



International Knowledge Network
of Women in Politics

CONSOLIDATED REPLY

of the e-Discussion on:

The implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Arab States: taking stock and moving forward

February 2016



**CONSOLIDATED REPLY_iKNOW Politics e-Discussion:
The implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Arab states: tacking stock, moving forward**

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LAUNCHING MESSAGE [Arabic](#) [French](#) [Spanish](#)

The United Nations Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security was adopted on 31 October 2000 ([S/RES/1325](#)). Participation is one of the four pillars of the UNSCR, stressing the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Comparative studies from across regions show that women's decision-making power with regard to peace and conflict impact the likelihood of war.

Since the Arab uprisings, a number of countries in the region have experienced heightened political unrest and unprecedented violent struggles, with women and girls bearing the heaviest brunt of the systematic violence committed in conflict areas.

A [2013 UN Women report](#) found "a lack of policies and actions" aimed at reducing the impact of armed conflicts on women, and little enforcement, monitoring or reporting on the relevant provisions of UNSCR 1325 among countries in the Arab region.

The e-Discussion will remain open over a period of 5 weeks (10 December 2015 – 24 January 2016). iKNOW Politics structured this e-Discussion along three main blocks, as shown below. Each block consists of a related set of questions. Respondents are invited to send contributions to as many questions as they see fit throughout the duration of this e-Discussion. The full concept note can be accessed [here](#).

QUESTIONS

1. ADVANCING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA (WPS)

- 1.1. To what extent has UNSCR 1325 been implemented across the Arab States? What are the main implementation gaps and challenges?
- 1.2. What progress has been made in promoting women's leadership and participation at all levels in the implementation of UNSCR 1325? What are the main limitations preventing women from having a greater role?
- 1.3. What are the most effective mechanisms and structures within Parliaments to advance the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (e.g. caucuses)?

2. STRATEGIES AND MONITORING

- 2.1. Are there particular budgetary constraints related to the WPS? What mechanisms are in place to allocate budget to the WPS agenda?
- 2.2. What accountability mechanisms need to be developed to ensure monitoring and reporting on UNSCR 1325?
- 2.3. National Plans of Action (NPAs): what good practices exist in the Arab States and beyond and what is the role of parliaments in calling for NPAs through their oversight function?

3. PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- 3.1. What role do civil society and women's organizations play in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and how can Parliamentarians cooperate with these stakeholders? Please share concrete examples.
- 3.2. What type of capacity-building efforts are effective and which venues/formats are best to enhance cross-regional learning and exchanges of best practices?
- 3.3. Are there topics that need particular attention and capacity building in light of the recent conflicts (i.e. refugee crisis, increased radicalization and extremism)? Are there any example already available?

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The e-discussion was hosted on the iKNOW Politics online platform and received eleven contributions from international organizations and regional organizations, leaders, policy specialists and women rights activist from the Arab region. One comment was authored by the iKNOW Politics team, based on the knowledge gathered at a webinar organized by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

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1. [Radhika Coomaraswamy](#), Lead author of the United Nations’ Global Study on UNSCR 1325, former Under-Secretary of the United Nations and former Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.
 2. [Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh](#), Assistant Secretary General of the League of Arab States, former Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan, former Senator to the Jordanian Upper House of Parliament and former Regional Director for the Arab States of UNIFEM.
 3. [The Jordanian National Commission for Women and UN Women Jordan](#), joint reply by the two organizations specific to Jordan.
 4. [Sally El Mahdy](#), Regional Political Participation Advisor at the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States in Cairo.
 5. [Pamela Husain](#), Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Advisor at the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States in Cairo.
 6. [Sarah Douglas](#), Policy Specialist on Peace and Security at UN Women Headquarters.
 7. [Gabiella Borovsky](#), Policy Specialist on Political Participation at UN Women Headquarters.
 8. [Basma Al Khateeb](#), Human Rights defender, women’s rights activist, member of the Iraqi Women Network, former UNIFEM and UNFPA coordinator in Iraq.
 9. [Kirthi Jayakumar](#), Women rights defender, author, journalist, UN Volunteer and lawyer specialized in Public International Law and Human Rights.
 10. [Marwa Farid](#), Masters Candidate in Security, Terrorism and Insurgency. Middle East Affairs political analyst.
 11. [Nana N’dow](#), Inclusive Political Processes Consultant at UNDP.
 12. [iKNOW Politics](#) contribution on National Action Plans.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

The experiences, practices, and recommendations of each response were consolidated by the Team and the below summary highlights the key conclusions of this e-Discussion.

Advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Drawing on and confirming the findings of the United Nations Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 “ [Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Keeping the Peace](#)”, all respondents agree on the pressing need to advance the agenda on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in the Arab region.

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All contributions drew attention to the complexity of the conflicts that are currently unfolding in the region and emphasized the benefits that can be brought about when women are fully included in peace processes. When women participate, they help shift dynamics and bring with them particular leadership qualities, such as consensus building, public debate, and a sense of the imperative to conclude talks and implement agreements. These elements are paramount for peace negotiations to be meaningful and lasting. Research has shown that women's involvement in peace processes leads to better outcomes. The Global Study reports "a 20 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting two years. This percentage increases over time, with a 35 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years". A [study](#) of the Graduate Institute of Geneva shows that peace agreements were more likely to be reached in cases where women's groups were able to exercise a strong influence on the negotiation process, and that these agreements were more likely to be implemented.

Furthermore, several of the countries with the highest [political] representation of women globally are also those emerging from conflict, including Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Rwanda, Serbia, and South Sudan.

The respondents made clear that women's participation and leadership have considerable benefits in peace negotiations and have spill-overs that improve the advancement of gender-sensitive legislations and actions. Good examples from other countries were cited:

"In Burundi, women succeeded in including provisions on freedom of marriage and the right to choose one's partner into the peace agreement. In Guatemala, women's organizations coordinated with the woman representative at the table to introduce commitments to classify sexual harassment as a new criminal offence and establish an office for indigenous women's rights".

In the Arab region, only three countries have established National Actions Plans (NAP)¹ for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. A successful example is Iraq, which has adopted its NAP in February 2014. The other two, Palestine and Jordan, have drafted their respective NAPs but did not officially adopt them. As expressed by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), its adoption was compromised by the limited awareness efforts and a lack of local engagement in the drafting process. The draft remained under review by the Government of Jordan for three years. Currently, the JNCW is working with UN Women Jordan to implement UNSCR 1325 through the development and adoption of a new NAP.

At the regional level, the League of Arab States (LAS) put forward a Regional Strategy on advancing the WPS agenda, including a regional action plan for the implementation of all UNSC resolutions related to this agenda. The LAS is the first international organization to take the initiative of such a regional strategy and action plan.

All respondents agree that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is a difficult process, as one respondent highlighted:

¹ To read more on National Action Plans and search by country, please access [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom](#).

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“The main challenge faced is primarily attitudinal – if country X is not in conflict, it does not need a NAP. The perception that 1325 applies only to countries in conflict is slowly changing, but requires continued advocacy... Another major challenge is the traditional (non)relationship between government and civil society, and more specifically engagement with women as equal and valued representatives of civil society.”

The difficulties faced by civil society organizations that wish to engage in the implementation of the agenda was brought up by several respondents. In Iraq for example, despite the multi-sectoral working groups set up within the framework of the NAP, the government did not include enough consultations with them when revising the plan. This resulted in the dismissal of amendments and the deletion of provisions that had been put forward by the groups. In addition to this:

“It was also observed that the adopted plan lacked statistical indicators demonstrating the escalating violence... Furthermore, the plan did not include the National Security Council resolution 1820 on the criminalization of sexual violence as a means of warfare. It also did not include the list of resolution 1325 recommendations, adopted by the Security Council.”

Another major challenge mentioned by numerous respondents is the lack of funding to support the full implementation of the NAPs. It was noted that only few NAPs have dedicated budgets and even fewer receive funding directly from the government in question.

Parliaments were found to be vital bodies in delivering transitional justice, as proven in the examples of Bosnia, Libya, Kosovo and Croatia where parliaments have enabled restitution for women victims of conflict (particularly of gender-based and sexual violence). The role of male MPs was mentioned as important to further promote the WPS agenda among MPs:

“What is essential is that there are both men and women MPs willing to promote the agenda. This is not just a gender agenda, but a national human rights agenda that must be owned by all duty-bearers. Particularly in a patriarchal society, it is critical to have male as well as female champions of the cause, as women in government are sometimes place-holders for men, rather than independent actors”.

Three proposals were suggested for the Parliaments in the Arab region:

1. Developing gender sensitive laws that attend to the different articles of the UNSCR 1325, including the introduction of quotas for women in peace negotiations and transitional entities.
2. Monitoring the government’s implementation of the UNSCR 1325 related laws.
3. Enlightening the general public of the UNSCR 1325.

Two parliamentary caucuses were recently launched by the Arab States’ Regional Parliament and the Algerian National Parliament. Both have put UNSCR 1325 at the core of their operational by-laws and yearly action plans that fundamentally work towards achieving gender equality.

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- *Strategies and Monitoring*

For any National Action Plan (NAP) to reach its full potential in terms of implementation, proper strategies and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to be put in place. Emphasis was put on the actors responsible for the monitoring and the mechanisms in place to share the findings. Good practices were observed when civil society was engaged in the monitoring process to produce shadow reports. This led to greater transparency and effectiveness of the agenda's implementation. It was suggested to place the reports within the public domain and to link this process to the reports on gender-responsive budgeting. Such a mechanism facilitates to access the government's adherence to its gender commitments.

Respondents from Jordan also put emphasis on the need to draw on expertise and technical support in the monitoring process. For example, JNCW and UN Women Jordan worked together to bring to the table various stakeholders. The practices put in place for the future Jordanian NAP read as follows:

1. A *three-way cooperation* between the JNCW), UN Women (providing international legitimacy and technical support) and the Institute for Inclusive Security (providing specific, technical expertise on NAP design and implementation processes). These three bodies will serve as the technical experts in supporting the national Steering Committee.
2. The establishment of a *Steering Committee* (still to be formed in Jordan), composed of high-level government officials. The Steering Committee is the primary decision-making body, and leads the process of NAP adoption, as well as its implementation and localization at later stages. Furthermore, it grants a sense of direction and stronger ownership of the NAP process to key stakeholders and ensures that political will in the country is well understood, and that national priorities are adhered to.
3. The establishment of an *advisory body* – in Jordan, the National Coalition for the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325. With wider representation than the Steering Committee, the role of the advisory body is to support and guide the NAP development process in Jordan.
4. The creation of a *Secretariat for UNSCR 1325* within JNCW – that is, staff specifically dedicated to WPS/UNSCR 1325 implementation within the process' leading body – to ensure coherence and continuity of the process.

Other good practices include the above-mentioned LAS Regional Strategy. It was identified as a positive initiative to encourage other regional organizations to recognize the regional impact of conflict and to identify how each country can contribute to mitigate its impacts. The creation of such platforms are thus important steps towards fostering regional dialogue and partnership building. However, it remains to be seen if a model such as the one initiated by the LAS, will have positive effects on advancing the WPS agenda and more generally on women's participation.

- *Partnerships and capacity building*

Partnership building, especially with civil society, is at the core of the successful implementation of the WPS agenda.

Respondents agreed that civil society and women's organizations have played a key role in pushing the agenda, promoting the role of women in peace processes and raising awareness about the impact of conflict on women and girls in the Arab region:

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“We worked with national counterparties and CSOs to align their forces and lobbying efforts to increase women’s representation in peace negotiations, political dialogues, constitutions’ development and governments following peace agreements. For example, in Libya six women were members in the Constitution Development Assembly and a women’s track was introduced to the formal political dialogue composed of 25 active women. In addition, a Syrian Women’s Initiative (SWI) was created composed of more than 40 women activists (representing different ethnicities, backgrounds, geographical locations, political affiliations, etc.). This SWI managed to form a parallel track to the official political dialogue and created a vivid space for women’s voices, which leveraged their lobbying power.”

It is crucial to bring together those directly involved, for example through platforms that enable all stakeholders to meet and make decisions together as these allow for experience and knowledge-sharing while ensuring relevance and practicality. For example, CSOs in Iraq conducted several initiatives to reach the various religious and ethnic groups of both sexes and promote the principles of peaceful coexistence and tolerance in the areas experiencing high levels of sectarian violence.

In regards to capacity building, many Iraqi CSOs have organized trainings in the fields of conflict resolution, dialogue and development. There is no doubt that civil society activism has vast impact on the society. For instance, women’s movements in Iraq successfully lobbied for the adoption in the constitution of a quota system which ensures the participation of women by no less than 25%.

Another example is that of the regional office of UN Women in Cairo, which organized a two-day capacity building workshop that gathered representatives of women machineries across the MENA region. Training on how to draft applicable, cost-effective and coordinated NAPs was provided. Furthermore, it was highlighted that a full understanding of the national needs and context related to the WPS agenda, is a key element to strengthen capacities, awareness-raising and lobbying. With a view to increase understanding of local challenges to the WPS agenda, plans to address the gender dimension of radicalization, as well as consultations with refugees are currently being developed.

USEFUL RESOURCES (available on iKNOW Politics)

- Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for Local Change: Civil society opportunities in the MENA region [[EN](#)] [[AR](#)]
- Regional Strategy "Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security" [[EN](#)] [[AR](#)]
- Advancing gender equality within peace and security in Jordan [[EN](#)] [[AR](#)]
- Iraqi National Action Plan for Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 [[EN](#)] [[AR](#)]
- Iraqi Women in Armed Conflict and Post-conflict Situation [[EN](#)] [[AR](#)]
- iKNOW Politics Interview with Radhika Coomaraswamy [[EN](#)]
- Policy Recommendation: Applying Global Tools to Improve National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 [[EN](#)]
- Women, Peace and Security in Iraq [[EN](#)]
- CNN Video on the Importance of Women for Peacebuilding [[EN](#)]

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- Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies Marie O'Reilly October 2015.
[- https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Why-Women-Brief-10.12.15.pdf](https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Why-Women-Brief-10.12.15.pdf)
- UN Women, 2013, Regional Consultation for the Proposed General Recommendation on Women's Human Rights in Situations of Conflict and Post Conflict Contexts for the Arab States & the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Amman, Jordan, available at:
[I http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Womenconflictsituations/RegionalConsultationAmmanJan2013.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Womenconflictsituations/RegionalConsultationAmmanJan2013.pdf)

بالعربية حلقة

نقاشية حول حماية النساء أوقات النزاعات المسلحة الداخلية في بنغازي

تعاني المرأة بكل تأكيد لشتى أنواع التعسف والاضطهاد وانتهاكات العديده الجسدية والجنسية وقد تم تسجيل وتدوين العديد منها وخاصة اثناء الازمات...

نساء ليبيا يقدمن خطة عمل من أجل السالم في مؤتمر صحفي في جنيف

بعد اجتماع استمر ثلاثة أيام في مونترو في سويسرا قدمت مجموعة نساء ناشطات لبيبات من مختلف الخلفيات من داخل وخارج البلاد خطة عمل من أجل السالم...

فائزة جائزة نوبل للسالم من تونس, و داد بوشماوي تتحدث أمام مجلس الأمن

"البلدان في منطقتنا تعاني من أزمة سياسية واجتماعية واقتصادية غير مسبوقه. إن تهيش شعوب المنطقة لعقود..."

لقاء مع بسمة الخطيب, ناشطة في شبكة النساء العراقيات

بسمة الخطيب مختصة في شؤون المرأة, و هي عضوة في شبكة النساء العراقيات و منسقة سابقة لبرنامج...

تحديد الفجوات التشريعية في تطبيق قرار مجلس الأمن 1325 حول المرأة و الأمن و السالم في الدول العربية

تم تحضير هذه الدراسة في سياق مشروع الأمم المتحدة للتنمية المخصص ببناء المؤسسات و قدرات البرلمانات العربية و غيرها...

لقاء مع السيدة الزهراء لنقي من ليبيا

الزهراء لنقي, مؤسسة من مؤسسات منبر المرأة الليبية من أجل السالم و عضو في الشبكة العربية للمرأة و الأمن و السالم, كرامة...

[المزيد هنا.](#)