and Social Council 1997', Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF> Accessed on: 2 May 2013.

3    This was an agenda for women's empowerment. It emphasised that women's concerns can be addressed by working together though partnership. Its shortfall is attributed to the lack of commitment by all stakeholders, as well as insufficient mobilisation of resources to support its recommendations.

4    UN-DPKO (N.D.) 'Key Achievements and Challenges of UNDPKO in Gender', presentation, Available at: <http://www.honvedelem.hu/files/9/8008/isha_dyfan_-_un_dpko.pdf> Accessed on: 1 April 2013.

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8    UN-DPKO (2010a) 'Annual Progress Report of the Gender Advisory Team of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) 2010', p. 12, Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/gender_team_progress_report_2010.pdf> Accessed on: 2 April 2013.

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11   UN-DPKO (2010a) op. cit.

12   UN (2002) 'Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview', pp. 13, Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf> Accessed on: 9 January 2013.

13   UN-DPKO (2010a) op. cit., p. 29.

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UN PHOTO/ARPAN MUNIER

# MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO AFRICAN UNION PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS: WHY WE ARE GETTING IT WRONG

BY **YVONNE KASUMBA** AND **WALTER LOTZE**[1]

Since the adoption of Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on 31 October 2000,[2] there have been global efforts to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution, as a means of responding better to the systematic targeting of women in times of conflict. Efforts on the part of the United Nations (UN) have included an emphasis on strengthening gender mainstreaming in global peace support operations (PSOs) – be it through increasing the number of female peacekeeping personnel, providing specialised training to peacekeeping personnel, strengthening gender-sensitive planning in PSOs, or the appointment of dedicated gender focal points and officers in missions, among others.

While the development of a concerted plan of action to strengthen gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping operations has yielded encouraging results over the last decade, other organisations active in conflict prevention, management and resolution have not always been able to achieve the same degree of success. The African Union (AU), for instance, had already established a Woman, Gender and Development Directorate as early as 2000, but it was not until

**Above: Female police officers from Rwanda arrive in Darfur, Sudan, to join the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).**

2009 that the organisation's Gender Policy was adopted by the AU Summit. While the Gender Policy addresses gender mainstreaming into the work of the organisation more broadly and is based largely on the human rights architecture that has been established by the AU to date, it surprisingly provides little guidance with regard to gender mainstreaming in the peace and security work of the organisation, let alone for AU-mandated PSOs. This is the case despite experience that women have important roles to play in terms of the empowerment of vulnerable women in times of conflict, and can contribute overall to the furtherance of sustainable peace. It can be argued that the AU still has some way to go when it comes to mainstreaming gender considerations into its peace missions. Mainstreaming has to begin with an understanding of the complexities of modern-day PSO environments, and the reality of issues related to the protection of civilians, sexual exploitation and abuse, and gender concerns – all of which ultimately require responses that are multidimensional and integrated in nature, and which necessitate action from a multiplicity of actors and stakeholders.

This article reviews the context within which efforts to mainstream gender considerations in AU-mandated PSOs takes place, making specific reference to the press statements of the 223rd and 364th meetings of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). To date, these specific press statements provide the best strategic guidance to the AU Commission on mainstreaming gender considerations in the peace and security work of the organisation. Building on this, the article reviews efforts undertaken by the Commission to strengthen gender mainstreaming in its PSOs, before providing a set of recommendations that could serve to strengthen gender mainstreaming in PSOs in the AU context going forward.

**Mainstreaming Gender Considerations in AU Peace Support Operations**

In the absence of an overarching AU-wide gender strategy designed to address the specific realities of the organisation's work in conflict and post-conflict settings, the decisions of the AU PSC on gender, peace and security provide the best strategic framework to date. It is from this framework that the Commission and AU personnel working in peace missions can draw guidance when it comes to mainstreaming gender considerations into their work.

During the first open session of the PSC on mitigating the vulnerabilities of women and children in armed conflicts, held on 30 March 2010, the PSC noted with concern that women and children are prominent among the victims of armed conflict.[3] The PSC then proceeded to link a focus on women and children in conflict to the broader human rights architecture that has been put in place by the AU – specifically the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the ACRWC or Children's Charter),

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the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and Declaration 229 (XII) adopted by the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, which proclaimed 2010–2020 as the African Women's Decade. The PSC also made specific reference to UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) and Resolution 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security. The PSC further stressed that gross violations of human rights – including sexual violence, forced displacement, and loss of life and livelihoods – as well as the impunity of such remained widespread, and that this situation was compounded by the marginalisation of women in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes.

On this basis, the PSC developed an eight-point action plan to mainstream gender considerations into the peace and security efforts of the AU. First, the PSC urged the Commission to take advantage of the Year of Peace and Security in 2010 to further the AU gender agenda. Second, it urged AU member states that had not done so to ratify, domesticate and implement the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). Third, the PSC encouraged the Chairperson of the Commission to take the necessary

**The African Union's Peace and Security Council recognises that the presence of women in peace-keeping greatly enhances conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation processes.**

steps to ensure the mainstreaming of gender into AU efforts aimed at promoting peace and security – including through the deployment of a gender expert in the AU Liaison Offices/PSOs; the appointment of women as ambassadors of peace, as part of the Year of Peace and Security, and as special envoys and representatives; and the involvement of women in peace processes. The PSC also encouraged the Chairperson to appoint a Special Representative on Violence against Women and Violence against Children. Fourth, the PSC requested that the necessary steps be taken to ensure that the scope of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child be expanded to address the

role of non state actors in the violation of children's rights during armed conflicts. Fifth, it requested that harmonised reporting be presented on the progress made by member states in promoting women's and children's rights, and that a closer link be established between the AU human rights architecture and the AU Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Sixth, the PSC requested member states to include progress on the implementation of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa within their annual reports to the Assembly of the Union, as required by the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. Seventh, the PSC stressed the need to address the gender dimension of violence against children, to prioritise prevention by identifying the root causes of the vulnerabilities of women and children and to respond with recommendations to mitigate risk, while ensuring accountability and ending impunity by prosecuting the perpetrators of violence against women and children at national and regional level. Finally, the PSC decided to hold an annual open session on the theme of women and children and other vulnerable groups in armed conflict.

It was not until three years later that the next open session of the PSC would actually take place. In those three years, very little progress on any of the points in the action plan developed in 2010 had been attained. This next open session was held on 26 March 2013, and was titled "Women and Children in Situations of Violent Conflict in Africa: Contribution and Role of Women".[4] While referencing its 2010 session, the PSC made no explicit reference to the action plan that had been developed then, or to its status of implementation. Rather, it developed a new seven-point action plan. First, recognising the growing contribution and presence of women in PSOs despite the limited number of female personnel, the PSC called for active steps to be taken to increase the number of civilian[5] positions held by women, recognising that the presence of women in peacekeeping greatly enhances conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation processes, and ensures that the needs of women and the population at large are integrated in negotiations and peace agreements. Second, the PSC called for the full implementation of the necessary instruments for the protection of women and children in armed conflict, noting that the pace of implementation to date had been slow. Third, it emphasised the responsibility of member states to ensure the protection of women and children in situations where they are threatened or affected by violence. This is in line with relevant AU and international instruments condemning the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, emphasising the need to fight impunity in cases of sexual violence and rape in situations of conflict, and stressing the need to hold perpetrators of such acts fully accountable. Fourth, the PSC requested the Commission to continue efforts to bring women and children to the centre of its work, with a view to developing strategies at continental, regional and national level. Fourth, it called for the continued

**A policewoman in Somalia is given supplies by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) police force at General Kaahiye Police Academy in Mogadishu.**

mainstreaming of gender considerations into the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and highlighted that the responsibility for the implementation of a gender policy should be diffused across the organisational structure, as opposed to being concentrated in a centralised manner. In this regard, the PSC again recommended that efforts to mainstream gender considerations include the appointment of a Special Representative on Violence against Women and Children in the Context of Armed Conflict, and the conduct of regular training sessions for AU personnel. Fifth, the PSC commended efforts to develop training materials for African Standby Force (ASF) operations, and requested that such efforts continue. Sixth, it requested that the Strategic Plan of the Commission for the period 2014–2017 contain specific actions, achievements and challenges in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Finally, the PSC requested that training centres preparing AU personnel for service in PSOs make use of AU-developed training material in all future training courses, to ensure that the AU's approach to gender mainstreaming in PSOs was consistent. In light of the new ambitious action plan, the PSC decided to host its next session on women and children in situations of armed conflict in Africa in September 2013, six months after its second open session on the subject.

### Challenges

While the ambitious action plans developed by the PSC are commendable, several challenges should be noted. First, between 2010 and 2013, the PSC developed two action plans on mainstreaming gender into the peace and security efforts of the AU. Between them, the two action plans vacillate from focusing on the empowerment of women to viewing women as victims, from the ratification of protocols and treaties by member states to bureaucratic solutions focused on the Commission's internal workings, and from mainstreaming gender considerations into conflict analysis to increasing the number of female civilian personnel as the focus of attention. While the articulation of such broad areas of engagement is encouraging, on the one hand, it could also be argued that the PSC's engagement on mainstreaming gender in peace and security efforts on the continent has lacked focus. And whilst the deliberations of the PSC reflect a sure awareness of the unique burdens women face during conflict, the impact that conflict has on them and the important role that women can play in the mediation and resolution of conflict, this has not effectively translated into concrete action to facilitate the inclusion of women in AU PSOs better. The absence of an implementation plan based on the 2010 session of the PSC, and the fact that all of the

**An African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeeper greets a group of children and women during his patrol in the Kaa'ran district of Mogadishu (November 2012).**

decisions of the 2010 session had yet to be implemented in 2013, are also of concern.

Furthermore, in an effort to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender considerations into the peace and security work of the organisation, a gender advisor was recruited for the Department of Peace and Security in 2011. However, by 2012 this arrangement was discontinued and, in early 2013, the Commission was again working to reconceptualise how best to mainstream gender considerations into the peace and security work of the organisation. The 2013 decision of the PSC that the responsibility for the implementation of a gender policy be diffused across the Commission's organisational structure, as opposed to being concentrated in a centralised manner, will result in neither the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) nor the Department of Peace and Security being assigned the clear lead responsibility for taking this agenda forward. While gender considerations should certainly be mainstreamed across the work of the organisation – and, in effect, each Department and Division should take responsibility for this agenda within its own area of responsibility – the danger of not having a responsible focal point is that the issue may, quite simply, fall through the cracks in the absence of an overarching strategic approach.

With regard to PSOs specifically, the situation is even more challenging. The PSC's 2010 session made no reference to the PSOs of the AU. In 2013, mainstreaming gender into PSOs featured in two distinct ways: (1) increasing the number of female civilian personnel, and (2) working with training centres to ensure that the AU's gender training manual would be used in the training of personnel serving in AU missions. While the elevation of these two specific areas is important, the lack of contextualisation within a broader strategic approach appears to highlight that, in fact, a broader strategy on mainstreaming gender considerations into PSOs within the AU remains absent.

It is no surprise, therefore, that mainstreaming gender considerations into AU-mandated PSOs has been a rather limited undertaking to date. Between 2010 and 2012, the WGDD in the AU Commission developed a gender training of trainers manual for PSOs. This was piloted in 2011, and was subsequently made available to African training centres to use in preparing personnel for AU-mandated PSOs. While the manual proved a useful start and provided broad understanding of the social context within which peacekeepers may find themselves, it fell short in terms of providing an adequate contextual framework for current-day AU PSOs, especially in the context of the ongoing efforts to establish an ASF. In addition, as the manual was developed in a policy lacuna, it also was unable to provide effective guidance for AU PSO personnel on practical issues such as monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

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The AU's ability to recruit female civilian personnel to its missions has also not improved much over the course of the past years. While the AU, for instance, deployed its first civilian personnel to Mogadishu, Somalia, as part of its efforts to establish an integrated mission headquarters for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in April 2010, it was not until October 2012 that the first female civilian staff member was deployed to Mogadishu. By April 2013, of 25 international civilian personnel deployed to Mogadishu, only two were women. As the AU becomes more experienced in fielding multidimensional operations, it can be anticipated that the recruitment of gender focal points will become the standard – as evidenced in the planning process for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), wherein the recruitment of gender officers was identified as a priority right from the beginning. The establishment of a joint Protection, Human Rights and Gender section has also been approved for both AMISOM and AFISMA, highlighting that the inclusion of gender as a core area of engagement in AU-mandated PSOs is increasingly becoming a priority.

## Recommendations

In effect, therefore, despite the progress in certain respects that has been made in recent years, the mainstreaming of gender considerations into AU PSOs remains a largely ad hoc undertaking, and continues to take place in the absence of a broader Commission-wide guiding framework or implementation plan. To ensure that gender considerations are meaningfully and effectively mainstreamed into AU PSOs, some or all of the following actions could be undertaken – by the AU Commission, regional economic communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms (RMs) participating in the development of the ASF, and the training centres, civil society actors and development partners supporting the development of the ASF – in an effort to achieve a more effective and holistic outcome.

### 1. Articulate clear understanding of gender in AU PSOs

The AU should clearly articulate its understanding of gender in the context of AU PSOs, and what mainstreaming gender considerations into the planning, deployment and management of its peace missions entails. This should be done on the basis of a three-pronged approach:
1. mainstreaming gender considerations into the strategic headquarters and planning elements of the ASF;
2. mainstreaming gender considerations into the operations across all components on a daily basis; and
3. mainstreaming gender considerations into the engagements of the PSO with the host state, host communities, all the actors it engages with in the implementation of its mandate, and within the context of the conflict or post-conflict setting it operates in, based on the types of considerations that are present.

### 2. Provide the necessary strategic guidance

Based on the above, the necessary strategic guidance on mainstreaming gender considerations into AU-mandated PSOs, and on how to prioritise doing this, should be provided to the Commission. This should include a press statement from the PSC dealing specifically with gender in PSOs; reference to such a press statement in the outcomes document of an AU summit; a Chairperson's directive based on the decisions of member states; and finally a Commission-wide strategy on mainstreaming gender into AU-mandated PSOs developed on the basis of all of the above, accompanied by an implementation plan.

### 3. Strengthen coordination within the Commission

To implement a strategy to mainstream gender considerations in AU-mandated PSOs effectively, coordination on the issue should be strengthened within the Commission. For one, a decision would need to be taken on how responsibility for advancing this agenda should be allocated in light of the 2013 decision of the PSC that no specific department or division should be allocated the lead responsibility on the issue. For another, the coordination mechanisms between the Department of Peace and Security, the WGDD and the Bureau of the Chairperson should be reviewed and strengthened as appropriate, to ensure that regular coordination on the issue is taking place.

### 4. Engage with member states

To strengthen the implementation of its agenda, the Commission should also strengthen its engagement with member states on this issue. For one, member states should be engaged to ensure adherence to their treaty obligations, and to strengthen reporting thereon. For another, member states should be encouraged to provide more female personnel, both to the ASF planning elements and to AU-mandated PSOs. Increasing the number of female personnel in PSOs cannot be achieved immediately, given the very low numbers of female personnel serving in national armed forces in Africa. However, member states can be encouraged and supported to develop national action plans that address this shortcoming in the mid to long term.

### 5. Increase the number of female personnel

Building on the above, the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs should develop proactive strategies designed to increase the number of female personnel serving in the ASF planning elements and in missions. In this regard, strategies should be developed aimed both at increasing the number of civilian female personnel recruited and deployed into missions, and at increasing the number of uniformed female personnel. In addition, efforts should be undertaken to review employment conditions and facilities in the field, to ensure that all measures necessary are being taken to attract and retain female personnel to field operations.

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In 2012, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was elected to the position of Chairperson of the African Union Commission. She is the first woman to hold this position in the history of the organisation and has indicated that the increased participation of women in matters of peace and security on the African continent is a priority item on her agenda.

### 6. Improve training

The training of mission personnel in mainstreaming gender considerations into their daily operations, based in particular on the understanding of the AU and the strategies developed accordingly, will be key to ensuring that the AU's vision and ambition are translated into reality on the ground. On this basis, the existing training material should be reviewed and adapted, centred on an elaboration of the policy frameworks and the development of implementation plans. It should then be widely disseminated to all training institutions and training service providers preparing personnel for service in AU missions.

### 7. Strengthen the reporting cycle

Finally, the reporting cycle on the implementation of activities designed to strengthen gender mainstreaming in AU PSOs should be strengthened. At present, reporting to the Chairperson of the Commission, to the PSC and to the Summit is somewhat ad hoc, and lacks the comprehensive analysis from the field that is expected of such reports. Reporting should be regular, detailed and provide the basis for strategic decision-making of the PSC, both in response to specific conflict situations and peace missions, as well as at a more strategic and forward-looking level.

### Conclusion

Although mainstreaming gender considerations into AU PSOs has, to date, largely fallen by the wayside, it is important to note that useful opportunities to both elevate and strengthen the level of engagement currently exist. For one, the PSC has already twice held open sessions on women, peace and security. On both occasions, mainstreaming gender considerations into PSOs has been a priority for the PSC. For another, in 2012 the AU deployed its first gender officer into a PSO, paving the way not only for strengthened gender mainstreaming in AMISOM, but also for mainstreaming gender considerations into future operations as well. Finally, it should also be noted that, in 2012, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was elected to the position of Chairperson of the AU Commission – the first woman to hold this position in the history of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/AU. Already, in 2012, the Chairperson indicated that the increased participation of women in matters of peace and security on the African continent would be a priority item on her agenda. The mainstreaming of gender considerations into PSOs has, therefore, at least in theory, been given renewed energy. There is certainly much to celebrate in 2013, as the AU marks the 50th anniversary of its establishment. However, few would celebrate the achievements that the AU has made in its first decade of existence in differentiating itself from the OAU around the issues of women, peace and security. With renewed focus, there could perhaps be much more to celebrate in this regard by the time of the 60th anniversary celebrations. ▲

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### Endnotes

1   The authors would like to thank Esebet Getachew and Michael Lilier for useful conversations on this topic, and Abel Gebreselassie for research assistance related to this topic.
2   United Nations (2000) *Security Council Resolution 1325*, 31 October.
3   African Union (2010) *Press Statement of the 223rd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council* (PSC/PR/COMM.CCXXIII), 30 March.
4   African Union (2013) *Press Statement of the 364th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council*, (PSC/PR/BR.(CCCLXIV)), 26 March.
5   No reference was made by the Council to increasing the number of female uniformed personnel in peace support operations.

# GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS: EXPERIENCES FROM FIELD MISSIONS

BY **MARTHA MUTISI**



UN PHOTO/OLIVIER CHASSOT

**Above: African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) civil affairs officers meet with a group of internally displaced women at a Women's Community Centre in the Abu-Shouk Camp, in northern Darfur, to hear about their security and health concerns.**

### Introduction

This article explores the normative architecture on protection of civilians (PoC) and examines how missions and host communities are operationalising this concept. The United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) are increasingly, and more actively, addressing PoC, and are particularly incorporating the gender dimension into PoC. In this analysis, three current peacekeeping operations in Africa are examined, namely the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Hybrid AU–UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). This article focuses on the experiences of these three peacekeeping missions in incorporating gender considerations into the PoC strategy at the mission and field level. After examining the challenges that peace support operations (PSOs) in Africa have encountered in addressing gender issues during the enforcement of PoC mandates, the article provides recommendations for strengthening the POC.

The concept of protection of civilians has roots in international humanitarian law, which calls upon conflict actors to minimise harm to civilians and civilian property during hostilities. The UN has always espoused the need to protect civilians from the scourge of war, although the international organisation has become more explicit in recent years. In 1968, the UN General Assembly, in its Resolution 2444 (XXIII), called for the Secretary-General to examine possible strategies to ensure more effective application of measures to protect civilians in all armed
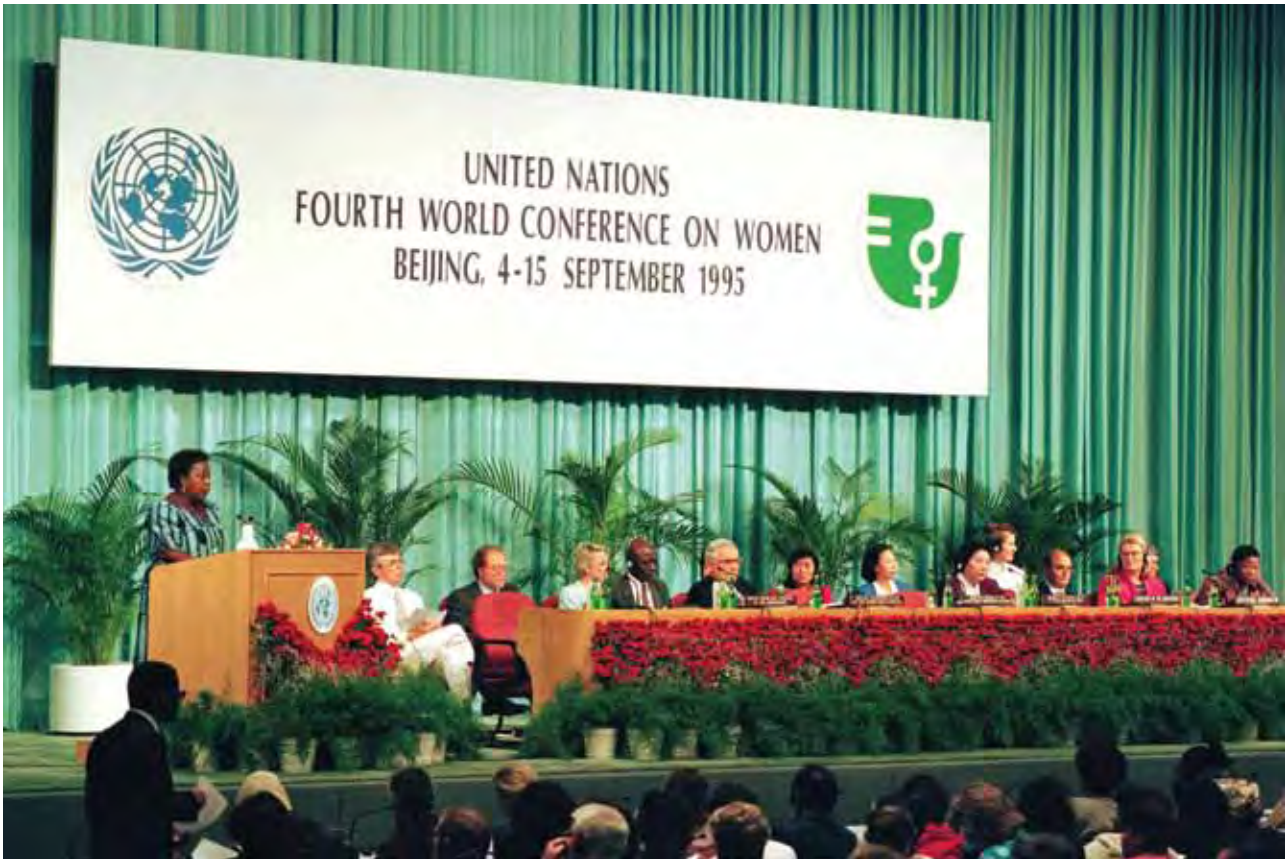
The need to protect women in armed conflict was highlighted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Following this landmark development, in 2000, the United Nations adopted Resolution 1325, which underscores the importance of women's participation in all facets of peace operations.

conflicts.[1] Following the atrocities against civilians in the 1990s – especially in Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda – where UN peacekeepers failed to prevent these grave crimes effectively, the UN Security Council (UNSC) launched a self-reflective exercise on its peacekeeping. The Brahimi Report offers a self-critical analysis of the UN, and concludes that the credibility of the UN was marred in the 1990s when the organisation could not distinguish between victim and aggressor.[2]

Against this background, the 1990s witnessed the genesis of the UN's incorporation of PoC in its discussion and practice on peacekeeping. In 1999, the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict stressed: "The plight of civilians is no longer something which can be neglected, or made secondary because it complicates political negotiations or interests. It is fundamental to the central mandate of the Organization. The responsibility for the protection of civilians cannot be transferred to others. The United Nations is the only international organization with the reach and authority to end these practices."[3] In October 1999, the UNSC passed Resolution 1265, which provides for "appropriate measures" in response to situations where civilians are being targeted

or humanitarian assistance is deliberately circumvented,[4] signalling the UN's expansion of the peacekeeping mandate to include PoC.

Since 1999, the UN has expressly mandated its peacekeeping missions with PoC provisions and, subsequently, the past decade has witnessed the development of PoC-related norms. These include the UNSC Resolution 1674 and Resolution 1894, which commit the UN to take action to protect civilians in armed conflict; the 2008 Capstone Doctrine;[5] and the March 2009 report of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The issue of PoC has been discussed extensively by the UNSC and, in 2009, the Council "reaffirmed its commitment to the full and effective implementation of its resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict".[6] In addition, the 2013 UN Secretary-General's report highlights the importance of protecting women from sexual violence.[7]

As a result of this robust normative architecture on PoC, peacekeeping missions such as UNAMID and UNMISS have subsequently developed PoC mandates. AU missions such as AMISOM have also been engaged in processes of mainstreaming PoC into their operations, despite not having a specific PoC mandate. The emphasis on civilian protection in

peacekeeping missions in Africa is supported by various local structures and field-driven strategies.

At its headquarters, the UN has pillars that advance PoC in its operations, which include the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Field Support (DFS) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). UN agencies that have a protection mandate include the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). These institutions work towards implementing PoC frameworks in peacekeeping missions. For example, OCHA developed a training programme on the prevention and mitigation of conflict-related sexual violence for human rights officers and other mission personnel. This has also been included in the work plan of the Global Protection Cluster for 2010.

**Conceptualising and Unpacking PoC in the Peacekeeping Context**

While the definition of PoC is nebulous, the International Committee of the Red Cross has defined it as "all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law".[8] There have been scholastic arguments that PoC as a concept is related to the notion of "responsibility to protect" (R2P), which emerged to undo the grave damage caused by the international community's failure to protect civilians and prevent genocide in the 1990s.[9] Although in some circles, including the African continent, there is insistence on the distinction between R2P and PoC, both concepts express the international community's recognition of the need to address the vulnerabilities of civilian populations.

Currently, the PoC concept is used to refer to the normative frameworks, mechanisms and actions that prohibit violence against civilians. These include specific mission tasks that seek to enhance the PoC, taking into account the needs of different population groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. PoC also ensures that relevant peacekeeping missions contribute to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance. PoC has several pillars, including protection through the political process, protection from physical violence and protection through the creation of a protective legal and humanitarian environment, and the strengthening of host state capacity.

PoC is attributed to the changing conflict environment, which has resulted in the stark realisation that traditional peacekeeping is not enough to maintain peace and security.

**Women and girls, including African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeepers, march in El Fasher, Sudan, to celebrate International Women's Day (8 March 2011).**

The protection of civilians is central to the legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping operations.

Overall, PoC reflects the need for more multidimensional approaches to peacekeeping that recognise the importance of humanitarian, peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. Since most conflict parties are increasingly targeting civilians, PoC is now one of the main benchmarks used to evaluate contemporary peacekeeping operations. PoC is tied to the realisation that sustainable peace cannot be realised in the context of civilian insecurity and widespread human rights abuses. PSOs risk failure and international condemnation if they are unable to address extreme violence against the population, as witnessed in Rwanda and Bosnia, among others.

PoC is also central to the legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping operations. Success in peace and security is assessed on the basis of the conduct of peacekeepers and their capacity to protect civilians. As Diehl states: "To a higher degree, success can be defined in terms of curbing the level of violence and bringing the underlying conflict to an end."[10] Druckman, Stern, Diehl and Fetherston define success based on the "contribution of peacekeeping to larger values such as world peace, justice, and the reduction of human suffering".[11] Punga concurs that "as long as the United Nations is not able to efficiently prevent the vulnerable from falling victims of atrocious war crimes, it cannot be the successful, competent, and respected International Organization envisioned by its founders".[12] When PSOs are unable to prevent or mitigate violence against civilians, the practice of peacekeeping is discredited. Ultimately, the effectiveness of PSOs has been defined as "the elimination of threats to the safety of civilians, for both the short and the long term, throughout the duration of the mission and upon its withdrawal".[13]

Lessons from past and current missions inform us that sexual violence, prostitution and trafficking in women and children often coexist alongside peace operations, even though the UN has a zero-tolerance policy for these behaviours. In addition, the failure of missions to provide security in complex crises such as Somalia, and to protect civilians from mass atrocities in Rwanda, provided impetus for peacekeeping reform. Sexual violence against women is continually used as a weapon of war in conflict-affected areas. Against this background, contemporary PSOs are now mandated to safeguard local populations in warzones.

**Gender Considerations in Protecting Civilians**

Contemporary conflicts have now shifted from an interstate nature towards an intrastate dimension. Such developments have serious ramifications, including systematic violence and onslaughts on civilian populations, particularly women and girls. With the changing context of conflict, peacekeeping has also evolved from its traditional

role of monitoring the implementation of peace agreements to being more multidimensional and addressing the full spectrum of activities – from providing secure environments to monitoring human rights and rebuilding the capacity of the state.

The need to protect women in armed conflict was highlighted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing held in 1995. Following this landmark development, in October 2000, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1325, which underscores the importance of women's participation in all facets of UN peace operations and recognises the contribution of local women in decision-making to prevent conflict and build peace.[14] The DPKO developed several policy guidelines on mainstreaming gender into PSOs, including the reports titled Integrating Gender Perspectives into the Work of United Nations Police in Peacekeeping Missions (2008) and Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations (2010). These provide tools for field personnel to translate gender mainstreaming into practical actions for protecting civilians.

At the continental level, PoC is explicitly stated in Article 4 of the AU Constitutive Act (2002). The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a non-indifference stance when conflict parties violate rights of civilians, and notes that "the

protection of a non-combatant's basic right to life and dignity is a fundamental element of all peace support operations".[15] The AU also mainstreamed gender in its PoC framework in 2003 and 2004, when the organisation adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), which endorses the provisions of UNSC Resolution 1325. The AU also developed its Gender Policy (2009) and Action Plan (2010), which encapsulate both the continental body's policy ideas and proposed actions towards gender mainstreaming.

Ultimately, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is harmonised with the frameworks and mechanisms that exist at the UN level to mainstream gender into PoC. For example, the AU Gender Policy reiterates the AU's commitment to promoting the effective participation of women in peace operations and security processes. Similarly, the AU Peace and Security Department's Roadmap for Gender Mainstreaming (2011–2013) outlines several activities undertaken by the AU Commission to strengthen the normative basis for the protection of women in armed conflicts. For example, through a General Assembly decision, the AU declared the period 2010 to 2020 as Africa's Decade for Women. This decade is an opportunity for the AU's Women,



SOJOUD ELGARRAI, UNAMID

**Women from the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people work on a project during a forum organised to raise awareness on gender-based violence. The event was organised by the African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), in collaboration with United Nations agencies in the region (December 2012).**

A Ugandan police officer serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on patrol in the Kaa'ran district of the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

Gender and Development Directorate, the PSD, the PSC and the Panel of the Wise to further the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, while paying attention to issues such as sexual violence and women's participation in peace processes.

### Gender Mainstreaming in PoC: Evidence from Selected Cases of Peace Support Operations

There is evidence of gender considerations in PoC in three peacekeeping missions, namely the hybrid UNAMID, UNMISS and AMISOM. The analysis corroborates the statement made by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a report to the UNSC, which concludes that "the most significant progress made in the implementation of Resolution 1325 has been in the peacekeeping arena".[16]

### *Hybrid African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)*

UNAMID, which was established through UNSC Resolution 1769 of 2007, has PoC at the core of its mandate, along with ensuring respect for human rights. The PoC mandate was derived from the recognition that the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians have been claimed in Darfur since the conflict erupted in 2003 between the government of Sudan and various armed groups. As a result, the UN profiled Darfur as a humanitarian crisis.

In response to the Darfur situation, the UN, in partnership with the AU and other key stakeholders, undertook a series of initiatives towards resolution, which resulted in the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006. In the same year, the AU deployed a peacekeeping mission to Sudan, which was replaced in 2008 by the AU–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which currently stands at a force size of 20 888 troops – the largest peacekeeping force in the world.[17]

As the conflict in Darfur continues, there have been ongoing efforts in a quest for lasting peace. The All Darfur Stakeholders' Conference of 27–31 May 2011 in Doha is one of the most recent concerted efforts towards peace in Darfur. However, challenges such as the complex operational environment and ongoing conflict continue to limit the ability of UNAMID to carry out its mandate.

Even though the mission experiences such challenges, UNAMID continues to implement its PoC mandate through the work of its various structures. The creation of a Humanitarian Recovery, Development and Liaison Section (HRDLS) played a pivotal role in UNAMID's development of guidance for PoC implementation. In February 2009, the HRDLS created a Mission Directive on the Protection of Civilians in Darfur, which provides a blueprint for PoC implementation. The directive defines three major categories of protection activities: preventive protection, immediate response protection and follow-up protection.[18]

The Human Rights Section (HRS) is another UNAMID structure that contributes to PoC efforts, and pays particular attention to vulnerable groups. This HRS is located in four

**A UNMISS police officer interacts with women residents of Pibor near a water bore.**

states in Darfur – El Fasher (North Darfur), Nyala (South Darfur), El Geneina (West Darfur) and Zalingei (Central Darfur) – and operates 11 military outposts.[19] The HRS engages in monitoring, investigation, reporting, advocacy and capacity-building activities, with the goal of preventing further human rights violations in the context of conflict. The UNMISS HRS collaborates with the Government Advisory Council on Human Rights in developing responses to the general human rights situation in Darfur.

Another PoC-mandated structure is the UNAMID Gender Advisory Unit (GAU), which champions gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the mission's mandate implementation through capacity-building, policy advice and technical assistance to mission leadership and management. GAU also conducts studies on various issues relating to gender, conflict and peacekeeping towards supporting evidence-based advocacy for the special protection needs of women. UNAMID GAU supported the active representation of women to ensure that the Doha negotiations and outcomes integrated women's concerns and gender issues. Overall, GAU has been involved in a diverse range of approaches towards redressing gender inequalities and protecting civilians, as strategies for promoting sustainable peace in Darfur.

PoC implementation is strengthened when there is full cooperation between government authorities, UNAMID and the community, especially when it comes to fostering preventive measures and rapid response.[20] As such, UNAMID

has been implementing quick impact projects (QIPs), which seek to strengthen the capacity of state institutions to protect civilians. A good example is the construction of police stations and courts to allow Darfur's citizens to have access to justice. In December 2012, UNAMID constructed a rural court in Tawilla, North Darfur, as part of the mission's QIP approach.[21] Such projects are expected to strengthen the rule of law and ultimately fight against impunity, especially in cases of sexual violence.

Effective PoC implementation requires the creation of innovative strategies to protect vulnerable populations, even in the context of limited resources and a difficult operational environment. In Darfur, there are several good stories emerging from the work of peacekeeping personnel, who are effectively reducing cases of sexual violence in the community. UNAMID established Joint Protection Teams (JPTs) comprising civilian, police and military peacekeepers, who engage in activities such as walking women to the market or to fetch firewood. A study reviewing the 10 years of implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 concludes that the patrols and escorts by JTPs have resulted in positively shifting perceptions of communities, especially women, about their security.

UNAMID further implements PoC strategy through the capacity-building of local law enforcement agencies. To this end, the training targets Sudan's national police at both national and regional level. In collaboration with the UNDP,
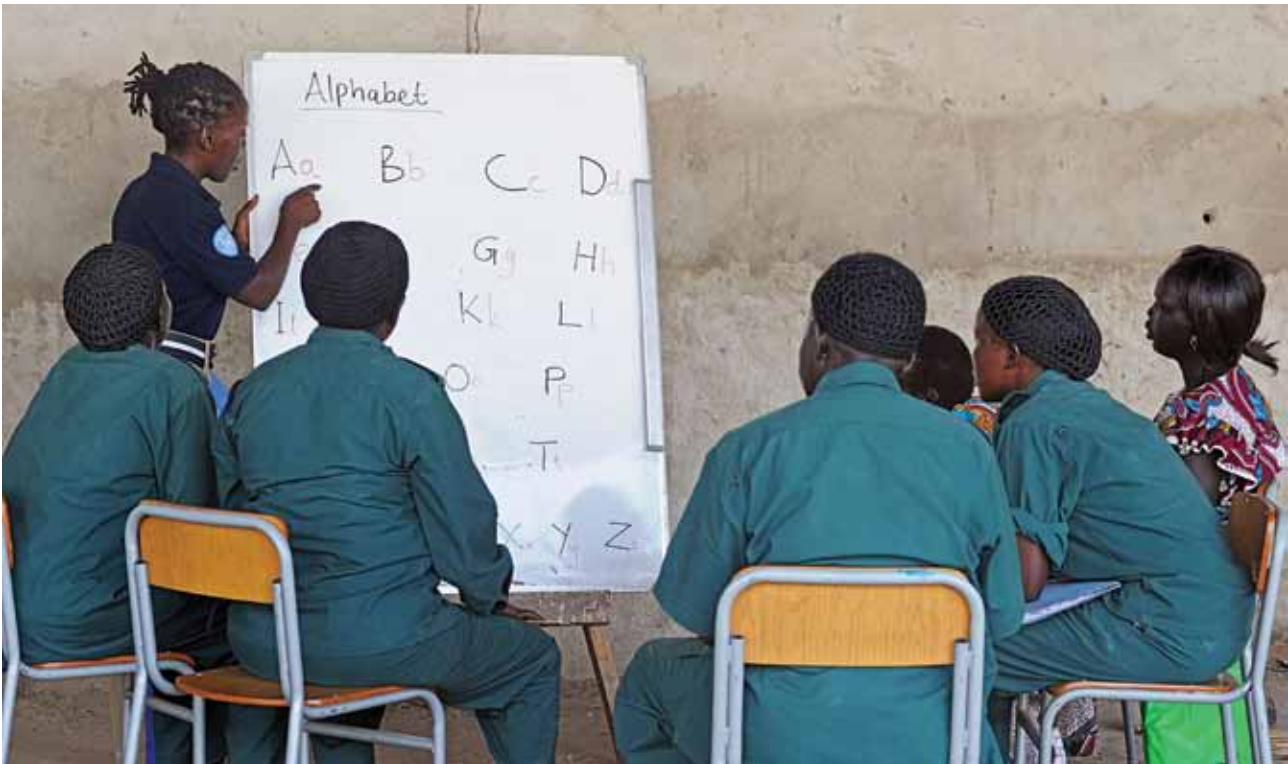
**The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) conducts English literacy classes for female members of the South Sudan National Police Service in Juba (February 2013).**

the mission trains local police in topics such as community policing, human rights, preventing gender-based violence, crime management, election security and the rule of law. UNAMID has also conducted capacity-building for other security actors in the Darfur conflict, including the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), and Minni Minnawi and the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM), which had established police structures that were dominated by former military combatants with limited police training.[22] In addition, UNAMID partners with other stakeholders, such as humanitarian agencies and local organisations, to support the establishment of local security structures such as community policing volunteers. These have proven to be effective in reducing cases of sexual violence.

PoC is strengthened by taking into account the needs of refugees and IDPs, particularly by involving women and girls in designing the camps to ensure their security and protection needs are met. In collaboration with UN agencies such as OCHA and the UNHCR, the mission has strengthened efforts to involve women in camp governance processes by supporting their participation in IDP camp management committees. Other agencies such as the UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) respectively provide vocational training and economic recovery opportunities as well as reproductive and health services. Such camp management practices enhance the human security and dignity of women, while protecting their rights.

Despite these notable achievements, the challenge for realising the PoC mandate stems from the fact that "the mission operates in an environment which is exceptionally hostile to its activities".[23] UNAMID is affected by the government's limited cooperation and "obstructionism"[24]– a situation that ultimately hampers the mission's effectiveness in protecting women. UNAMID faces mobility challenges of its staff as well as UN humanitarian personnel, especially restrictions on the mission's movement and complicated visa acquisition processes in Sudan.[25] A number of reports have highlighted the arrest and kidnapping of several UNAMID staff, which further hampers the mission's efforts to provide adequate protection to the population. Kagwanja and Mutahi highlight the negative impact of limited security on the provision of humanitarian assistance.[26] As a result, the tension between government and UNAMID has contributed to the immense suffering by civilians, who ultimately end up not being fully protected.

The implementation of gender considerations in PoC is further curtailed by the cultural environment in Darfur that prohibits discussion of sexual violence. In the Darfur context, topics of sexual and domestic violence are taboo, which results in a culture of silence that further limits recourse to any form of justice. Victims of sexual violence abstain from reporting it for fear of stigmatisation. The cultural complexities surrounding sexual violence is compounded by the lack of

integration between UNAMID and other UN agencies, which leaves actors unsure about which PoC strategy to pursue.

### African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

Since 1991, the escalating conflict in Somalia made intensive intervention necessary, hence the deployment of AMISOM by the AU PSC on 19 January 2007. Since its establishment, the mission has sought to stabilise the situation in the country and to create conditions that enable the conduct of humanitarian activities. Now with a renewed mandate since January 2013, AMISOM considers capacity-building as one of the key components to advancing its goals, including incorporating gender mainstreaming in the mission strategy. Against this background, the mission has made substantive efforts to address issues facing gender inequality and the marginalisation of women.

Although AMISOM was not designed with a specific PoC mandate, the mission is currently developing its mission-specific strategy for protecting civilians. If the success of PoC implementation is assessed through examining to what extent the mission has limited violent conflict and reduced human suffering, then AMISOM has succeeded considerably. AMISOM has mainstreamed gender considerations in its strategy and plan of action, using the AU Gender Policy (2009) and the AU Peace Support Operations Division's roadmap for gender mainstreaming as reference points. The AU Gender Policy calls for the effective participation of women in peace support operations, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, while the roadmap seeks to consolidate the mainstream gender considerations in the APSA.

To this end, AMISOM conducted training for its peacekeepers in Baidoa and Beletwenye in February 2013 to equip its peacekeepers with adequate skills to address gender issues, including sexual abuse and systematic violence against women in Somalia. The AMISOM Gender Unit, created in 2011, seeks to reinforce the peacekeepers' understanding of good gender practice through pre-deployment and continuous in-house training on issues of gender equality and the rights of women and girls, as well as conduct and discipline. The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) has been involved in conduct and discipline training, which raises awareness among uniformed and civilian peacekeepers on the peacekeeping code of conduct and the zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence.

### United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Although independence from Sudan in 2011 marked a major milestone for South Sudan, many issues still plague the world's youngest country. Intercommunal violence continues to be driven by widespread underlying issues, including the proliferation of small arms. As a result, the protection of civilians is a central and cross-cutting element of UNMISS's mandate, which is derived from UNSC Resolution 1996 (2011).

The current UNMISS architecture also emphasises PoC. The 2012 UN Secretary-General's report mentions that the mission has created positions for nine Women's Protection Advisers, and these are covered by the mission budget.[27] These advisers not only support local women's peace projects, but also address conflict-related sexual violence. Having personnel with a PoC mandate has enabled UNMISS to provide a broad range of gender services within the mission as well as in the host communities.

## ALTHOUGH AMISOM WAS NOT DESIGNED WITH A SPECIFIC POC MANDATE, THE MISSION IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING ITS MISSION-SPECIFIC STRATEGY FOR PROTECTING CIVILIANS

UNMISS also implements PoC in collaboration with other partners, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and government departments. Training is one of the approaches being used to raise awareness of PoC within the mission and among stakeholders from government and civil society. UNMISS personnel continue to receive training to equip them with skills to address sexual abuse and systematic gender-based violence. The UNMISS Gender Unit conducts training and workshops, which seek to strengthen the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 at national and state level. In October 2011, a gender mainstreaming workshop, co-organised by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the country's Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MoGCSW), was held in Juba. Following the training, a national network of experts was established to enhance gender mainstreaming at all levels of government and society.

At the field level, UNMISS works with various local structures that provide support in implementing the PoC strategy. Such structures include protection clusters and gender-based violence working groups, which are critical pillars for the operationalisation, monitoring and evaluation of PoC. The mission engages in deliberate efforts to incorporate local perspectives in the design and appraisal of peacekeeping interventions, by consulting with women's groups to encourage participation in and dialogue around gender issues.

The partnerships between missions, local organisations and UN agencies in the field increase the chances for long-term and sustainable peace. In South Sudan, for example, there is currently a PoC Working Group, which was established to oversee the implementation of PoC in the country. NGOs such as ACCORD are key stakeholders that have engaged with UNMISS towards the development of a community engagement strategy for PoC. UNMISS also facilitates local coordination forums, such as the peacebuilding and protection sub-cluster meetings, which provide important opportunities to engage with key partners operating in the field of protection. Through these meetings, the UNMISS Civil Affairs Officers (CAOs) keep abreast with the latest PoC-related

**The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Gender Unit observed the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign. This involved a series of activism events countrywide, with the participation of non-governmental organisations and other partners.**

developments in the country. NGOs have also been involved in the assessment of UNMISS training of PoC stakeholders, to provide feedback on the relevance and utility of such training. This synergistic approach to PoC has ensured that local organisations contribute towards a protection strategy that addresses specific gender needs.

UNMISS engages with the relevant government departments in implementing PoC. For example, in 2012, the UNMISS Gender Unit observed the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, in collaboration with the South Sudanese MoGCSW and the Ministry of Social Development. During this period, a series of activism events were held countrywide, with NGOs and partners participating. Such collaborations have had a positive impact on the adoption of gender equality provisions in national processes.

The mission also implements gender programmes that, in the long-term, will have positive effects on PoC. The mission advocated inclusive governance processes, including campaigning for women's participation in the 2011 referendum and elections. Currently, the mission is engaged in policy influence processes, which seek to ensure that South Sudan's constitutional review process incorporates gender and youth considerations. To this end, the UNMISS Gender Unit has held regular meetings with the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) party and opposition parties to present youth and women's issues for consideration in the constitution.[28] Through such processes, missions help in

strengthening legal frameworks that enhance the status of women and girls in society.

UNMISS supports the development and strengthening of structures that advance women's rights and protection. For example, through the MoGCSW, the Government of South Sudan created a network of gender focal points in each government department to ensure that gender considerations are undertaken in the design and implementation of policies. The creation of gender desks in police stations has also ensured that women who have experienced sexual violence can get immediate counselling and support when they report these acts to the authorities. Additionally, UNMISS and other UN agencies have championed the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach to demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), which includes female ex-combatants as well as other women associated with armed groups in South Sudan. However, the implementation of gender considerations in DDR still has mixed results, as critics indicate that many eligible women are missing in DDR processes.

Through its Judiciary Affairs Section, UNMISS is also involved in the promotion of children's protection. Through workshops and training, the mission promotes the full implementation of the Child Act by engaging with schools, parents, security and justice institutions and NGOs on issues such as early forced marriages, child labour, street children and low basic education retention rates. Following consultations in Jonglei State in February 2013, UNMISS

released a draft paper, titled 'Frame for Comprehensive Multi-Dimensional Approach to Child Protection in Jonglei State'.[29] The UNMISS child protection work involves collaboration between the mission's Gender Unit, Judiciary Affairs Section and Communications Department and other UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN Women and the UNDP.

Despite these good stories, the challenge in South Sudan is that UNMISS has limited resources to implement PoC effectively, especially for women. The exercise of the PoC mandate by UNMISS requires a multifaceted protection strategy that includes early-warning assessments, air patrols, ground patrols and support for the deployment of South Sudanese security service personnel to areas affected by the violence. This requires a significant amount of human and logistical resources. A DPKO publication, titled *A New Partnership Agenda – Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping*, recognises that missions face challenges in operationalising PoC because of a "mismatch between expectations and capacity to provide comprehensive protection".[30]

### The Way Forward for Gender Considerations in PoC

Incorporating gender considerations in PoC requires a critical mass of civilian and military women in PSOs. However, women's representation in peacekeeping is still deplorably low – contributing countries still send low numbers of female peacekeepers, while recruitments at mission level also reflect a huge gender imbalance. In response, the UN launched a global campaign in August 2009 to increase the deployment of uniformed women in peacekeeping, setting targets of 20% for the police by 2014 and 10% for the military by 2020.[31] These targets have not yet been achieved, although there is increasing female participation in peacekeeping. Currently, the percentage of women deployed as civilians in peacekeeping operations has reached 30%. In addition, the UN has had three women as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs).[32] The UN has also witnessed the deployment of all-female formed police units (FPUs) in Liberia, while African countries – including Burundi and Rwanda – have increased their female representation in police peacekeeping contingencies.

Effective PoC implementation requires the support of senior leaders in the peacekeeping hierarchy. The senior mission leadership needs to be involved in developing and supporting the implementation of mission-specific PoC strategies. Mission leaders require some education on rolling out PoC, and this can be disseminated through training or other capacity-building activities. A good example is the senior mission leadership retreats, which are conducted by ACCORD for UNMISS and AMISOM officials. By involving leaders of peacekeeping missions in training for PoC, it increases the chances of uptake and the operationalisation of measures to protect the community, especially women and children, from violence and abuse.

As highlighted by the UNSC in February 2013, states generally have the responsibility to protect civilians. It is important for state parties (and other armed groups) to comply strictly with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws, which will ensure the protection of the civilian population. To this end, states should provide appropriate training to raise awareness and responsiveness to PoC considerations by their personnel participating in peacekeeping missions. Some countries, such as Burundi and Rwanda (contributors to AMISOM), are increasingly paying attention to the PoC issue, and have already held discussions on the subject.

In line with the goal of protecting women, the AU should appoint a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in the context of armed conflict, as initially planned in the AU PSD Roadmap for Gender Mainstreaming (2011–2013).[33] The Special Representative will prioritise the protection of women from sexual violence and abuse during conflict, and will work with peacekeeping missions and humanitarian agencies to ensure that women are protected and empowered to take part in peace processes. The UN already has a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who serves as the UN's spokesperson and political advocate on conflict-related sexual violence.

### Conclusion

Both the UN and AU have developed policies to protect civilians from the scourge of conflict. These organisations employ a multidimensional and integrated approach to peacekeeping, which supports PoC implementation. In addition, the UN and AU have actively incorporated gender considerations within their institutional hierarchies, policies and missions. As such, there are good stories emerging from headquarters and the field offices, highlighting the effective incorporation of gender considerations in PoC. However, the continued violence on civilians during conflicts and the incessantly high rates of sexual and gender-based violence reflect the gaps between policy and practice.

Despite the progress made in outlining a comprehensive PoC architecture with gender dimensions, most peacekeeping missions still comprise an underwhelming number of women in decision-making positions and in peace processes. To address this discord, the UN and AU should place more attention on the active and equal involvement of women in decision-making, policy design and implementation of PoC. More importantly, the role of government support in strengthening PoC strategies cannot be underestimated.

Having member states as partners is critical for effective PoC implementation by missions and headquarters.

Despite their challenges, UNMISS, UNAMID and AMISOM are demonstrably committed to the PoC mandate, and continue to seek innovative ways of providing gender-sensitive protection to the local population. ▲

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### Endnotes

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2   Brahimi Report (A/55/305–S/2000/809) of 21 August 2000.

3   This report was published on 8 September 1999 (S/1999/957).

4   (S/ RES/1267) of 15 October 1999.

5   The Capstone Doctrine incorporates the protection of civilians as a cross-cutting issue and highlights three critical factors for the success of PSOs – namely legitimacy, credibility and local ownership.

6   UN Security Council (2009) 'Statement by the President of the Security Council' [made on behalf of the Security Council, at the 6066th meeting, 14 January 2009, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict'], 14 January 2009, (S/PRST/2009/1), Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49744c8f2.html> Accessed on: 24 April 2013.

7   For details, see UN Secretary-General (2013) 'Sexual Violence in Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General', 14 March, (A/67/792-S/2013/149), Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5167bd0f4.html> Accessed on: 24 April 2013.

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# WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING: THE EMERGENCE OF THE ALL-FEMALE UNIFORMED UNITS IN UNMIL AND MONUSCO

BY **CATHERINE A. ONEKALIT**

## Introduction

For decades, political analysts, peacekeepers and the like have tried to demonstrate to the world that women are not just victims of war, but agents of peace. Although significant, international commitments towards the realisation of women's rights, their protection and participation in all stages of peace processes – for instance, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action – did not yield the expected results, in particular with regard to women in peacekeeping. It was not until October 2000 – 52 years after the United Nations (UN) Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had commenced operations[1] – that the international community, through United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325, recognised the undervalued and unutilised

contributions of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Corresponding to the extension of peace operations' mandate to peacebuilding, securing peace and post-conflict reconstruction was an increasing demand for experienced and qualified staff to implement peacekeeping obligations productively. The idea that women could contribute to peacekeeping operations had been developing and was slowly being accepted, though many women still served as civilian rather than uniformed personnel.

**Above: On 31 January 2007, 103 Indian police-women were deployed to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). They were the core of the first all-female formed police unit deployed to a peacekeeping operation.**

The importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents of peace and security in peacekeeping missions continues to be seen as a necessity.

According to recent DPKO gender statistics, 30% of civilian staff are women, with female military and police personnel at 3% and 9% respectively, and an overall percentage of female uniformed personnel at 3.33%.[2] Despite these humble statistics, the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents of peace and security in peacekeeping missions continues to be seen as a necessity, and a plan to fast-track their involvement was thus conceived.

This article expounds on the role of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations. In particular, it analyses all-female uniformed Formed Police Units (FPUs) in peacekeeping missions in Africa, and highlights their strengths, challenges and lessons learned.

### Women and Peacekeeping

Women constitute almost half the world's population, and together with children make up an estimated 80% of war victims.[3] It therefore makes sense that they must play a role in peacekeeping, especially as doing so would impress directly upon their nature as care-givers to secure the protection of vulnerable populations and, importantly, to participate in peace processes. Numerous peace practitioners indicate that uniformed female peacekeepers can perform the same roles, under difficult situations and to the same standards, as their male counterparts. Many of these peace practitioners thus advocate for an increase in the number of women in peacekeeping. In cases where women (both civilian and uniformed) have been involved in peacekeeping, they have demonstrated that they are sensitive to the needs and problems that women in different post-conflict communities face. Francesco Bertolazzi, a researcher with the UN International Research and Training Institute for the

Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), concurs, stating that women have to be a part of peacekeeping missions as they reflect the society with which they interact to build peace.[4] The DPKO continues to promote a gendered approach to recruitment in peacekeeping, specifically based on validated facts relating to the roles women play. These include addressing the specific needs of female ex-combatants and their reintegration into civilian life, the mentoring of female cadets (military and police), interviewing the victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and accessing female populations easily. When in direct contact with local communities, female peacekeepers seem to have an advantage, as they easily gather information that boosts and/or leads to the realisation of peacekeeping mandates – a view substantiated in a paper by INSTRAW.[5] Nonetheless, despite the ground-breaking UNSC Resolution 1325 and a follow-up on Resolution 1889 (which reaffirms the former), it remains the ultimate responsibility of individual troop-contributing countries to involve more women in military and police peacekeeping.

According to the DPKO, a total of only 20 women served in the UN as uniformed peacekeepers in 32 years (1957 to 1989). After UNSC Resolution 1325, there was specific policy advanced on gender mainstreaming, and the number of uniformed female peacekeepers increased to 3 744 by 2010.[6] There was a growing demand to augment the participation of women at all levels in international peacekeeping. In response, countries began to develop all-female peacekeeping units by selecting members from their uniformed and paramilitary branches. These units were trained in international peacekeeping and deployed to UN peacekeeping missions. Countries that have contributed to such all-female contingents include India, Bangladesh, Peru

and Samoa. The first all-female contingent was deployed in Liberia, and each annual rotation is replaced by an all-female unit.

## Uniformed Female Peacekeepers

The intensified recruitment of uniformed women in peacekeeping is theoretically viewed as an increase in gender representation in the UN. While there are females serving as soldiers (military) in peacekeeping missions, it is only the UN Police (UNPOL) that has seen all-female contingents. According to a DPKO Police magazine, UNPOL launched a global effort to recruit more female police peacekeepers and set up an ambitious recruitment drive, thus increasing the number of female FPUs in peacekeeping operations.[7] Africa – having had 29 peacekeeping missions, of which eight are operational at present[8] – has several mixed (male and female) FPUs. However, there are only two all-female FPUs – in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

In many instances, these specialised UN police units- the FPUs, have conducted successful peace missions, operating at considerable risk to extricate people trapped by gunfire.[9] However, the all-female FPUs, in particular, are said to have become an inspiration for women in host nations as well as across the continent, becoming role models in the war-torn countries where they serve. Several arguments are made to advocate for more uniformed all-female peacekeeping contingents, contending that their insertion into military situations has a civilising effect. To the extent that these claims are true, all-female FPUs appear to be a powerful tool in the daunting task of nation-building after violent internal discord. What is the effect of the all-female FPUs in UNMIL and MONUSCO? To what extent does the role of female peacekeepers differ from that of male peacekeepers? These questions are important as they highlight the actual strength of female FPUs, their impact and lessons learned.

## Indian Female Formed Police Units: UNMIL

On 31 January 2007, 103 Indian policewomen were deployed to UNMIL, and immediately became a global media sensation. They were the core of the first all-female FPU ever deployed to peacekeeping operations and even though they were accompanied by 22 male support staff, this was not a usual phenomenon. Since then however, there have been consecutive all-female contingents. This unique Indian all-female FPU was an interesting trial in UN policing and peacekeeping, and it highlighted the impact of uniformed female representation. The impact of female personnel must be considered within the broader context of UNMIL, itself influenced by developments in Liberia, cultural dynamics and the media.

A best practice report, titled 'Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Operations: The Case of Liberia 2010',[10] highlights the tasks of FPUs as guarding the president's office, providing security at local events with high-profile leadership, riot control, and carrying out night patrols with members of the Liberian National Police (LNP) in and around Monrovia. With each rotation, the FPUs' roles broadened beyond the mandated tasks to include a wide range of community-focused programmes, with particular interest in Liberian women and girls. The range of the Indian FPU's actions and interactions impacted on Liberia on several fronts. However, it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of the impact in the area of security, as most of the influence that is documented is attitudinal and/or behavioural. This view is supported by gender consultant Kristen Cordell, who indicates that the actual security impact of the all-female FPU in Liberia is not adequately documented.[11]

Reports highlighting the impact of the Indian FPU, particularly their effect on socially constructed gender stereotypes of women's attributes, are easy to understand. Several researchers have indicated that the personal time and resources the female peacekeepers devoted to interacting and communicating with the community had an amazing influence, unlike their male counterparts. It is reported that when the female FPUs noticed changes in the response of the community to their programmes, they approached both men and women, seeking to understand the reasons for their absenteeism and/or withdrawal from usual activities. This approach resulted in a detailed understanding of needs and prevalent challenges, aiding the improvement of programmes within the communities the FPUs serve.

The all-female FPUs also conducted community summer camps, which taught young Liberian girls self-defence, first aid and classical Indian dance.[12] In the areas in which the FPUs operated, it is believed that sexual abuse and exploitation dropped sharply. Reports also indicate an

**A task of the Indian all-female formed police unit is to carry out night patrols with members of the Liberian National Police.**

**The all-female formed police units highlight that women can engage in the full military range of activities, including positions of command.**

increase of girls remaining in and completing primary school, especially in a suburb of Monrovia where the FPUs are deployed. "Girls are reported to be less on the street or involved in sexual relationships with older men.[13]

The presence of the Indian all-female contingents has led to enhanced physical safety and security. The FPU night patrols, lighting systems and armed presence are seen as critical. In the words of UNMIL's senior gender advisor, Carole Doucet: "The new and important practice in the case of the all-female Indian FPU is the capacity of a woman-only force to effectively implement formal security provision tasks while acting as a role model to citizens."[14]

Increased female recruitment in the LNP is also ascribed to the all-female FPU, which is said to have inspired women and girls to take on non-traditional roles. However, the long-term effect on the transformation of the LNP depends on whether increased female recruitment in the LNP measurably improves LNP performance.

Support from the Government of Liberia and UNMIL created awareness around the activities of the FPUs and, to an extent, impacted on their activities. By increasing FPU visibility at international events and drawing attention to their presence in the community, security continued to improve. The Ministry of Gender and Development described the activities of the all-female FPU by linking the FPU to "protection with a female face", and stated that supporting such FPUs ensures that Liberia moves towards a path of inclusive security.[15]

### Bangladeshi Female Formed Police Units: MONUSCO

Bangladesh has been one of the top contributors of female police officers to UN peacekeeping. In addition to sending an all-female FPU to Haiti in 2010, it deployed another all-female FPU to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2011. The first annual rotation took place in February 2013 with 125 members, and subsequent rotations have been pledged.[16] According to the coordinator of the FPU in Kinshasa, the contribution of the Bangladesh all-female FPU is appreciated across many components of the mission. The tasks of the FPU includes crowd control, the protection of UN staff and materials, and escorting UN personnel into insecure areas of the mission. They also offer defence training, especially in martial arts. A flash report by the Commander of the second FPU contingent, Shirin Jahan Akter, states that International Women's Day on 8 March 2013 was celebrated with a display of martial art skills with the theme of 'Rise up Women, Awaken your Power'.[17] Such activities are reported to have a major impact on Congolese society at large, and women in particular.

## THE UN'S GENDER INTEGRATION POLICY SUGGESTS THAT GENDER IS A STRONG UNITING FORCE, AND IGNORES THE DIFFERENCES OF WOMEN WITH REGARD TO CULTURE, NATIONALITY AND RELIGION

In addition to the formal tasks of security provision, the all-female FPU has engaged in cross-cultural interaction within the communities they serve. The first FPU contingent began its work in a critical situation, within a tense security environment triggered by the presidential and national legislative elections in 2011. Its activity during this time was crucial, and the FPU was instrumental in saving civilian lives during heavy fighting in Kinshasa.[18]

### Challenges of the All-female Formed Police Units

The unique characteristics of both the Indian and Bangladeshi units – that is, their female composition and community outreach efforts – risk being seen as dispensable or irrelevant to the core work of uniformed personnel, unless they produce improvements in security. For both the UNMIL and MONUSCO missions, the contributions of the all-female FPUs have been said to impact positively on security, especially in the areas they are deployed. However, these claims can be questioned – for example, claims of improved security can be undermined, as there is no data to support it.

The idea that men are soldiers and women are homemakers has, to some extent, relegated the all-female FPUs to socially constructed gender roles. Their activities have been viewed more as part of a deliberate UN policy of gender mainstreaming to increase the recruitment of women in uniform in peacekeeping operations. Their instrumental role of saving civilians during conflict is not given much credit, and

they tend to be counted simply as people in military uniforms who help to keep the 'actual soldiers' (men) in line.

The UN's gender integration policy suggests that gender is a strong uniting force, and ignores the differences of women with regard to culture, nationality and religion. The policy portrays gender as a shared experience, meaning that female peacekeepers from all over the world are best equipped to work with any woman in any foreign country. It ignores how different identities may affect different interactions in different contexts. Womanhood does not automatically translate to effective communication with all post-conflict communities.

### Lessons Learned

All-female FPUs provide a powerful display of female power. Because they are both uncommon and challenge the traditional view of uniformed peacekeepers as male, the female units are seen as remarkable. The all-female FPUs show that women can engage in the full military range of activities, including positions of command. Ultimately, the success of the all-female FPUs implies that female representation is likely to be more effective when women are organised in a sizeable group, rather than spread thinly across units, contingents and battalions.

Since the all-female FPUs are armed and offer more muscle than unarmed police, as well as more accuracy than military troops, they are intended to fill the gap in public security provision between foreign military troops and national police. Beyond the simple directives of the DPKO, and given the variations in society and security environments, the FPUs continue to need a high level of flexibility. The benefits of effective community relationship-building activities, through providing support to communities and developing trust, are important and should be replicated in all uniformed units, including the military.

As more all-female units join peacekeeping units, they continue to participate in activities that are voluntary and are sometimes executed in their spare time. Mandating future FPU contingents to perform similar tasks may require the provision of more resources in terms of time, money and training. These resources may not be readily available.

### Conclusion

The Indian and Bangladeshi all-female FPUs highlight the benefits of female representation in – and for – peacekeeping missions. There is no doubt that they have contributed substantially to changing lives for the better in the societies in which they work. However, it is important to remember that an all-female FPU is not by design an indicator of success of uniformed women in peacekeeping. The point of this observation is that encounters between female peacekeepers and locals can be fraught with as many challenges as those of male peacekeepers. While the presence of female-only FPUs may sometimes make these encounters run more smoothly, there are cases where the gender of peacekeepers is secondary to barriers like language, race or religion. Nonetheless, one must be careful to ensure that in objectively

and constructively critiquing the impact of the all-female FPUs, we do not detract from the significant and important role of uniformed women in peacekeeping. ▲

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# THE ROLE OF THE UNMISS GENDER UNIT AND OFFICERS IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

BY **MARIA NAKABIITO**

### The Policy Context

Gender mainstreaming in peace and security is informed by a clear mandate and a rich policy context. These derive from both the global agenda for peace and security and the women's rights and gender mainstreaming agenda, articulated by the intergovernmental community at the Beijing Conference (1995). The principle instruments of this policy context are The United Nations (UN) Charter (1947), which governs all UN activity and specifically gives attention to the equal rights of men and women; UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000); and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979). CEDAW is a comprehensive treaty and, as such, its provisions must be reflected in the constitutions and legislations of state parties, and hence are legally enforceable. Other policy instruments include The Beijing Platform for Action (1995); The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Agreed Conclusions on Gender Mainstreaming (1997); the UN Department of

**Above: A United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) human rights specialist (right) discusses human rights cases and ongoing investigations with the police chief of Boma, South Sudan (March 2013).**

**Gender office support to elections is an opportunity to increase women's representation, raise issues of inequality and press for change.**

Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Under Secretary-General's Policy Note on Gender Mainstreaming (2005); and the DPKO Policy Directive on Gender Mainstreaming (2006), among others.

### The Role of the UNMISS Gender Unit

The above-mentioned policy documents provide a framework for integrating gender perspectives into the implementation of peacekeeping mandates at policy and operational levels. Gender advisers and officers have, therefore, been appointed to peacekeeping operations. Gender advisers have the role of being catalysts in gender mainstreaming efforts, but gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all uniformed and civilian staff. Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men contribute and benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality and equity.

The role of gender advisers and officers is that of catalysts in gender mainstreaming efforts, overseeing the rationalisation and coordination of gender mainstreaming activities. The OGA is also responsible for providing technical guidance to staff; however, gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all staff of the mission.

### What has been Achieved?

OGA adopts a two-prong strategy in implementing gender mainstreaming. This is an internal strategy within UNMISS, and an external strategy with non-UNMISS partners that include government, civil society and local and international NGOs.

The OGA, through training and capacity-building of the mission's civilian and uniformed personnel, ensures that the mission components have the requisite skills and knowledge to understand and address gender issues and, where appropriate, support the capacity among UN agencies and national partners that work with the mission on the relevant aspects of mandate implementation. OGA forms strategic partnerships with other UN agencies and civil society organisations to ensure collective ownership and complementary approaches towards the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Key national partners include government ministries, particularly the ministry responsible for gender at national and state levels; women's NGOs; the Women's Legislative Caucus; gender committees in both houses in

the legislature; key international NGOs working on gender and governance; the National Electoral Commission; and the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) programme.

The OGA has been able to achieve:
- the establishment of a gender technical working group;
- strengthening institutional mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment through the appointment of gender focal point persons and clear terms of reference for sector-wide implementation of the gender agenda;
- annual tracking and reporting on indicators for UNSC Resolution 1325, contributing to the Secretary-General's report on South Sudan;
- raising awareness on gender equality dimensions of the mission mandate; and
- establishment of an in-mission gender task force.

## Operational Function and Support Rendered by the Mission

### 1. Substantive Issues

UNMISS's OGA interventions have been geared towards having gender equity reflected in the national constitution, policies and legal frameworks, buttressed by national ethics that support and promote gender equity. In South Sudan today, women are still neither adequately empowered nor are they participating effectively in the governance structures and processes, which remain nascent anyway. However, at this time – when the South Sudanese are determined and have set in motion the process of democratising governance – women and the country at large are presented with a significant window of opportunity to participate fully in democratic development, right from the onset of the new nation.

### 2. Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration

The OGA also advocated for special measures and programmes to address the gender-specific needs of female ex-combatants, as well as the wives and widows of former combatants. Borrowing from best practices in DPKO, the 'no weapon, no entry' rule (in DDR) for eligibility was never applied in UNMIS(S); thus, greater attention was paid to the needs of women. Women who could not present weaponry but had been actively involved in the conflict were included in the DDR process right from the planning phase, thus making them eligible for demobilisation, disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) as either ex-combatants and/or Women Associated with Fighting Forces (WAFFs). Other key successes are the inclusion in the gender unit of a member of the DDR administrative review committee, to ensure gender responsiveness in projects to be undertaken in DDR cantonments, such as in Mapel in Western Bahr el Ghazal State.

### 3. Elections

Another key aspect is the OGA's contribution to elections and the referendum. Under-representation of women in politics is a common feature of many African countries, and South Sudan is no exception. The potential of women to contribute significantly to the electoral process and to the leadership of South Sudan has hardly been harnessed. Although women constitutionally enjoy the right to vote and be voted for, they account for less than about 30% of political positions. Their political participation has not been tested; in addition, their participation in other leadership roles is low and close to non-existent. They are only barely included and represented in party leadership. Gender office support to elections is an opportunity to increase women's representation, raise issues of inequality and press for change. The OGA focuses on women in elections through training and creating linkages between the media, potential female candidates and women's organisations to enhance female participation.

### 4. Security Sector Reform

The Gender Unit has trained the police and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to build the capacity for the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS), the Ministry of Defense and Veteran Affairs (MODIVA) and SPLA to become effective partners in gender and development initiatives. Training the uniformed services on gender is part of security sector reform (SSR) and an important component of peacebuilding, democratisation and development. As a major state security apparatus, the uniformed services sector is a key focal area within SSR. Gender equity and diversity within the uniformed services is expected to contribute to creating a more representative and non-discriminatory security sector, and increasing the operational efficiency of this sector.

### Highlights and Achievements
- Women have taken up leadership positions, including governorship in one state (Warrap State). While such success may not be solely attributable to the work of the gender office, the OGA undertook several electoral capacity-building trainings for potential women candidates. There has been advocacy for the appointment of seven gender focal point persons in Western Bahr el Ghazal State government ministries, including that of parliamentary affairs.
- There has been awareness training for the Western Bahr el Ghazal state-appointed gender focal point persons.
- Gender training for the administration of justice was undertaken with the gender committee of the state legislative assembly.

### The Gender Unit's Good Practices
- There is continued engagement with stakeholders through training and advocacy with national stake-

**The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Gender Unit has trained the police and assisted in building the capacity of the South Sudan National Police Service.**

holders and collaboration with the Public Information Office to popularise national instruments for gender mainstreaming and female participation.

• There is collaboration with UN agencies for financial contribution towards gender work, while UNMISS provides technical skills. While UN agencies like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have the necessary resources available, they often do not have gender specialists. Building symbiotic relationships and partnerships between UNMISS and such agencies contributes to better implementation.

• Continued capacity-building through mentoring national counterparts and partners occurs.

• There are integrated outreach activities with the Office of Human Rights.

• The use of gender intermediaries – that is, persons other than gender officers – to advance the gender agenda, especially in meetings, is helpful.

**Challenges Experienced by the Gender Unit**

• Within the mission, gender mainstreaming is perceived as an add-on activity and as the sole responsibility of the OGA only.

• There is a limited number of gender staff in the field offices.

• Social-cultural norms and practices such as early and forced marriages, wife inheritance and patriarchal domestic and institutional relations result in resistance and the delayed implementation of gender equality provisions in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), UNSC Resolution 1325 and other instruments.

• There is a lack of resources – for example, financial resources – for enhancing civil society and especially women's skills, to engage in gender programming processes.

• There is a lack of reliable statistics and indicators on gender.

• There is limited commitment and capacity – or even outright resistance – among stakeholders to undertake gender mainstreaming in different programmatic areas.

• There is a threat that women will be confined to the constitutional 25% in leadership positions, yet 75% is theirs to take. The constitutional provisions are not accompanied by any deliberate measures and mechanisms to make it possible for women to gain real access to elective institutions.

**Thousands of civilians, including women and children, sought refuge at the UNMISS base following an exchange of fire between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and an armed group in Pibor, Jonglei State (6 March 2013).**

- There are a limited number of credible partners to work with. Local NGOs lack the capacity that is required of rights holders, and government lacks the necessary human, financial and institutional capacity to deliver on its functions.
- Misinterpretation of constitutional provisions for gender quotas occurs.
- There is limited capacity for civil society and state ministry officials to develop and implement gender plans of action and programmes.
- There is limited funding for outreach advocacy and awareness activities, as required for the dissemination of UNSC Resolution 1325 and other international and national instruments that would enhance the implementation of the gender agenda.

### Conclusion

The South Sudan government has responded positively to the UN's calls to promote women's rights and protection. Its Transitional Constitution ensures that South Sudanese women enjoy the same equal rights as men in political and social life. Nevertheless, women remain under-represented in government and appear to have limited power to influence the implementation of the UN resolutions and government policies. Women and girls have seen little change in their lives and social status, and continue to fall victim to conflicts and violence, discrimination and maltreatment. South Sudan is struggling with a large gender capacity gap and the Ministry of Gender and Social Development is lacking in qualified and competent staff. It is also grossly under-resourced. Most development agencies and partners also seem to lack adequate gender capacity. There is significant capacity available in the South Sudanese diaspora, but it is yet to be repatriated. Finally, South Sudanese society is highly militarised and this further exacerbates threats to women's peace and security, and presents a negative protection environment. ◣

**Maria Nakabiito is a Gender Specialist. This article is written in her personal capacity.**

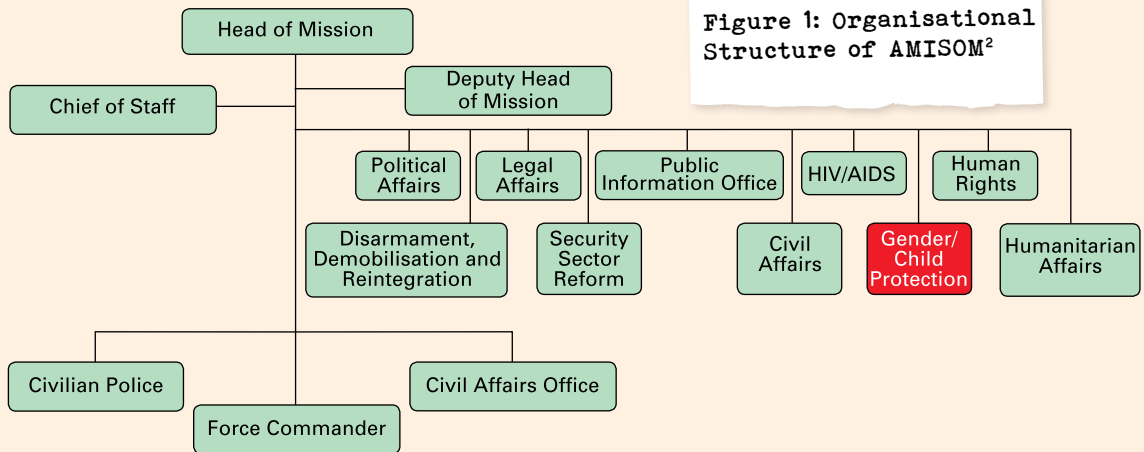# AMISOM Troop-contributing Countries and Female Representation

*Nicolle Chido Manjeya*
*Olivia Victoria Davies*



Olivier Chassot

## Establishment and Structure of AMISOM

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was established on 19 January 2007 by the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council. The mission comprises military personnel contributed by African member states. The major troop-contributing countries to the mission include Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti and Sierra Leone. In implementing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325,[1] the mission is working towards having a greater number of female personnel contributed by these countries. Earlier this year, the UNSC, under its Resolution 2093 (2013), renewed the mission's mandate for a period of one year to 2014. The Resolution requested that AMISOM strengthen children's and women's protection in its activities and operations, through including the deployment of a Child Protection Adviser and a Women's Protection Adviser within its existing civilian component. The gender and child protection components within the mission work with each department on the organisational structure indicated in Figure 1, to mainstream gender into the operations of the mission.

Figure 1: Organisational Structure of AMISOM[2]

- Head of Mission
- Chief of Staff
- Deputy Head of Mission
- Political Affairs
- Legal Affairs
- Public Information Office
- HIV/AIDS
- Human Rights
- Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
- Security Sector Reform
- Civil Affairs
- Gender/Child Protection
- Humanitarian Affairs
- Civilian Police
- Force Commander
- Civil Affairs Office

## Current Female Statistics of AMISOM Troop-contributing Countries

### Table 1: Percentage of Female Personnel Contributed by Countries[3]

| Contributing countries | Number of troops | Number of females | Percentage of females |
|---|---|---|---|
| Uganda | 6 223 | 193 | 3.10 |
| Burundi | 5 432 | 40 | 0.73 |
| Kenya | 4 652 | 29 | 0.62 |
| Djibouti | 960 | 8 | 0.83 |
| Sierra Leone | 850 | 0 | 0 |
| Total troops | 18 117 | 270 | 1.49 |

The percentages in Table 1 indicate a very low contribution of female personnel. Uganda and Burundi are making some progress in including a larger number of female troops, who are currently represented in AMISOM's peace support operations. Individual countries may experience internal challenges that may explain why their contribution of female personnel is low. However, these challenges need to be addressed to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 at mission level effectively.

### Figure 2: Gender Representation by Troop Contributing Countries



Female Contribution

## Overview of Challenges

Emphasising that the inclusion of women is pivotal in peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, AMISOM continues to engage in mainstreaming gender into all areas of its operations. This is done through gender awareness training conducted for troops in Kismayo, Mogadishu, Baidoa and Beletweyne in Somalia, and other cross-cutting initiatives. As much as the mission is striving to implement UNSC Resolution 1325, there is also a challenge for troop-contributing countries to increase the number of female representatives in police and military contributions. This challenge is rooted in the point that the mission cannot influence individual troop-contributing countries to provide large numbers of female personnel. Further, the cultural beliefs of troop-contributing countries often pose a challenge to increased female representation.

The AU adopted the Burundi Model of support for AMISOM. This model requires troop-contributing countries to provide most of the equipment and resources needed by their troops. The challenge with this model is that AMISOM has little influence in determining the gender composition of its police and military personnel.[4] However, despite this challenge, the mission in itself has made positive strides towards the involvement of women through the establishing of a Gender Unit. The unit works to empower and involve Somali women through training, outreach programmes and capacity-building processes. Finally, to track progress on AMISOM's work on gender mainstreaming, the mission needs to establish wider access to its gender statistics in all its data and reporting.
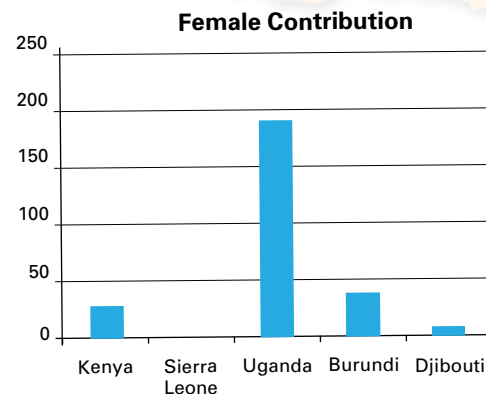
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1   United Nations Security Council (2000) 'Resolution 1325', Available at: <http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf> (Accessed 2 April 2013).

2   Organogram adapted from: Peacock, Emelie (2011) 'The African Union Mission in Somalia: The Mission, Its Successes and Challenges and Ways Forward', University of British Columbia, p. 17, Available at: <http://www.winstonchurchillbc.org/images/PDF/Second%20prize%20paperEPeacock-2012.pdf > (Accessed 2 April 2013).

3   All figures on the contributions of troop-contributing countries are obtained from individual country profiles on the AMISOM website: see African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (n.d.) 'Djibouti', Available at <http://amisom-au.org/djibouti/> (Accessed 10 April 2013).

4   Peacock, Emelie (2011) op. cit., p. 7.

BY **PRIYAL SINGH**

# TEN YEARS OF THE KIMBERLEY PROCESS CERTIFICATION SCHEME

*Interview with the Chair of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, HE Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, on 28 March 2013 in Durban, South Africa.*



GETTY IMAGES

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) – often referred to as the Kimberley Process – is an intergovernmental initiative relating to the trade of rough diamonds. Initiated by southern African diamond-producing states and established in 2003, participating governments to the KPCS highlighted a grave concern that the trade of rough diamonds from conflict or rebel-held areas (referred to as either conflict diamonds or blood diamonds) can directly undermine peace efforts and lead to protracted conflict. The KPCS, which has been endorsed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and the UN Security Council in Resolution 55/56, therefore requires that all participating governments certify the origin of their export or import of diamonds, and enact domestic legislation to ensure the effective implementation of the scheme. Significantly, member states can only trade with other members, such that compliance with the demands of the KPCS are linked to the trade itself. The KPCS has employed an innovative tripartite approach between governments, civil society actors and the diamond industry to tackle the scourge of conflict diamonds in the last decade.

Now in its 10th year of operation, with a membership that accounts for approximately 99.8% of the global production of rough diamonds,[1] Priyal Singh of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) met with the Chair of the KPCS, HE Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, to reflect on the KPCS and to discuss the achievements made thus far, and what remains to be done.

**Ambassador Welile Nhlapho took over the Chairmanship of the Kimberley Process on 1 January 2013. He served as South Africa's Ambassador to the United States until his appointment as National Security Special Adviser to President Jacob Zuma in November 2009. In June 2011 he became South Africa's Special Representative to the Great Lakes countries.**

**Priyal Singh (PS): As we commemorate 10 years of the founding of the KPCS, what would you regard as the most important aspect of UN Resolution 55/56?**

HE Ambassador Welile Nhlapo (WN): The Resolution was a critical milestone in the development of the KPCS, as this effectively paved the way for it to operate within the UN system. Indeed, it was – and still is – vital that a process of this nature be provided the necessary multilateral endorsement such that it may be developed, implemented and administered through various international frameworks, which essentially fall within the UN system. This allows for greater coherence within the international system, specifically in terms of reporting and seeking support for the further development of the process.

**PS: Given Africa's considerable role in the development and ongoing implementation of the KPCS, how would you define the continent's overall contribution to it?**

WN: The continent has played a considerable part in ensuring that the vast majority of all diamonds traded globally are now conflict-free. African states, in particular, have done well in meeting the compliance demands, as articulated by the KPCS, and have put in place numerous domestic frameworks and mechanisms to this effect. These developments have, in turn, bolstered the diamond trade by ensuring that legitimate governments in Africa receive due revenue from these natural resources, whilst further supporting the general security environment, specifically in terms of diamond mining. We can, therefore, see that the continent has played a critical role in crafting a much more sustainable, secure, ethical and legitimate international trade in diamonds, largely through the central role played by the KPCS.

**PS: In light of these developments, would you then argue that the KPCS is a successful model with regard to the notion of "African solutions to African problems"?**

WN: Certainly. By looking at recent statistics, it is clearly evident that the KPCS has dealt a significant blow to the trade of conflict diamonds over the last decade. Given that the KPCS was initiated in Africa, and is now a truly global process between governments, the diamond industry and civil society, a case can be made that this is indeed a successful model in terms of international responsibility, cooperation and collaboration. While certain challenges relating to implementation and capacity may persist in some regions, I am, however, confident that solutions are forthcoming.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution (December 2009) reaffirming its strong support for the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which imposes strict requirements on rough diamond shipments to certify that they are conflict free (or that their sale is not fuelling conflicts).

**PS: What is particularly interesting about the KPCS is the manner in which an international response of this nature could potentially address matters relating to peace and security, as well as economic considerations. What in your opinion constitutes a link, if any, between the KPCS and issues of peace and development?**

WN: There is indeed a robust link between these considerations that the KPCS accounts for, with particular regard to the economic development and stability of diamond-exporting states. What has become apparent over the last decade is that a certification scheme of this nature plays a central role in creating and enhancing the conditions for peace. This can primarily be attributed to the fact that the KPCS effectively mitigates the political-economic processes in which violent rebel groups source funding through the exploitation of a country's diamond resources. Subsequently, legitimate state actors are afforded a more secure and stable environment, as these groups can be more effectively kept at bay. Furthermore, the KPCS has dually bolstered the developmental prospects of diamond-producing states, who are signatories to it, by improving our understanding of the overall industry in terms of statistics relating to revenues, production and so forth. By emphasising transparency and accountability, the KPCS has also allowed for a more secure channelling of revenues to legitimate state actors – such that

this fiscal base can be subsequently employed to finance social development, and to further improve the conditions of workers.

*PS: The tripartite structure of the KPCS – between governments, civil society actors and the diamond industry – has been cited as a pioneering approach in addressing international problems. What is your view on the efficacy of this structure in allowing the scheme to fulfil its mandate effectively?*

**WN**: One of the key outcomes of this structure is the overall attitudinal change of end-buyers. Increasingly, over the last decade, individuals have become more acutely aware of ethical considerations in their purchase of diamonds. The tripartite structure of the KPCS has been instrumental in spearheading this change, by working closely with the key actors across the diamond production spectrum. The World Diamond Council, for example, is represented by the KPCS's working groups and has played a significant role in ensuring that no diamonds are handled without certification. Participating governments, on the other hand, have made great strides over the last decade in ensuring that compliance is honoured through the development of domestic frameworks and mechanisms. Civil society actors have duly played a considerable role in promoting, influencing and developing the agenda of the KPCS. Cumulatively, these developments have sought to ensure accountability at all stages of the diamond-production value chain, and have worked well in complementing individual efforts towards the overarching goal of the KPCS.

*PS: As current Chair of the KPCS, what do you see as the most pressing challenges to prioritise and address, and how do you envision the KPCS strengthening in 2013?*

**WN**: One of the most glaring weaknesses of the KPCS is its absence or lack of integration with the formal peace, security and development institutional architecture of the African Union (AU). Given that the majority of all diamond-producing countries are AU member states, the KPCS would benefit greatly – in terms of implementation – from greater complementary, collaborative and integrated efforts with the AU. The KPCS's monitoring process is one example which could be greatly enhanced through greater collaboration with the AU Peace and Security Council. If the information generated through these monitoring exercises were effectively harnessed, then this could pay large dividends in terms of better identifying and understanding illicit activities, and could further be used to ensure better beneficiation of the continent's resources. Moreover, these benefits could, in turn, be utilised to more effectively finance development programmes across the continent, as well as fund post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts. ▲

**Priyal Singh is a Programme Officer in the Operations Division at ACCORD.**

### Endnotes

1    The Kimberley Process (n.d.) 'About', Available at: <http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/web/kimberley-process/kp-basics> Accessed on: 5 April 2013.

**Erratum**
In *Conflict Trends,* Issue 1 (2013), the picture caption on p. 46 incorrectly named Ghana's Minister of Women and Children's Affairs (January 2010) as Jane Amavi Kwawu. The correct name is Juliana Azumah-Mensah.

# Promoting peace through training, research and policy development

**The Training for Peace (TfP) Programme is an international training and research programme funded and established by the Norwegian Government since 1995. Its primary purpose is to contribute towards capacity building within the broader ambit of peace operations in Africa.**

TfP is a joint programme between the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in Oslo, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in Durban, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria and the Koffi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra. The target groups are personnel within relevant ministries, such as Foreign Affairs and Defence, and the military, police, judicial, non-governmental organisations and media sectors.

Within its overall goal, TfP's objective is broadly twofold:
- primarily, to establish a self-sustaining, multifunctional peace operation capacity in Africa.
- secondarily, to provide advice to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in formulating policies on issues pertinent to co-operative efforts between Africa and Norway regarding peace operations and reconciliation.

Both of these are implemented at the conceptual and the practical level through training, research and policy development activities.

## TRAINING

The programme conducts a set of generic and specifically designed training courses in Africa.

## RESEARCH

TfP carries out research and studies in support of training and policy development. These activities help formulate, document, analyse and apply innovative ideas and practices from past and current peace operations, and encourage the development of a common understanding and application of peacekeeping doctrine within Africa.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

TfP conducts seminars, conferences, expert meetings and workshops to develop new understanding, knowledge and approaches that provide the basis for more effective training and education. In addition, Tfp promotes policy development in order to formulate, document, analyse and apply innovative ideas from overseas to improve peacekeeping capabilities in Africa.

## CIVILIAN ROSTER

To facilitate rapid deployment of personnel with relevant qualifications, the TfP programme is associated with the African Civilian Response Capacity for Peace Support Operations (AFDEM) – an organisation running a regional civilian stand-by roster, which screens, includes, tracks and helps deploy personnel trained in a variety of peacekeeping and peacebuilding skills. The AFDEM Roster is located in Bulawayo, Zimbabawe.

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