

WHITE BOOK

Pathways towards Sustainable Peace

Building United Nations Security
Council Resolution 1325 on the Women,
Peace and Security Agenda in Cyprus

.....

Guidelines of Best Practices 2017



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UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established in 2010 to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.



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The contributors of this text are women involved in civil society and peacebuilding who volunteered their time, skills and expertise including many of whom are working mothers that re-arranged child care in order to participate. We do not take this lightly and value their time as they go about their double day of work. We are humbled and grateful for the enthusiasm, passion and commitment of all the participants to push the women, peace and security agenda forward.

INTRODUCTION

United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) 1325 unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security', which mandates that women should be participants in the making and keeping of peace in the local, national and international arenas. It is the first time this international male-dominated body recognized the gendered nature of war, conflict, peace and security. The unanimous adoption of such a document is a testament to the recognition of gender inequities and inequalities as well as an acknowledgement of women's contributions to preventing and resolving conflicts around the world. Furthermore UNSCR 1325 addresses the impact of war on women and girls and the section on *protection* includes women's rights, protection of women from gender-based violence particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuses. It also stresses the pivotal role women and girls play in conflict management, and sustainable peace as well as addressing women as leaders, and active agents. Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' is a landmark in that it is the first time that the Security Council focuses its attention exclusively to women, as agents in their own right in situations of conflict and in transition from conflict. The resolution is significant not only for recognizing the disproportionate and gender-specific impact of conflict on women and girls in the prevention and resolution of conflicts but also for highlighting the undervalued role of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. In Cyprus, this resolution is of paramount importance and there is need for the implementation of 1325. Of note is that Cyprus has endorsed but has not yet developed a National Action Plan (NAP). For the increased practical implementation of UNCR 1325 the Security Council adopted a series of more relevant resolution such as 1820, 1888 and 1890. The challenge is to ensure that 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are made relevant to the context of Cyprus and in a format that is accessible to all and to develop an effective NAP to benefit the whole of the Cypriot society.

The Cypriot Context: Where are the women in the Cyprus peace process?

Cypriot women are still missing from the official negotiation table despite the UNSC Resolution 1325 recommendations to UN member-states which Cyprus has also endorsed. Both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot negotiating teams have ignored for many years the relevance of UNSCR 1325 as part of the pathway towards a sustainable and durable solution to the Cyprus Problem. While the term “gender” includes women, girls, men and boys, an adequate understanding of its impact in formal discussions and possible solutions to the Cyprus Problem amongst the members of the negotiating team is not fully appreciated. Thus the context of the Cyprus peace negotiations lacks a gender perspective and thus fails to address gender equality issues in all the chapters under discussion-governance, property, citizenship, economy and security. Women appointed in the working groups and the technical committees dealing with the talks are few. This also reflects the low participation of women in all other government institutions and decision-making bodies-only one woman minister and only seven women in the Legislature. In the Turkish Cypriot community there are three female “members of parliament” and one female “speaker of parliament”.

Civil society initiatives to include UNSCR 1325 in the peace process

Some Cypriot Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), specifically those focusing on women’s issues have engaged for decades to advocate specifically for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the peace negotiations and for gender mainstreaming in general. One of such organizations has been the bicomunal Hands Across the Divide (HAD, formally established in 2001) and the Gender Advisory Team (GAT, established in 2009). Both these organizations have taken on the responsibility of promoting peace, reconciliation and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Cyprus context.

Hands Across the Divide is a bicomunal women’s non-governmental organization which first came together in 2001 during a two-day seminar titled “Communication in Divided Societies: What Women can Do”. The notable feminist and activist Dr. Cynthia Cockburn led the workshop. One of the urgent needs of all women participants was “We must campaign for our human right to meet each other and work together, we cannot depend on patriarchy and militarism to give us permission.” (For more elaboration and discussion see: Agathangelou 2003; Hadjipavlou 2004; Hadjipavlou 2006, 2010a, Hadjipavlou and Mertan 2010b. For GAT’s work see briefs and events at: www.gat1325.org; Demetriou and Hadjipavlou 2017, Demetriou and Hadjipavlou 2015, 2016).

Pathways towards Sustainable Peacebuilding

The purpose of the Pathways towards Sustainable Peacebuilding conference was to both build on all previous women’s efforts, initiatives and discussions and to bring women experts in the field of politics and civil society from multiple ethnicities and perspectives to gain a better

understanding of UNSCR 1325: what it means, why it matters, but more importantly how it is implemented together in the everyday lives of women in Cyprus. The workshops were attended by women from civil society and the public sector, including educators, lawyers, journalists and activists who developed an integrated and inclusive dialogue on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and what that would look like in a post-solution Cyprus. There were 4 workshops each responsible for one of the 4 pillars of UNSCR 1325: Participation, Protection, Prevention, Relief and Recovery. Under each pillar of 1325, the conference sub-themes as it relates to the resolution included the following:

- Participation
 - Institutions (religious, politics), LGBT
- Protection
 - Violence against Women, Gender-Based Violence, Women in Peacekeeping/ Peacebuilding
- Prevention
 - Education, Media/ Technology
- Relief and Recovery
 - Economy, Urbanization, Literature & the Arts

The result of this collective work is the 'White Book of Best Practice' which offers guidelines for the women, peace and security agenda in Cyprus. Its aspiration is to promote a set of good practices to advance the women, peace and security agenda as a core dimension of the larger discussion of the Cyprus peace building process.

WORKSHOP I

Participation

The Participation workshop was led by Sabine Freizer, UN Women Policy Advisor, Governance, Peace and Security for Europe and Central Asia and Meral Birinci-Sonan, Barrister-at-Law

a) Participation in the negotiation process

Participants of the group included members of the Gender Technical Committee¹ and they responded to the questions put forward by the members of the Gender Equality Committee, informed of the method of their work as well as work that has been done so far. Some

¹ The Gender Technical Committee (GETC) was established in August 2015 and made up of women and men from CSOs and academia from both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. They were appointed as part of the ongoing confidence building measures (CBMs). Media coverage of the issue of gender in the peace talks is minimal at best and dialogue with local women's organizations and other CSOs is restricted as GETC meetings are not public due to the work guidelines and its mandate. GETC have submitted documents and proposals to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot negotiating teams and have been assured that they are taken into consideration. Needless to say that more flexibility and transparency is needed to make discussable these proposals.

participants noted an overall lack of transparency in the negotiation process although it is generally understood that the talks by nature have to be protected by a certain degree of confidentiality. The balance between access to information and confidentiality is accepted as a difficult one to achieve. There are concerns that excessive secrecy and non-engagement with the public might prove an obstacle to “selling” any agreement reached.

It was generally accepted that women groups/NGOs/civil society should have more of a role to play in the political process and that more should be done/demanded in terms of communicating views, concerns and proposals to the negotiating team/leaders.

b) Participation in politics/decision-making mechanisms

- The general and familiar problem of insufficient participation of women in politics and political decisions was examined.
- The use of quotas was mentioned and a comparison with political party participation where some political parties are already implementing quotas.
- The point was raised that women assume the traditional roles imposed on them and become less demanding, accepting their low participation and “leaving politics to the men”. For example when demanding higher participation or quotas, women who are 50% of society settle for quotas of under 50%.

c) How to increase and improve participation

- The present wide range of active women’s/feminist NGOs and initiatives can increase collaboration and develop networks to produce proposals and activities for gender equality.
- If the talks produce an acceptable agreement that will be taken to referenda, there is endless potential for women collaborating within and between each community for the purpose of a desired solution.

d) Action Plans

In line with the general conclusion that women groups/NGOs/civil society should assume more roles in the political processes including the negotiations, the following actions were proposed;

- Setting up an ad-hoc women’s group to work on possible recommendations to be communicated to the negotiating team/leaders.
- Seeking funding to start an awareness raising campaign and consultations with broader society
- Supporting women candidates in elections by facilitating training and coaching programs for them (including media training and building coalitions with media outlets) and following commitments were made
- Advocating for religious freedom in a secular state

- Demanding an organic and flexible constitution that can adapt to changing realities
- Supporting a “happy, reunited, environmental and animal friendly, forward looking, open, modern, European, Feminist Cyprus.

e) Achievements

The following were noted as the achievements of the women’s rights movement in Cyprus:

- Existence of a network of bi-communal women
- External support and funding
- Gains in LGBTI rights, recognition and visibility.

f) Challenges

During the discussions of the group the following challenges were raised:

- Women’s rights and women empowerment are limited
- There is a lack of awareness of gender equality – education perpetuates stereotypes
- There is a lack of inclusion of women in the peace process due to a lack of transparency, trust, inclusivity and participation. For those that are part of the process, they feel isolated and lonely, lack of contacts with broader civil society
- There are an insufficient number of women in government and parliament to advocate with.

WORKSHOP II

Protection

The Protection workshop was led by Rada Boric, Director at the Centre for Women’s Studies in Zagreb, and Susana Pavlou, Executive Director at The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) Cyprus.

While noting that exploring a pillar in isolation becomes a challenge for seeing the big picture, it was nevertheless a necessary and useful task in focusing and drilling down to the fundamental issues within the Protection pillar. The next stage of the process is envisioned as a process to work in combining the work of the pillars into a cohesive action plan that can be taken up either nationally or regionally.

Significantly and most importantly, this group of women included not only Cypriot women who have been part of the active grassroots for some time and in some cases for decades, but also women who were taking the step for the first time. This was an important grounding for the group as it ensured that assumptions, back-stories and ‘unsaid’s were not allowed to undercurrent the discussion.

While looking at Protection as a whole, Cyprus as a case in point was given due attention. In the main, the role of women was emphasized as needing to be more interwoven at all levels. This was based on the presumption that since UN Resolution 1325 recognizes the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peace building. Therefore, the overarching action point of the Protection pillar group is the demand that women's expertise and knowledge be utilized and integrated through direct consultation and active participation at all levels; grassroots through to government. The other points are as follows:

1. Women have experience in working with women. We demand that these skills be utilized to their fullest extent by the government – mere acknowledgment of women's potential role is not enough. This includes, but is not limited to, women being actively and directly involved in policy making around peace issues and in particular on "Protection". This can be achieved, firstly, through measures ensuring women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making. Secondly, an active and intentional focus on increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. Both strategies should be addressed by governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, research and academic institutions, sub-regional and regional bodies, and non-governmental and international organizations. A case in point example would be that in parliament, a 30% representation of women is considered a level of critical mass for women to have a process impact.
2. Women need to be protected from abuse and exploitation. Although there are many factors that contribute to lack of protection and exposure to exploitation, economic insecurity is a major element. Protection of women through building social and economic capacity via empowerment, resilience and capacity building centers will offer new ways of self-determination. Providing women with an infrastructure within which they can learn to empower themselves and make choices about their own future from wellbeing to career choice. Examples of this in some areas could include skills building such as learning computers; programming, as well as capacity building in business skills, team building and leadership.
3. A major factor of active protection is knowing your rights and the rights of others. While the UN, as well as other agencies, have a plethora of individual, group, civil and social rights, many women remain nevertheless unaware either of their existence or of their right to exercise them. Therefore, the group demands that vigorous communication and education measures should immediately be put into action to ensure that girls and women, boys and men, are informed and educated and trained on the why and how of the goal of gender equality. The target is that gender equality is understood and appreciated as a fundamental right, and that girls and women internalize these rights so as to be able to claim them, and every boy and man also understand women's equal rights, so as to be able to promote and protect these.

4. Whilst the Protection pillar can be seen to mainly focus on the point of war and crisis situations, this group believes it is also important to consider factors that affect women post crisis. Not only because this has an impact on society as a whole but more importantly because of the direct impact on the women in the long-term process of healing and empowerment. Therefore, we demand a system of psychological support processes that help women who have and/or are experiencing violence and/or abuse as part of an ongoing, latent, or stagnant crisis situation as in the case of Cyprus. This entails specially trained professionals with a focus on building a healing process from trauma, either current or archaic, so as to counter-balance a possible state practice of sustaining and building a fear process on grief and pain, for political gain.

Summary

Overall, the Protection pillar group explored the vulnerability of girls and women in the midst of crisis or war as well as the long-term impact that follows any crisis. It was important to the group to look forward to how to implement change in a practical and useful way drawing in particular on current women's strengths not just at grass roots levels but also across the various strata of decision-making, both horizontally and vertically. The four main points mentioned above were seen to be a viable spring-board for a discussion that could lead to an impactful national action plan, specifically in Cyprus.

WORKSHOP III

Prevention

The Prevention workshop was led by Gina Torry, Gender, Peace and Security expert and Katherine Toumbourou Freelance Journalist.

Militarism

Militarism and nationalism are ingrained in Cyprus and reinforce a conflict culture. In the prevention of conflict we propose:

Elimination of the dominant masculine model of 'heroism' as well as the dominant model of 'femininity' i.e. men are expected to be the protectors of the nation, and women are viewed as vulnerable groups. Women, on the other hand, are expected to protect the family and bear the pain and suffering (women of the missing). For this, we propose to focus on changes in the way the institution of the army/ military is currently operating.

Building new images and symbols of peaceful coexistence, cooperation and diversity (peace museums, peace parks, etc.) are a must and need to be established.

Since militarism and nationalism are fed by patriarchal structures, we propose focusing on new ways of connecting that are inclusive and non-hierarchical and relational, i.e. build alternative structures that embrace multiple masculinities and femininities. This can be done through education and the media (e.g. island-wide TV station whose principles are based on peace journalism and gender equality).

Change the 'defense culture' to include human security which means the elimination of all forms of violence – direct and indirect. For this to happen, we need gender budgeting and peace budgeting.

We need an entire revisiting of the existence of the military structures within Cyprus. For all this to materialise, we would propose the formation of a Gender Military Advisory Board within the government and specifically within the Ministry of Defense – with an emphasis on gender inclusiveness and broadening the training and education to include human security and provisions of UNSCR 1325.

Violence

Any form of violence is a human rights violation. In Cyprus, we have experiences of different forms of violence. In the prevention of conflict we propose to:

- Stop socialization of the new generations into the conflict culture;
- Create mechanisms for recognition and healing past wounds and grievances at all societal levels;
- Demand leaders to make a public apology for what one community did to the other;
- Safeguard the physical security of every citizen in daily life in every occasion and in every part of the island;
- Sensitize the media on conflict-based violence.

Education

Education Systems (public and private) that explicitly and/or implicitly promote a culture of conflict and gender inequality and perpetuate the conflict (e.g. the 'heroic' masculine myth that must be dismantled; patriarchy-based education) need to be addressed.

There have been a series of programs so far - we propose an expansion of this into broader society. In the prevention of conflict we propose: A long-term pilot program/intervention based on peace education (i.e. deals explicitly with matters of reconciliation, gender violence, militarization, deconstructing stereotypes and military images, promotes peaceful coexistence between communities, reconciliation, acceptance of the other, etc.).

This pilot program must have tangible and measurable results (before and after study, control group). The aim is to create young 'ambassadors of peace' to represent and problem-solve within school settings and society. We also propose creating a follow-up system and support for these children, which continues after and outside the school environment. The end goal would

be to implement the program on a larger scale at schools throughout Cyprus so as to gradually create a peace culture.

Centre for Cyprus Women

Currently, women's efforts to be included in the Cyprus peace process are commendable yet sporadic and few. Recognizing that women's empowerment is crucial for stable peace and security we recommend a physical space where women's voices can safely be heard and effectively amplified. The 'Centre for Cyprus Women' will be open to women and gender equality NGOs as well as all women of Cyprus. It will serve to facilitate the interaction of interested parties regarding women's issues, gender equality and empowerment by offering also lifelong learning opportunities and promoting active participation in decision-making processes. This space can be situated in the buffer zone giving access to all groups of women from both sides of the divide. It will act as a safe space to empower and will cater the following:

- Women's self-awareness and empowerment; to equip them with the necessary skills to break the glass ceiling in the business world, the peace process and politics. This includes training, coaching and mentoring on peace building, reconciliation and general empowerment.
- A one-stop shop of information on women's rights and gender equality issues, facilitating in the sharing of information among organizations who work on such issues and grassroots. This also includes an archive of all gender based research held in Cyprus.
- A focal point centre for NGOs and informal groups to work on women's and gender issues, facilitating in their coordination and developing projects and campaigns that will allow more women in leadership positions.
- A safe space for women to mingle, reconcile & heal through peer support and recovery groups. This includes also a children's play area.
- A uniting focal point to develop actions to lobby various stakeholders, e.g. authorities, Gender Focal Point, etc. Measures on how to facilitate access of more women to leadership positions will also be examined.

WORKSHOP IV

Relief and Recovery

The Relief and Recovery workshop was lead by Yeshim Harris, Director at Engi Conflict Management and Pembe Mentesh, Communications Expert/Local Activist.

This workshop adopted an interactive approach called Problem Tree Method.

Firstly the leader of the workshop gave a brief summary of what UN Security Council Resolution 1325 meant. The following aspect of 1325 was specially underlined:

That 1325 was where for the first time, the UN Security Council publicly acknowledged the role of women:

- not only as victims of conflict
- but as actors that can bring change and transform violent conflict.

Within this, the proactive role of women in promoting 1325 in Cyprus was taken as the main frame of the discussion. The workshop started with Albert Einstein's words:

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." in order to encourage the participants to seek approaches which provided out-of-the-box innovative ways of thinking.

Definition of the Problem/Introduction

The problem to be addressed in this session was defined as *UNSCR 1325 not being implemented in Cyprus. The framework of 'Relief and Recovery' pillar was defined as referring to the aftermath of a peace process:*

What happens after the negotiations for ending conflict was over, which is the stage where foundations for the future were laid and plans were made for governance and economic recovery.

It was agreed that the lack of women's involvement in peace processes in Cyprus is symptomatic of the fact that there is a lack of women in leadership roles in general. This is directly related to the lack of gender mainstreaming and gender stereotypes, as well as the lack of resources for gender initiatives. The victimization and re-victimization of women as part of the conflict was also seen as obstacle to women's effective involvement in the public sphere. In light of the above it was noted that in a post-solution context these issues would need to be addressed if a peace agreement is to be effectively implemented with the full participation of women.

Suggested Root Causes

The suggested root causes the group came up with were as follows and confirmed unanimously as applying to both communities:

1. Lack of resources, financial and other
2. Lack of will to implement
3. Patriarchal and cultural stereotypes in society structures
4. Lack of gender mainstreaming
5. Lack of access to information and knowledge
6. Lack of communication from the leaders about the concerns of each community
7. The disconnect between the negotiation process and the issues that affect daily life
8. Lack of awareness and education about gender and equality
9. Vulnerability, victimization and re- victimization
10. Lack of acknowledgment of artistic expression.

Suggested Proposals

1. Empower local authorities financially and otherwise to engage women through a community engagement programme. This way the resources will be redistributed properly and quotas can be introduced.

These programmes can cover:

- Raising awareness about 1325 and related issues
 - Education to address the issues around cultural stereotypes
 - Civic education programmes on human rights, cultural diversity and gender
 - Programmes to raise the agency of women,
 - Volunteering programmes to make up for missing resources
2. Review the way history is taught in schools through a gender awareness lens, for example talk about women in arts, women leaders, and musicians.

This review should have a focus on new narratives and embrace the local identities on the island of today.

3. Establish new gender sensitive constitutional provisions which include:
 - Identifying gaps with regards to gender issues
 - Introducing mandatory regular systematic reviews regarding the usefulness of laws
 - Introducing modern gender mainstreaming
4. Make efficient use of existing both academic and artistic resources that address the concerns of the communities. A lot of data about what needs to be done to understand the grassroots concerns and especially with regard to gender issues is already available.
5. Create processes to give voice to marginalized groups. For example, civic processes in urban and rural areas. There are many examples around the world such as community discussion groups in South Africa.
6. Create a 'Solution for Dummies' kit to explain the advantages and consequences of a solution as soon as possible and distribute widely.
7. Include the work of NGOs in the existing consultation mechanisms. Create information campaigns in the media and online. Create gender sensitive information campaigns.
8. Explore gender sensitive mechanisms for victim reparation looking at international best practices. These mechanisms should be victim centered as a way to forgive and heal. These should be a part of the solution process and respectful of local sensitivities.

CONCLUSION

Resources need to be allocated to meet the humanitarian minimum standards in gender mainstreaming and this includes leadership training and promotion of women in leadership roles, provisions for a gender sensitive federal constitution, community programs in support of women and girls, and gender sensitive media campaigns/education programs. It is imperative that as part of a post conflict process, gender sensitive victim reparation practices are put in place to address the victimization of women and to ensure that women and girls are supported as agents for change. Men need to be actively encouraged to be involved in the implementation of the above processes.

Consequently, the Guidelines of Best Practice is a means of contributing to gender awareness; gender equality and equity as well as positive social change; the different levels at which women mobilize for the participation and inclusion of women's perspectives at the peace negotiating table; and the difference between peace-building and official negotiations that serves as a solutions driven approach to gender mainstreaming in Cyprus.

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