

PREVENTION



The human and financial cost of conflict has led to the prioritizing the primacy of conflict prevention to achieve sustainable peace. Evidence shows that women can improve the efficacy of conflict prevention and early warning due to their strategic but sometimes unrecognized and underutilized roles at the family, community and at national levels. This requires integrating a gender analysis that is informed by information about - and from - women on their priorities, gender norms and roles; vulnerabilities and risks to violence, distinct conflict impacts and their gendered root causes into all actions, frameworks and guidance that informs prevention for sustainable peace.

A meaningful engagement with women is critical to develop timely and appropriate prevention initiatives across all functions in peacekeeping operations, as well as mitigating risks of conflict relapse in post conflict peacekeeping contexts. **Security Council resolutions 1325, 1889, 2122 and 2242** particularly affirm the significance of women’s leadership and participation in conflict prevention toward achieving international peace and security.

GOOD PRACTICES

MONUSCO: Regular Communication has been established by the MONUSCO’s military field commanders and leaders of women civil society organizations (CSOs). These regular fora are proving highly beneficial for both sides to facilitate mutual understanding and access information that is beneficial to early warning for better protection of women and girls.

UNMISS: Civil Affairs has actively engaged with local authorities to ensure the participation of women from faith-based organizations, traditional leaders and CSOs, in all capacity building exercises so that they can gain requisite knowledge and skills in conflict management.

Enhancing gender responsive prevention strategies

- Ensure a gender analysis is central to all conflict and political analysis that informs the various stages of peacekeeping planning, particularly in mission start-ups, strategic reviews, mandate renewals, transitions and drawdowns.
- Systematically enable and include women leaders and women civil society organizations, formally and informally, in identifying and developing strategies on conflict prevention.
- Adopt a gender responsive perspective in formal and informal efforts to violence prevention and stabilization efforts; including addressing structural exclusion and discriminatory barriers that limit women’s contributions; and gender norms, risks and vulnerabilities that perpetuate SGBV.

Barriers to gender responsive conflict prevention

Gender norms that do not ensure adequate prioritization of women’s experience and leadership in conflict prevention.

Militarised peacekeeping responses that frequently undermines the conflict prevention strategies led by women and women’s groups at community levels.

Lack of structural support and protection to women leaders who are publicly engaged in conflict prevention strategies at national, regional and global levels.

Gender blind conflict analysis that fails to acknowledge criticality of women’s leadership across the peace and conflict continuum.

PROTECTION



Women are disproportionately impacted by conflict. They are at risk to all forms of violence and exploitation. The sexual and gender based abuse and violence that women and girls experience in armed conflicts include but are not limited to rape, sexual slavery and forced prostitution. Enhanced protection of women and girls necessitates the centrality of gendered protection analysis to understand the actual impacts, threats and risks facing women and girls to inform protection responses.

Protection of women and girls is one of the foundational principles of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and is further emphasised particularly in 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106. This is based on the recognition that although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls suffer most due to their unequal status in society based on their sex. The growing number of armed conflicts and the violations associated with them have resulted in an increase in the levels of targeted threats to women and girls.

GOOD PRACTICES

MONUSCO: Protection of Civilians - Women are invited to contribute to localised protection mechanisms, such as Protection Committees, which address ways of increasing community resilience. Civil Affairs advocate for women's representation in local protection mechanisms where women can advocate for their own protection.

MINUSTAH: Community Violence Reduction (CVR) team established a mechanism for reporting on gender related issues within all CVR projects and activities. The CVR monitoring and evaluation system sets gender targets and indicators to measure the gender-related impact of any activity from implementation to evaluation. This helps identify to what extent protection mechanisms are working for women, contributing to their sense of security.

Strategies for enhancing women's protection in peacekeeping

- Identify and implement specific actions in planning and implementation of protection of civilian strategies that address the protection risks and threats faced by women and girls; including strengthening the institutional response mechanisms/referral pathway for SGBV survivors.
- Strengthen capacity of all personnel and national institutions to address women's rights; provide contextual guidance to address risks of SGBV faced by women in girls during armed conflict; invest in analysis that identifies structural issues that perpetuate SGBV.
- Contribute to strengthening and developing gender responsive security, justice and corrections institutions; invest in reforms and legislative frameworks that enable women's rights and security; ensure judicial and administrative infrastructure that protects women.

Obstacles to women's protection

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is pervasive and institutionally accepted as a consequence of armed conflict by armed parties.

Weak national systems and institutions that limit accountability and perpetuate impunity of perpetrators.

Lack of information and access to justice mechanisms and gender insensitive legal infrastructure

Social and cultural barriers that stigmatise survivors of SGBV.

Inherent exclusion and discrimination of women that limits their voice and access to services.

PARTICIPATION



Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security calls for an increase in meaningful participation and representation of women at all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and the achievement of international peace and security. There is a strong correlation between the status of women and the extent of their participation in peace and security related decision-making processes. Therefore, integrating a transformative gender analysis that enables the meaningful participation of women across all political, economic and social structures leads to inclusive, effective and sustainable peace.

In response, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Services facilitate women's participation across all functions and components of peacekeeping operations. This includes enabling women as candidates and voters in political processes, in national governance and security sector structures, in peace processes, as oversight observers in ceasefire agreements and in conflict management and prevention.

GOOD PRACTICES

MINUSCA: The Mission developed a database to register women eligible for political positions in the Central African Republic. The women were offered training and mentorship on political engagement to support their entry into political life and advance the representation of women in national structures and institutions.

Strategies to enhance women's participation in peacekeeping

- Prioritize inclusion and participatory models that optimize women's engagement as change agents across the peace and security processes and empower them to deliver and be part of transformative change processes as decision makers.
- Provide an enabling, protective and secure environment that optimizes women's voices in security related processes such as voters and candidates in elections; overseeing ceasefire commitments and implementation of peace agreements; security sector reforms initiatives; protection of civilian initiatives; and as ex-combatants advocating for gender responsive DDR strategies.
- Invest in dedicated capacity strengthening approaches through training; advocacy and awareness campaigns; strategic partnerships with women's organizations and gender responsive laws and legislations; gender equality provisions; CSOs at local, national and regional levels to leverage opportunities that enhance and enable women's participation in peace and security decisions.

Obstacles to women's participation

Gender norms and expectations that marginalize women from peace and security decision making spaces.

Stereotyping of women as victims in conflict.

Systemic and deepened violence and intimidation against women in conflict contexts.

Structural factors that restrict women's access to resources and information.

Discriminatory laws and institutions that limit women's engagement.

SEXUAL & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In armed conflicts, the structural power inequalities that contribute to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) greatly deepen and are manifested in various forms including as Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV). SCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 calls upon peacekeeping operations to act to combat SGBV, particularly against women and children and to prosecute perpetrators.

By addressing structural gender norms and expectations that fuel conflict and insecurity, peacekeeping missions contribute to preventing, mitigating and responding to SGBV. To enable a holistic approach, the Gender Advisers work with Women Protection Advisers to ensure the interconnectedness between broader SGBV and CRSV (as a distinct type of SGBV) through recognising the latter as a result of exacerbated structural inequalities brought by armed conflicts.

GOOD PRACTICES

UNAMID: Women Protection Networks - Women share early warning signs with the Mission for preventive action. They coordinate with UNAMID Military escorts in mapping the hot spots and escort / patrol schedules. This has directly improved their safety and security and allowed the Mission to respond quickly to threats to women in the camps.

Strategies for enhancing prevention of SGBV

- Invest in targeted capacity strengthening, guidance and tools to integrate gender analysis and actions across peacekeeping functions to provide a better understanding of gender norms and expectations which in-turn enables identifying, recognizing and thereby mitigating SGBV risks.
- Invest in community informed early warning mechanisms and inclusion of SGBV specific indicators and reporting benchmarks in all functions to ensure a timely identification of SGBV risks.
- Strengthen the legislative frameworks and capacity of national institutions such as legal, judicial and administrative sectors to respond to SGBV and uphold women's rights.
- Engage, collaborate and enable representation of women's groups and their collective leadership to meaningfully participate in developing an enabling environment that prevents and mitigates risks to SGBV.

Barriers to SGBV prevention

Fragmented analysis that ignores gendered structural causes and gendered roles and expectations that predispose women and girls to SGBV.

Weak national institutions, laws and legislations that do not criminalize SGBV.

Ad-hoc engagement of women's leadership in peacekeeping decisions and in the identification of preventive measures for SGBV, within the realm of peace and security strategies