

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



Community Consultations on: Women, Peace and Security



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Should Australia become the next country to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security?

Why do we need to be concerned about this resolution 1325?

Armed conflicts, mainly **civil** wars continue in **everyday locations** –where civilians are affected.

The **human tragedy of violent conflict** is enormous. Wherever there is armed conflict, sectarian tension, ethnic or religious rivalries, the occupation of territories, or militaristic violence, men and women suffer deeply, but there are **gender-specific experiences of conflict** including:

- **Sexual assault** as a routine part of a fighting culture.
- **War rape** used as a **weapon of war** with women as **strategic targets**;
- **Sexual exploitation** of women and girls by soldiers, militia and sometimes peacekeepers;
- **HIV/AIDS** spread when sexual violence is rampant;
- **torture** of women detainees; and
- the effects of **landmines** when women/girls collect water and firewood.

Gendered experiences also influence **decision-making on peace and security**. Typically, women and men:

- play **different roles** in armed conflict (as victims and as agents), and
- their approaches to and priorities in **securing peace** often differ.

Importantly, while women globally are active in **informal peacebuilding roles**, they are rarely visible in negotiations and political decision-making about the construction of new, just laws and policies needed to ensure sustainable peace.

What's the Background to this United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security'?

The resolution was passed in October 2000. It builds on earlier Conventions, particularly:

- 1980 **CEDAW**, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- 1995 **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** which combined rights and development;
- 2000 **Millennium Development Goals**, including the need to promote gender equality and empower women;
- 2008, resolution **1820** strengthens the commitment to eradicate violence against women in conflict zones and end the impunity that surrounds the abuse of women.

What does 1325 say?

It's an 18 point resolution, urging Member States to address the issue of furthering peace and security for women and girls. It's significant in calling for representation of women at all levels of decision-making to **prevent, manage and resolve conflict**.

Typically it's summarised as the **3 Ps**:

Prevention of conflict

Protection of women and girls during conflict

Participation in peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding

But, given 1820, we can add: **Prosecution of gender-based war crimes**

How has it been used?

- as a lobbying device for activists
- as the basis for toolkits for practitioners and policy-makers
- it's been translated into 98 languages, most recently into Nepali, Bulgarian and Pashto for Afghanistan

Is 1325 relevant to Australia?

In his national security statement to the Australian Parliament on 4 December 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, identified one of our security goals as:

'Promoting an international environment, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, that is stable, peaceful and prosperous, together with a global rules-based order which enhances Australia's national interest'.

This statement reinforces a commitment from Australia to become what Rudd calls a *'creative middle power'* and Australia seeks a seat on the UN Security Council from 2013.

In such a context, **implementation of 1325** and the development of a **national action plan** will play an important role.

- A commitment to 1325 has bi-partisan support.
- Drafting of a national action plan would involve civil society and a wide range of government agencies

To date: '1325 has been strongly supported but poorly implemented. This gap between rhetoric and action has been identified by UNIFEM as the *'accountability gap'*'.

Look at the Dates:

- 2000 - 1325 accepted
- 2004 - calls for national action plan to implement 1325
- 2006-2009, 14 national action plans developed with a number of other countries developing plans but not yet in Australia.
- UN developed a System-Wide Action Plan for 2008-2009 to implement goals of 1325 throughout UN agencies.

Q: Have a look at the resolution. How relevant do you think 1325 is to Australia?

What's the advantage of a national action plan?

INSTRAW (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) suggests five advantages:

1. Comprehensiveness – whole-of-government-approach, identifying gaps and good practices, prioritising initiatives.
2. Coordination - preventing duplication and ad-hoc approaches.
3. Awareness-raising – through seminars and training.
4. Ownership - participatory processes enhance ownership and increase the chances of implementation.
5. Accountability - a clear plan specifying **who** is responsible for **what**, with **timelines** and **budget** for implementation.

So, what's the process of developing a national action plan?

This may take several years, building political will, advocacy and awareness-raising, deciding who participates, what are the terms of reference, whether gender audits are needed, and drafting the actual plan. The Discussion Paper gives some examples of how different countries organised differently. Eg,

- UK - the lead agency was the Conflict Issues Group within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but there was an Inter-departmental Whitehall 1235 Action Plan Working Group with input from NGOs.
- Canada - has an all-party Parliamentary group on Women, Peace and Security but hasn't yet delivered their official plan.
- Denmark had a draft plan drawn up by Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence.
- Netherlands had an independent Women, Security and Conflict Taskforce with experts from the public sector, politics and civil society.
- Norway demonstrated that with political will, a plan can be developed quickly. The intention was announced 31 October 2005 and a plan launched 8 March 2006.

Q: Who should lead the development of an Australian NAP and who are the key stakeholders in government and civil society?

What's the scope of the national action plan?

Prevention of conflict

Protection of women and girls during conflict

Participating in peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding and political decision-making

Prosecution of gender-based war crimes

What are the values underlying the National Action Plans? (we may have different views on this)

- Certainly, girls' and women's security is paramount, but also, what about the link between security, development, human rights and women's empowerment?
- Eg, in relation to conflict prevention, the Dutch plan notes: '*security and development influence each other so directly that one may well ask where one stops and the other begins*'.

So what are the strategic priorities in the Action Plans?

All countries have differing strategic priorities they need to consider and incorporate when developing a plan. Eg, European countries are implicated in assisting with different conflict zones, sometimes due to their post-colonial ties.

Before discussing what Australia's strategic priorities should be, it's useful to have a brief summary of the current 14 national action plans and to highlight some features that I found to be striking.

Note that Colombia, Serbia, Israel and Fiji have integrated the mandates of 1325 into policy and legislation.

I'm outlining the plans in the order in which they've been released:

Denmark (September 2005)

This plan is focused on international peacekeeping operations, particularly in Afghanistan, Uganda and Sudan:

1. increase the balance in recruitment of staff to Danish defence forces
2. protection of women and girls' rights in local areas where Danish troops are deployed
3. increase participation of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction in areas where Danish troops are deployed

UK (International Women's Day, 8 March 2006)

It's very precise, two pages, no pictures with 12 recommendations and 12 examples of what's needed.

Norway (March 2006)

It has a very clear thematic focus with specific measures on:

- international efforts in peace operations
- conflict prevention, mediation, peacebuilding
- protection and human rights

Sweden (October 2006)

This gives examples of activities for implementation at three levels:

- national;
- in EU and regional organisations;
- globally – UN

Switzerland (February 2007)

They refer only to the three Ps:

1. increased **participation** of women in peacebuilding
2. **prevention** of gender-based violence and **protection** of rights of women and girls during armed conflict
3. gender-sensitive approaches to all **peacebuilding** projects

Austria (August 2007)

Detailed with priority areas, current activities, who's responsible, status quo, indicators and timelines (we have to ask, is '*ongoing*' a sufficient timeline?).

Spain (2007)

Stresses inclusivity in peace missions and is strongly linked to development policies and involvement in the EU and UN.

Iceland (March 2008)

This is built on the main pillars of Iceland's foreign policy -- respectful human rights; increased development and cooperation; and peaceful resolution of conflict.

It makes 10 straightforward commitments.

Finland (September 2008)

It has three headings, each with three objectives with the commitment to human rights policies:

1. conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding
2. crisis management
3. strengthening, protecting and safeguarding the human rights of women and girls

Netherlands (October 2008) (evaluation 1 year NAP 1325)

Plan formulates 19 goals in five focus areas: legal; conflict prevention, mediation and reconstruction; international cooperation; peace missions; coordination.

Examines their involvement in Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Plan is in a 76 page booklet, with an **action points matrix**: focus area, goal, activity, who is responsible.

Côte d'Ivoire (2008) (Ivory Coast)

Four main priority areas with strategic goals, effect of these goals, outputs and actions needed:

1. protection of women and girls against sexual violence, including female circumcision
2. inclusion of gender issues into development policies and programmes
3. participation of women and men in reconstruction processes
4. strengthening of integration of women into decision-making processes

Uganda (December 2008)

This plan simultaneously addresses 1325 and 1820 and the Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region.

Belgium (February 2009)

Their coordination mechanism was very inclusive – a civil society working group with NGOs, academics and parliamentarians.

It includes a **matrix** outlining responsibilities of each Ministry, but no timeline, budgets or indicators.

Liberia (March 2009)

Liberia has the first woman Head of State in Africa, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who, with Elisabeth Rehn, conducted the UN independent expert assessment of Women, War and Peace. Liberia's plan had vast international support from UNIFEM, UNDP and donor support for the implementation from Austria and Italy and was conducted in a highly consultative process. Liberia is in the post-conflict recovery phase and hence 'epitomises the principles and intent of resolution 1325'.

The plan is very clear. It's constructed on 4 pillars:

1. protection, prevention, participation and empowerment, and promotion (LNAP).

They highlight 10 strategic issues.

The approach is very clear, eg:

- strategic issue: eg, government provision of psycho-social trauma counsel for women and girls affected by gender-based violence committed during war
- priority area: development of trauma training
- output: trauma counsel policies developed and in practice
- indicator: number and quality of policies, systems and procedures in place

Q: What can Australia learn from the 14 action plans released?

What might Australia's strategic priorities in a national action plan be?

In March 2009, the Australian government released an expansive document called, 'Time for Action: National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021. It has 25 strategies and 117 actions, focused on victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault. So, Australia does produce detailed action plans.

So now, I'd like us to think in detail about the Australian context for 1325.

- Australia has been able to work on conflict prevention and resolution in PNG, Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Timor-Leste.
- We're involved in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- AusAID participates in aid, development and capacity-building in a wide range of countries with a clear concern for gender-inclusivity.
- The Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police increasingly are addressing gender issues in a positive fashion.

There are a wide range of practical questions I'd like us to consider:

First, I'd like us to explore 2 general questions:

Q: What should be the Australian government's focus in developing an action plan?

The related question:

Q: Which of the four Ps (prevention, protection/peacekeeping, participation/peacebuilding/political decision-making, prosecution) should an Australian NAP focus on?

Now, let's go to some of the more specific questions:

Q: In what ways can an action plan on women, peace and security be located within a broad agenda of rights and development?

Q: How much of the plan should be regionally focused and how much concentrated on actions within the scope of national agencies?

Q: What are the strengths and weaknesses of setting measurable targets, budgets and timelines in the plan?

Q: What can be done to ensure that more women participate in peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and political decision-making?