

## Gender-related aspects of prevention of armed conflicts

[A5-0308/2000](#)

### European Parliament resolution on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution (2000/2025(INI))

#### The European Parliament,

- having regard to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, and to the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action resulting from the World Conference on Human Rights of 14-25 June 1993, in particular paragraphs I 28-29 and II 38 on systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy in situations of armed conflict,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979, to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 20 December 1993, and to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989,
- having regard to the General Assembly Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984, and to the General Assembly Declaration 3318 on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict of 14 December 1974, in particular paragraph 4 which calls for effective measures against persecution, torture, violence and degrading treatment of women,
- having regard to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1265 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict of 17 September 1999, in particular paragraph 14, requesting that United Nations personnel involved in peacekeeping and peace-building activities have appropriate training in human rights law, including gender-related provisions,
- having regard to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3519 on Women's Participation in the Strengthening of International Peace and Security of 15 December 1975, and to the United Nations General Assembly Declaration 37/63 on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation of 3 December 1982, in particular paragraph 12 on practical measures to increase women's representation in peace efforts,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action resulting from the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women of 4-15 September 1995, in particular critical concern area E on Women and Armed Conflict, and to the outcome document of the United Nations Beijing +5 Special Session on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of 5-9 June 2000, in particular paragraph 13 on obstacles to women's equal participation in peace-building efforts, and paragraph 124 on a 50/50 gender balance in peacekeeping missions and peace negotiations,
- having regard to the International Criminal Court resulting from the Rome Statute of 1998, in particular Articles 7 and 8 defining rape, sexual slavery, forced impregnation, forced sterilisation and any other form of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes, including as a form of torture and a grave war crime, whether they occur in a systematic or non-methodical manner, and whether these acts occur in international or internal conflicts,
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols of 1977, stating that women will be protected against rape, and any other form of sexual assault,
- having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, in particular Articles 3 and 4, which prohibit inhuman treatment or punishment and torture, as well as slavery,

- having regard to the European Council resolution on Integrating Gender in Development of 20 December 1995, in particular paragraph 19 stressing that a gender perspective must be paramount in emergency operations and crisis prevention,
  - having regard to the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the United Nations Millennium Forum on the Strengthening of the United Nations for the 21st Century of 26 May 2000, in particular paragraph 11 of section B on gender training for all peacekeeping personnel,
  - having regard to its resolution on women in decision-making of 2 March 2000<sup>(1)</sup>, in particular recital I and paragraph 14 on women's participation in peace-keeping, peace-building and conflict-preventing activities,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 April 1984<sup>(2)</sup> on the application of the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees, in particular paragraphs 1 and 2 on providing refugee status to women who face harsh or inhumane treatment because they are considered to have transgressed the social mores of the society in which they live,
  - having regard to its resolution of 17 December 1992<sup>(3)</sup> on the rape of women in the former Yugoslavia, in particular paragraph 2 calling for the recognition of rape as a war crime and crime against humanity,
  - having regard to its resolution of 11 March 1993<sup>(4)</sup> on the rape of women in former Yugoslavia, in particular paragraph 14 calling for proper medical support for women rape victims, specifically facilities for termination of pregnancy, where that is the woman's wish,
  - having regard to the outcome documents of its public hearing of 26-27 June 1995 on gender specific human rights violations, and its public hearing of 18 February 1993 on rape as a war crime in Bosnia, in particular their recognition of the upheaval that refugee status brings to the lives of women, and the latter's call for financial compensation for victims of rape in armed conflict,
  - having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities ([A5-0308/2000](#)),
- A. whereas the Geneva Convention does not refer to acts of sexual violence as a "grave breach crime" or as a specific form of torture thereby making it ambiguous whether sexual violence is always considered a war crime,
- B. whereas women develop strength, power and flexibility in certain situations, recognise abuses and are prepared to take initiatives for their families and for society, thereby bringing about positive changes ,
- C. whereas the United Nations General Assembly Declaration 3318 on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict is technically vague, failing to mention sexual violence or the specific needs of refugee women,
- D. whereas 4/5 of the world's refugees are women and children and 90% of war victims are now civilians, mainly women and children,
- E. whereas rape and sexual violence have been shown to be highly prevalent in refugee camps in, for example, Kenya and Tanzania,
- F. whereas rape as a weapon of war has been documented throughout history, most recently in the former Yugoslavia, Sudan, Liberia, Uganda, Peru, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Bangladesh, as well as in other conflicts,
- G. whereas a wide spectrum of studies demonstrate that the mobilisation of male soldiers - both warring factions and peacekeepers - contributes to the growth of prostitution around military bases and army camps, subsequently increasing child prostitution, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases,
- H. whereas armed factions in conflicts across the globe, for instance in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan, have captured young girls and women and forced them into sexual slavery,

I. whereas women who are raped during war are often stigmatised by their local communities and often not provided with health care or psychological trauma services,

J. whereas several peacekeepers from European Union Member States have been dismissed from United Nations missions for acts of sexual violence in Somalia and Mozambique,

K. whereas only four European Union Member States - Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg - have ratified the Rome Statute out of the sixty states necessary to authorise the International Criminal Court (ICC),

L. whereas, as a consequence of armed conflict, the breakdown of socio-economic systems and increased levels of poverty, trafficking of women is a growing phenomenon in areas of conflict,

M. whereas women's peace initiatives often cross warring factions - as in the Middle East, Cyprus and Northern Ireland - and are often undertaken at great risk in areas of extreme conflict - as in Sudan, Lebanon and Russia,

N. whereas women are often marginalized or excluded from negotiation and diplomacy aimed at ending armed conflicts, as was the case in peace talks in, for example, Burundi, Tajikistan, and most recently in Kosovo,

O. whereas the rights, priorities and interests of women are frequently ignored in formal peace negotiations,

P. whereas women's full participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all peace initiatives is vital; whereas their participation in peacekeeping missions has not been numerically significant until the 1990s, the increased presence of women in the civilian, military and police components of peacekeeping operations has resulted in improved relations with local communities, which is essential to the creation of a sustainable peace,

Q. whereas donor attention during demobilisation of military forces and warring factions generally focuses on men, resulting in women often being excluded from aid and development programs associated with reconstruction,

R. whereas the needs of girl soldiers - who have often been raped, used as sex slaves, had unwanted pregnancies, have venereal diseases and/or AIDS - are generally not incorporated in demobilisation initiatives,

S. stressing that sustainable peace is in many ways contingent on community-based involvement and ownership of the peace process - a process which can only be legitimate if women are equally involved - and that the role of the international community in supporting civil society networks that link local, national, and international initiatives is crucial to the peace process,

## **I. The protection of war affected populations**

1. Condemns systematic rape, forced impregnation, sexual slavery, and all other forms of gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict;

2. Condemns the sexual misconduct of soldiers involved in peacekeeping operations;

3. Condemns the use of child soldiers of both sexes;

4. Calls upon the Member States to take all necessary steps to amend Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Protocol to define rape, forced impregnation, sexual slavery, forced sterilization, and any other forms of sexual violence as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions;

5. Calls upon Member States to ratify the Treaty of Rome authorising an International Criminal Court, which formally recognises rape, forced impregnation, forced sterilisation, sexual slavery and any other form of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes, including as a form of torture and a grave war crime, whether they occur in a systematic or non-methodical manner ;

6. Calls on the Member States to take action at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and advocate the updating of the wording of the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict to include sexual violence and the specific needs of refugee women;

7. Calls on the Member States to take action at the United Nations to ensure the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on women in armed conflict situations;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to gender sensitise peace and security related initiatives, and to that end:

(a) provide training on the gender-aspects of conflict resolution and peace-building to staff engaged in policies concerning conflict at headquarters and in field offices,

(b) utilise local gender expertise in field offices,

(c) foster research on the development of gender-based violence during and after armed conflicts,

(d) provide gender training at an early stage in the training of military personnel so that respect for women becomes a matter of course and a female-friendly atmosphere prevails in the army,

(e) ensure that actions against trafficking in women in conflict affected areas form part of such initiatives;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate a gender perspective in the planning of refugee camps under their funding auspices, and to that end:

(a) make sure that all the initiatives they fund are in line with international agreements and norms concerning refugee women, such as the UNHCR guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women and on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence against Refugees,

(b) protect refugees and internally displaced women and children from the possibility of sexual abuse through the provision of appropriate preventive measures at the very stage when camps are divided up,

(c) secure the right of women refugees to self-determination through appropriate economic opportunities and equal representation in refugee committees and other decision-making bodies in refugee camps,

(d) secure safe conditions of return for women and girls returning to their geographical areas of origin;

10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make available adequate financial resources so that victims of rape and assault in areas with an armed conflict can receive psychological counselling and have the choice between terminating the pregnancy or giving birth discreetly and so that victims of these outrages can be protected;

11. Calls on the Commission to set aside a certain percentage of the EUR 216 million refugee fund for the training of reception centre civil servants, police officers, and health staff to meet the particular needs of refugee women;

12. Calls on the Member States to introduce a gender perspective in their refugee policies, and to that end:

(a) under specific conditions grant temporary refugee status to women who have been raped or have been subjected to other forms of sexual violence during armed conflict, occupation and/or transition,

(b) provide rape victims with treatment for trauma and offer them practical help as outlined in paragraph 14 of its aforementioned resolution of 11 March 1993 on the rape of women in Former Yugoslavia,

(c) ensure that detention/reception centres for refugees include separate facilities for non-related men and women, concurrent with the appointment of gender trained staff in the women's section;

## **II. International efforts to prevent and solve armed conflicts**

13. Calls on the Member States to promote equal participation of women in diplomatic conflict resolution and reconstruction initiatives at all levels, and to that end:

- (a) recruit more women to the diplomatic services of Member States,
- (b) train women within the diplomatic corps of Member States in negotiation, facilitation and mediation skills, creating rosters of qualified women for peace and security related assignments,
- (c) nominate more women to international diplomatic assignments, specifically to senior positions (UN special representatives, peace commissions, fact-finding missions, etc.),
- (d) increase the percentage of women in delegations to national, regional and international meetings concerned with peace and security, as well as in formal peace negotiations,
- (e) require international diplomatic peace teams to systematically consult with women's community-based peace groups and organisations, ensuring that their problems and priorities are reflected in the official peace process;

14. Calls on the Council and the Member States to promote the gender sensitisation of peace, security and reconstruction operations in which they participate, and to that end:

- (a) make a gender analysis an automatic element in the planning and practice of external interventions. Specifically, analysing the extent to which women's social, economic and political marginalization increase as a result of the conflict, as well as the opportunities for improving women's position as a result of the changed situation,
- (b) ensure that all military personnel - male as well as female - and specifically peace-building, peacekeeping, and peace-enforcement personnel have thorough gender training,
- (c) have magistrates and human rights observers accompany peacekeepers to ensure that international law is upheld;

15. Stresses that current conflicts demand the increased use of non-military crisis-management, which means that new non-military skills are required of peacekeepers, resulting in enhanced opportunities for women, and calls on the Member States and the Council to:

- (a) include women in all reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, peace building, and conflict preventive posts - including fact-finding and observer missions - in which Member States participate,
- (b) secure that women participating in peacekeeping operations are bound by United Nations norms and international human rights principles and not by discriminatory local restrictions,
- (c) promote the use of all female fact-finding and assistance teams to respond to sexual violence and other situations where demanded by the cultural context;

16. Stresses that reconciliation of deep-seated conflicts present an unequalled opportunity to create the framework for a democratic and equal society, and to that end, calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote constitutional protections of women's equality in the design of the peace accords;

### **III. Community-based participation in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts**

17. Points out that most women are traditionally associated with non-violence, while their lives and value systems are interwoven with the protection of life, dialogue, reconciliation, negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, values which may provide an alternative solution to the modern culture of violence and lay the foundations for a new culture, the culture of peace, the strengthening of dialogue at all levels, the equitable distribution of the planet's resources and respect for racial, religious and cultural differences;

18. Stresses the importance of active local involvement in the peace and reconciliation process; and calls upon the Member States and the Commission to:

(a) support the creation and strengthening of non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations, active in conflict prevention and in post-conflict peace and reconstruction work,

(b) work towards the education of women's organisations in non-violent conflict resolution;

19. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to systematically promote the participation of women in the official conflict resolution process, and to that end:

(a) encourage that warring factions incorporate women into their peace negotiation teams,

(b) ensure that gender inequalities and repercussions are discussed systematically in each area of negotiation,

(c) ensure that the peace process is deeply rooted, through requesting that warring factions incorporate civil society representatives into their peace negotiation teams,

(d) support public awareness raising campaigns and debates about the contents of the peace negotiations;

20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that women who are frequently the most vulnerable, and who often have a crucial role in the rebuilding of their societies, are not marginalised by inappropriate demobilisation and reconstruction initiatives, and to that end:

(a) promote a public debate in post-conflict regions concerning gender-based abuses in order to avoid a repetition of violence,

(b) ensure that both women and men benefit from reconstruction initiatives, specifically that female ex-combatants are not excluded or made worse off from demobilisation programs,

(c) set aside a specific percentage of demobilisation and reconstruction funds for women's political and economic empowerment,

(d) pay particular attention to the specific rehabilitation needs of girl soldiers within demobilisation initiatives;

21. Calls on the Commission and the Council to inform the European Parliament on an annual basis on the progress, programmes and initiatives undertaken as a consequence of this resolution

22. Calls on the Council, Commission, and the UN Secretary General to in all reporting on peace and security related initiatives include a chapter covering gender related aspects;

23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the UN Secretary General.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Texts Adopted, Item 7.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 127, 14.5.1984, p. 137.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 21, 25.1.1993, p. 158.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 115, 26.4.1993, p. 149.