PARTICIPATION

UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the subsequent seven resolutions (SCRs 1820; 1888; 1889; 1960; 2106; 2122, 2242 and 2467) that collectively make up with WPS Agenda, calls for an increase in full, equal and 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 security, political, economic and social structures will support a more inclusive, effective and sustainable peace.

The Department of Peace Operations facilitates women's participation across all functions and components of peacekeeping operations. This includes supporting women's full, equal, and meaningful participation as candidates and voters in peace and political processes, in national governance and security sector structures, as oversight observers in ceasefire agreements and in conflict management and prevention.

GOOD PRACTICE

MINUSCA: The Mission developed a database to register women eligible for political positions in the Central African Republic. These women received training and mentorship on political engagement that supported their entry into political life and contributed to advancing the representation of women in national structures and institutions.

Strategies to enhance women's participation in peacekeeping

- Prioritise inclusion and participatory models that optimise women's engagement as change agents in peace and security processes and empower women to be part of transformative change processes as decision makers.

- Provide an enabling, protective and secure environment that elevates women's voices in security related processes including: voting and running in elections; overseeing ceasefire commitments and implementation of peace agreements; engaging in security sector reform initiatives; participating in protection of civilian initiatives; and advocating as ex-combatants for gender responsive DDR strategies.

- Invest in dedicated capacity strengthening approaches through: training; advocacy and awareness campaigns; strategic partnerships with women's organisations and gender responsive laws and legislations; gender equality provisions in legislation; and CSOs at local, national and regional levels in order 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 marginalise women from peace and security decision making spaces.

Stereotyping of women as victims in conflict.

Heightened systemic violence against, and intimidation of, women in conflict contexts.

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

Discriminatory laws and institutions that limit women's engagement.

PROTECTION

Women are disproportionately impacted by conflict. They are at risk of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and sexual exploitation including rape, sexual slavery and forced prostitution. Enhanced protection of women and girls necessitates a gendered protection analysis in order to understand the actual impacts, threats and risks facing women and girls to inform effective 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 in 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2467. This principle is based on the recognition that although entire communities suffer the consequences of conflict, women and girls suffer most due to their unequal status in society. The growing number of conflicts and the violations associated with them have resulted in an increase in the levels of targeted threats and violence against women and girls.

GOOD PRACTICES

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

MINUSTAH: The 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, and 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 and referral pathway for SGBV survivors.

- Strengthen capacity of all personnel and national institutions to address women's rights; provide contextual guidance to address risk of SGBV faced by women in girls during 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 conflict by armed groups.

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.

Exclusion and structural discrimination against women that limits their voice and access to services.

PREVENTION

The human and financial cost of conflict has made conflict prevention and the achievement of sustainable peace a priority. Evidence shows that women can improve the efficacy of conflict prevention and early warning due to their strategic yet under recognised and under utilised efforts at family, community and national levels. Ensuring women's capacities are fully employed requires the integration of a gender perspective in conflict analysis. A gender conflict analysis is informed by engaging women to discuss their priorities, their experience of gender norms and gender-based discrimination, including gender-based violence, and the different ways in which conflict impacts them. A gender conflict analysis also addressed the root causes from a gender perspective and ensure that all actions, frameworks and guidance that informs prevention for sustainable peace considers the specific experiences, capacities and roles of women.

Meaningful engagement of women and women's organisations is thus critical to developing timely and appropriate prevention initiatives across all functions in peacekeeping operations, as well as mitigating risks of a resurgence of conflict. Security Councils resolutions 1325, 1888, 1889, 2122, 2242 and 2467 particularly affirm the significance of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention toward acheiving international peace and security.

GOOD PRACTICES

MONUSCO: MONUSCO's military field commanders and leaders established regular communication with women civil society organisations (CSOs). These regular fora have been highly beneficial in facilitating mutual understanding and sharing of information beneficial to early warning for better protection of women and girls.

UNMISS: Civil Affairs actively engaged with local authorities to ensure the participation of women from faith-based organisations, civil society organisations and traditional leaders in all capacity building exercises so that they can gain 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 startups, strategic reviews, mandate renewals, transitions and drawdowns.

- Systematically enable and include women leaders and women civil society organisations, formally and informally, in identifying and developing strategies on conflict prevention.

- Adopt a gender responsive perspective in formal and informal violence prevention as well as stabilisation efforts, which includes addressing structural exclusion and discriminatory barriers that limit women's contributions and gender norms, risks and vulnerabilities that perpetuate Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

Barriers to gender responsive conflict prevention

Gender norms that disregard women's experience and leadership in conflict prevention.

Militarised peacekeeping responses that undermine conflict prevention strategies led by women's civil society organisations at community levels.

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

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

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, 1820 and 2467 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 so the Mission can take preventive action. They coordinate with UNAMID Military escorts in mapping the hot spots and escort/patrol schedules. This has directly improved women and girl's safety and security and allowed the Mission to respond quickly to threats to women in camps.

Strategies for enhancing prevention of SGBV

- Invest in targeted capacity strengthening, guidance and tools to integrate gender analysis and actions across peacekeeping functions. This will provide a better understanding of gender norms and expectations which in turn will enable better identification and mitigation of 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 organisations as well as their collective leadership to meaningfully participate in developing an enabling environment that prevents and mitigates risks of SGBV.

Barriers to SGBV prevention

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

Weak national institutions, laws and legislations that do not criminalise 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