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Gendering Human Security

From Marginalisation to the Integration of Women in Peace-Building

Recommendations for policy and practice from
the NUPI-Fafo Forum on Gender Relations in
Post-Conflict Transitions

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This report was drafted by Kari Karamé, NUPI, with the assistance of Gudrun Bertinussen

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Preface

The nature of wars has changed radically during the last two decades. Most of today's armed conflicts are internal, which means that they take place within the borders of one state, though they may often spill over into the neighbouring states. The populations of such intra-state wars are usually of different ethnic and/or religious identity and often it is the national, cultural, historical or religious identity of the state which is at stake. These circumstances place an increased importance on the cultural sensitivity of international assistance provided to societies emerging from conflict.

The particularities of conflict are unique, but many conflicts share several characteristics. The state apparatus is weakened or has collapsed totally, and the parties in conflict will therefore have great power over their own people. The distinction between the military and the civilian fields is blurred, and likewise between the battlefield and the home front. As adult men often face the choice of either fleeing or fighting, women may have to take on responsibilities and roles that they were not prepared for by the traditional gendered pattern of behaviour.

The civilian population has become the main target of warfare, and 80 to 85 per cent of the victims are civilians. Sexual violence against women is used as a strategy of war, and is recognised as a crime against humanity. Women, children and elderly make up the majority of the refugees and the internally displaced persons. As a result, human security or the protection of civilians has become a major focus for international intervention and assistance.

During these conflicts women are victims and survivors, but also fighters and participants, leaders and activists. Women are often primarily responsible for maintaining the core relationships and functions in society, at home, as refugees or as displaced persons. In this sense, therefore, war also offers possibilities for the empowerment of women. This empowerment is, in turn, crucial to re-launching the social and economic development at the core of many peace-building strategies.

Yet, societies emerging from conflict may experience a redefinition of the role and status of women in society, resulting in the marginalisation or isolation of women from the key peace-building processes in the transition from conflict. And thereby the tremendous knowledge and capacity resources that women have developed during conflict are either lost or neglected.

On 24-26 January 2001 the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Programme for International Co-operation and Conflict Resolution (PIC-CR) of the Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science held a learning seminar, or Forum, on Gender Relations in Post-conflict Transitions. The organisation of the Forum was led by NUPI and the meeting was held at the Fafo Institute in Oslo.

The purpose of the Forum was to develop an understanding of gender and decision-making in post-conflict transitions and identify relevant recommendations for practitioners on how to integrate women in the peace-building process. The Forum asked the following questions: How have women contributed to the survival of parts of the civil and physical infrastructure? What has been the experience of women decision-makers in the transition from conflict? Has there been a process of marginalisation and, if so, how has it occurred? What has been the impact of peace-building assistance on women in general and their roles in politics and decision-making in particular? How can international organisations help to empower women in post-conflict societies? If the focus was on women, the ultimate aim of the debate was to improve the basis for viable peaceful solution to conflicts to the benefit of the total society, both women and men, elderly and children.

The Forum gathered more than 40 people from international organisations, governments, NGOs and universities and research institutes. Participants were invited on the basis of their experience of policy processes and programme implementation in the relevant multilateral or national arenas, including several participants from countries in conflict or emerging from conflict. The organisers are grateful for this great interest and are pleased that the high number of participants, and the different backgrounds which they have brought to bear on the subject, has generated an outcome which includes both analytical perspectives as well as a number of concrete recommendations.

The following Forum report was prepared by Kari Karame, Researcher, NUPI, with the assistance of Gudrun Bertinussen. The report is a joint Fafo-NUPI publication, and it is based on the various experiences, views and recommendations expressed by the participants during the Oslo Forum. The intention of the Forum was to explore the complexity of the questions posed, while simultaneously seeking to elaborate concrete recommendations for strengthening policy and practice. The report is intended to reflect the views expressed during the Forum, but it is not a consensus document and the views recorded here are not necessarily those of the authors, their institutions nor of the participants. A draft of the report and its recommendations was made available to the Forum participants and co-sponsors, and revised in light of their comments.

NUPI and Fafo would like to thank the Government of Norway, the Government of Canada and the Government of Switzerland. Their contributions enabled participants to attend from around the world and the participation of their officials

and policy makers made the Forum possible and relevant. Finally, NUPI and Fafo are particularly grateful to the participants for their energy and engagement on the issues. Without them the Forum - and this report - would not have been possible.

1 Executive Summary

The Forum chose to focus on women's agency in post-conflict transitions due to a sense that, until recently, there has been inadequate treatment of the issues related to women in violent conflict and that this treatment has tended to focus on women as victims. While this perspective is crucial to an understanding of the problem, it was felt that a focus on women's agency might also help clarify some options for the development of potential solutions.

1.1 Mainstreaming gender

Gender awareness and mainstreaming have been issues in international development assistance for more than 20 years. Over that time, the perspective has developed from looking at women as an isolated category and target group with special needs, to recognising women's lives as enmeshed in social relations, as members of social groups with shared ambitions, dreams and fears with their male counterparts.

To integrate gender issues in international assistance in conflict and post-conflict societies, an understanding of the nature of the specific conflict and the societies concerned is a prerequisite. A gender perspective involves looking at both women's and men's activities and roles before, during and after the conflict, while recognising women's agencies as enmeshed in social relations and divisions in both a local and a global context. In a post-conflict situation the change of gender roles has to go hand in hand with the democratisation process at large.

1.2 The challenges of implementation

The analysis of a post-conflict situation and its gender relations has to be transformed into policies and action on the international level. This is a key challenge for the

international community and a precondition of gender-sensitive assistance in post-conflict areas. Commitment and political will have to be created among international key players who are responsible for formulating strategies. Gender issues have to come in at an early stage of policy definition. Successful international assistance depends on better planning and improved practices in the field.

1.3 Gender as a quality-improving tool

Gender sensitivity is an added value and offers additional resources to every development. Women are often an unused resource in post-conflict reconstruction and peace processes. Their inclusion into all levels, from the planning stage to implementation, will improve the international assistance and make it more sustainable. When the focus is on women in this context, the aim is to develop tools to ensure that international assistance programmes are gender balanced. Any peace process that ignores the needs and roles of women is unnatural, and therefore inherently unstable.

Recommendations

Local Context

I Local Knowledge

- Different conflicts have different dynamics and characteristics which international assistance should take into consideration prior to implementation.
- While the policies and practices of international assistance should integrate local knowledge, stereotypical and essentialist views of local conditions concerning women's abilities and potentials should be avoided.
- Gender- and culture-sensitive programmes are enhanced when local women's knowledge of the needs and conditions of society is recognised as a resource. This knowledge should be integrated into the planning of assistance, including support to institution building, democratisation, protection of human rights, as well as through peace-keeping missions or the provision of humanitarian aid. In the field, one way to achieve this should include co-operation with existing women's networks.
- International human rights standards should remain a point of reference for the planners and implementers of assistance.

II Jurisdiction

- In general, attention should be paid to the fact that in many countries emerging from conflict women are not individual legal persons or are in other administrative ways prevented from full participation in the reconstruction of society.
- The political negotiations at the heart of peace processes should address women's rights, including property and land rights. Often in post-conflict situations widows are not able to inherit or assume title over the land, property, benefits, incentives or entitlements of their deceased husbands or male relatives. Wives of disappeared men may be denied access to title deeds for many years.
- Women should be provided with passports or ID cards to enable them to register and be eligible for assistance.

- Election laws should ensure that women are not excluded from political participation, taking into consideration the particularity of the local social conditions as one electoral paradigm will not fit all.

III Personal Security

- Post-conflict societies often suffer from lawlessness, including domestic violence. Special attention should therefore be paid to women's personal security in such situations.
- The planning and implementation of international assistance should pay particular attention to women's needs when planning and establishing refugee camps and in the facilitation of the return of displaced persons.
- The traumatised victims of sexual violence during a conflict will need special care during and immediately after violent conflict.
- Gender awareness training should be integrated to the training of international staff deployed in post-conflict situations, including civilian police, law enforcement and social security personnel, as well as peace-keepers (soldiers) and heads of missions.
- Troop contributing states and donor countries should promote women as mission officers and as heads of missions. Women members of international missions tend to be more sensitive to the needs of local women, and local women often find it easier to communicate with other women.

IV Political Participation

- Training should be provided for women who wish to become active in organised politics or for women who wish to expand their impact within established political organisations.
- To assure women's participation in political life, both as voters and as activists, quotas for women candidates in post-conflict elections should be advocated by international electoral authorities. These should be considered in light of local capacities and conditions.
- To be effective, quotas will require that training be provided to political candidates prior to elections and on an on-going basis.
- Local women's organisations should be asked to play a lead role in the process of political capacity-building. Such organisations could also provide a forum for women if their voices are excluded from existing political parties or fora.

- Women should be trained for political lobby work. Specific resources should be dedicated to the training of women in advocacy (lobbying) work and for women parliamentarians.

V Reintegration of Combatants

- The repatriation and the social reintegration of ex-combatants - both men and women - is a delicate process with potentially significant implications for a society emerging from conflict. Special support programmes are needed to ease this process, as in some cases former combatants have turned to criminal activities and violence in the absence of a social network to assist them in re-integration.
- Special programmes are needed to address the potential for domestic violence. These programmes should target men who are being reintegrated as, during conflict, men are often socialised into a culture of violence.

The Global Context

VI Early Warning

- A growing lack of security for civilians is often one of the indicators of an impending armed conflict. Early warning systems should be further developed, based on indicators that take into account the insecurity of women, the elderly and children.

VII International Law

- International law, including international human rights and humanitarian law, does provide for the protection of women. However, there is a problem of enforcement. In most cases, troop contributing states and donor countries participating in peace or humanitarian missions are required by law to ensure the compliance with international law of the parties to the conflict. To limit impunity, these states should act through the appropriate enforcement mechanisms to ensure that special attention is paid to those violations of the law designed to protect women.

VIII Peace Processes

- The Facilitators of peace negotiations should work to ensure that women from all levels of society, are part of the peace process. They should help to provide space for advocacy and lobbying in order to avoid the isolation or exclusion of women.

- Peace processes should include frameworks that take into account the needs of women, the elderly and children. Central to such frameworks should be mechanisms to ensure that the views of women are taken into consideration at all stages of the peace process, from the planning and framing of a mandate to the implementation of a peace agreement.
- Peace efforts in exile communities should be supported as the refugees, both men and women, are also part of the peace process, and may influence its course.
- Training should be made available to women and women's organisations to facilitate their participation peace processes which are held outside the local context (e.g. training in English, law, etc.).

IX Co-ordination between International Actors

- Co-ordination between local, national, regional, bilateral and multilateral organisations, including NGOs, in the planning, design and implementation of projects should bring together gender advisors in the field to advise headquarters and capitals level policy makers on appropriate policies.

X Gender Training within International Agencies

- International organisations should not ask a war-torn society to implement gender balance if this principle has yet to be implemented within the organisations themselves. International implementation agencies should be transparent and accountable for their own operationalisation of gender balance.
- Training in gender awareness is important for middle management but should not be restricted to one gender advisor or the organisation's gender unit.
- Gender training should also be provided to senior management in international agencies before their entering field positions
- These internal initiatives will require the allocation of resources to gender-sensitive programming.

XI Peace-keeping

- In the interests of the success of a mission, the contributing countries should work to ensure a greater representation of women in all stages and on all levels of peace-keeping missions.

- Relations between peace-keepers and the local population can depend upon the sensitivity of personnel to local norms and expectations. Peace-keepers - both women and men - should be trained in gender awareness. The focus should be on cultural sensitivity as the norms for interaction between men and women vary from one society to another.
- Mission mandates should include reference to codes of conduct for peacekeepers as concerns contact with local women and women's personal security. Codes of conduct for peace-keepers should include specific provisions prohibiting prostitution.

XII International Assistance

- International assistance should respect local agendas.
- Co-ordination should seek to pool resources linking the many actors working in the field to pull in the same direction.
- Policies should be linked to timetables to ensure implementation
- Local qualified women must be included in the field offices in positions of authority and not only as translators.

XIII Accountability

- Systems of benchmarking, evaluation and accountability of international activities should be developed with regard to both gender awareness and gender balance.

XIV Strategies for Implementation

- The United Nations system, regional organisations and international NGOs are all to some extent dependent upon policy decisions made in the capitals of member states and donor countries. The focus of advocacy should be on these governments with the demand that they implement or support the implementation of the recommendations for gender mainstreaming and gender awareness.
- Similarly, coalitions of 'like-minded' member states - such as the Human Security Network or parallel coalitions of NGOs - should promote gender mainstreaming and gender awareness within implementation agencies.
- Another focus for policy advocacy is the upcoming report on and implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325. Policy formulation processes as a result of Resolution 1325 are already underway and in this context participants urged practitioners and policy makers to consider the work undertaken during the Forum

and in previous meetings (e.g. Windhoek, Uppsala, etc.). It was suggested that the formation of a group of 'Friends' of Resolution 1325 may help provide a focal point for input from member states and NGOs.

- Finally, the on-going follow-up to the Report on Strengthening UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report) provides an opportunity for member states to integrate gender awareness and gender mainstreaming to the reform of UN peace operations. Forum participants noted that the Brahimi report was silent on the question of gender and that the follow-up policy formulation processes underway at the UN offered an opportunity to correct the absence of gender analysis in the report.

2 Women's Agency in Conflict

“Neither women nor war is a self-evident category.”¹

During post-conflict transitions, the empowerment of women is crucial to re-launching social and economic development. Women, like men, are both victims and actors in wars and armed conflicts, but usually in different ways and in different fields. During wars, women participate in new activities and assume new roles, often taking on more responsibilities. Despite these changes, women are often marginalised in post-conflict peace-building, both in the societies emerging from conflict and in the formulation and implementation of peace-building strategies by international peace operations.

2.1 The nature of modern wars

The Forum heard that most of the conflicts during the last ten to twenty years have been so-called intra-state wars, which means that they take place within the borders of one state, even if they also may spill over into neighbouring states. The populations of such intra-state wars are usually of different ethnic and/or religious identity and often it is the national, cultural, historical or religious identity of the state which is at stake. Control of state or of economic resources may also be an origin of the conflict.

These conflicts share several characteristics. The state apparatus is weakened, because it is not recognised by all its citizens, or is in danger of collapse. This vacuum will often be filled by the social and political leadership of the parties to the conflict, which, in turn, may lead to the blurring of the distinction between the military and the civilian, and between the battle front and the home front. Willingly or not, civilians become actors, or at least contributors to warfare. They provide combatants, medical services, food and shelter, and they pay taxes that cover the costs of warfare.

¹ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War*. 1987

The civilian population also becomes the main target of warfare. Participants noted that while civilians made up 10 per cent of the victims during World War I and 50 per cent of the victims during World War II, they amount to between 80 to 85 per cent of the victims of more recent wars, and of these most were women, children, the sick and the elderly. Sexual violence against women, like mass rapes, rape camps and forced impregnation, has become a strategy of war aiming at the destruction of the social fabric of a human group - and recognised as such by its recent confirmation as a crime against humanity. Women and children make up for 80 per cent of the refugees in the world today, compared to 73 per cent of an average population. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) represent an even bigger problem, but there is less information on the proportion of IDPs which are women.

The nature of these wars has made human security, particularly the protection of civilians in times of conflict, an important focus of international attention. This concern includes prisoners of war and missing persons, the overwhelming majority of which are men. In post-conflict transitions, returned former combatants and detainees often suffer from both physical and psychological traumas which can have a range of affects on society in general. Similarly, the impact of missing persons can also have social and economic repercussions. Without underestimating the suffering of these men, participants noted that a gendered analysis should take into consideration the dramatic impact that this suffering has on the living conditions of women.

2.2 Women's agency in modern wars

In the discourse of war, women are usually depicted either as victims or as the peace-loving counterpoint to the war-waging men. In reality, women are active in many ways during a conflict. However, the memory of their agency is remarkably short. The Forum discussion indicated that this seems to be an almost universal occurrence, with one of the main consequences being that women are not integrated as a resource in the peace-building process.

In fact, wars often create opportunities for women to assume roles and functions usually closed to them. These activities fall into two main categories: those either directly or indirectly related to military actions, and those related to the survival of households and civil society, even if it is not always possible to make a clear distinction between the military and the civilian spheres. What women actually do - or have to do - will depend on several factors in addition to gender, such as age, social level, education, and civil status, whether they live in an urban or a rural

environment, and on the prevailing security situation on the ground. Participants noted that the extent to which government institutions still exist and function, even with limited means, is an important factor affecting the living conditions of the civilian population in general and consequently women's agency as well.

It was emphasised that women do not live in a separate world; they belong to the same society as their men, and will normally share similar ambitions and hopes for the future of their people, as well as the frustrations and fears when that future

Columbia: Political violence and women

The conflict in Colombia remains unresolved after a two-year-long peace process of negotiation and dialogue. There is widespread pessimism among the civilian population due to the killings of non-combatant civilians, forced disappearances and kidnapping, recruitment of children by guerrilla and paramilitary forces, looting and destruction of property. It is estimated that the internally displaced exceed two million persons, or 5 per cent of the total population. The State does not have the capacity nor the political will to provide adequate humanitarian assistance. The population depends on services from the churches, NGOs and international humanitarian organisations.

Women are taking part in the armed conflict as combatants. Approximately 30 per cent of the guerrilla forces are women and the number is on the increase in paramilitary forces. There is great pressure on women's organisations to participate in the armed conflict and women are forced to join events, meetings and marches organised by armed groups. Women have also been killed for allegations of being romantically involved with persons in opposing groups.

There are many initiatives from civil society. Project Counselling Service (PCS) is an international consortium working on humanitarian aid and social development, channelling funds from the international community to projects, counselling, network building and protection. PCS has been particularly concerned with the war and the effect war has on women. Projects target women and men from many sectors of society: peasants, indigenous people, afro-Colombians, the intellectual elite, house wives, professionals and so on. Women contribute in important ways through pacifist initiatives. 'La ruta pacifica des las mujeres de Colombia' has joined the international 'Women in Black' initiative. They wear black in silent protest against the war, and publicly manifest their pacifist attitudes, standing at public sites every last Tuesday of the month.

is in danger. Women will side with the men in military activities, some may take part in combat. In Lebanon, in the mainly Christian militia, up to seven per cent of the combatants were women. In the war for independence of Eritrea women made up 25-30 per cent of the forces, and approximately the same proportion is reported from the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. Whether they all take part actively in combat is not clear, in part because women often move from one function to another in accordance with the needs of the moment on the ground. Nonetheless, the presence of women in a paramilitary force is of high symbolic value: it is supposed to signal a broad social consensus and solidarity, both to their own population and to the outside world. As a rule, however, women's participation in combat roles is viewed as temporary. For example, it usually does not provide a basis for a political career, as it often does for men.

In fact, participants suggested that most women will take up positions in support functions. Women have been found in greater numbers in logistics, staff and intelligence services. They provide shelter, food and medical care and serve as contact persons between the combatants and their family. It is said that behind every combatant in a paramilitary force there are an estimated 10 to 12 persons in support functions, and many of them are women.

Participants noted that, in conflict situations, most women, regardless of age, social level, etc., tend to view the survival of the family or household as their main responsibility. Adult men are often absent, either because they take part in the fighting, or they have left the country or the area to avoid being forced into military units. Others have been taken prisoner, or are among the missing. The result is that a female-dominated civilian population has become a common characteristic of contemporary conflict areas, and women therefore have to face the troublesome situation alone, without the support of their husbands and other adult male relatives. Both in the Balkans and in several African countries there are villages where up to 80 per cent of the population is female. To support their family women often become the main breadwinners of the family, when that is possible, or they continue to cultivate the family's land.

The Forum heard that people who live in a war zone often define their daily life as 'resisting war itself'. They do this by continually rebuilding the core institutions of society: organising schools wherever suitable buildings or locations can be found - often times even under a tree; opening health centres, summer camps for children, solidarity groups to provide food, medicine, cloths, etc. It is the average civilian women who are central to keeping the wheels of civil society running after the collapse of the state machinery. These activities entail considerable social or political risk: women depend upon positive relations with the military organisations in the area in order to ensure that the authorities do not consider such peace-building activities as subversive. Through these activities women keep the memory and idea

of a normal situation alive, thus playing a central role in defining the assumptions and aspirations which society will bring to post-conflict reconstruction.

In the process of displacement and return, women are usually the last to leave, and the first to return. Participants explained that the reason for this, in almost all cases, is that most women are not considered as combatants and therefore, when they are not being targeted, they face fewer restrictions on their movement. However, women refugees and IDPs face greater administrative obstacles. In many parts of the world they do not have status as individual legal persons, resulting in a lack of personal identity cards that can authenticate their identity and residence. The absence of legal status or the lack of papers means they cannot travel and, upon their return, they may become dependent on male relatives in order to establish their residence or ownership of their property. In some cases, women can be forced to re-marry against their will in order to obtain legal status. This affects not just the individual women but, as the majority of the refugees today are women with dependants, children and elderly family members, the problem of legal status can affect the majority of refugee or IDP households.

Participants noted that, while refugee camps provide shelter and food, for refugee or IDP women the camps may not be a safe place. The camps are usually built along the pattern of military camps, with sanitary facilities placed in the outskirts. But this also means that they are isolated, and it has happened that women and young girls have been attacked and raped on their way to or from these facilities. Increasing the security of refugee women can often be as simple as building more toilets and reducing the distances to them from the living quarters, measures which in several cases have resulted in reductions in the number of rapes recorded.

The proportion of women prisoners of war and missing persons is relatively low compared to that of men. But the conditions under which women are held prisoners are most of the time particularly difficult. Organised rape camps are the most extreme examples of the targeting of women detainees, but even normal detention presents particular problems for women: more often than not, women are detained in the same prison camps as men, which can include criminals, where they may be victims of sexual harassment from co-detainees and guards. In fact, there have been very few special prisons or detainee camps for women, and those that have existed were usually overpopulated. In addition, such prisons or camps were often placed in isolated areas, and contact between the women and their families was difficult. Contact with the outside world is a requirement of international law and contact with family members is of great importance for the morale of detainees, not to mention crucial to their supply of food and hygienic articles.

In times of war, political struggles are often replaced by the fight for freedom, the survival of the nation or the family and, as a result, the struggle for women's rights is displaced. This seems to be a universal tendency, even within political

organisations for which the idea of independence for the nation is intertwined with the idea of freedom for the individual. Nonetheless, various kinds of women's movements have constituted an important arena for women both during armed conflicts and in the post-conflict transition. Some of these movements are pacifist and work against any violence. Others may be directed against a particular war or conflict, like the Russian Mothers, who aim their activities against the war in Chechnya.

In a society divided by war, women may organise themselves to meet across the demarcation line, or in other ways express their disapproval of the division of their

Northern Ireland: 'Women Together'

'Women Together' started in 1970 in Northern Ireland as a cross-community organisation when, as the conflict escalated, work within the formal political parties became impossible. 'Women Together' brought together chat groups in every area. In these groups people could sit together and speak openly about their experiences, presenting their different views. 'Women Together' also organised peace marches and were visible in the local community.

Still, women remain marginal in formal political participation in Northern Ireland. Only 12 of the 108 members in the new Northern Ireland Assembly are women and 86 of 582 elected local councillors are women. Of 1000 people surveyed in top decision-making roles only 27 were found to be female. The Northern Ireland Women Coalition (NIWC) was formed in 1996, working to raise the profile of women in politics in Northern Ireland. It is a non-sectarian broad-based coalition of women of all political hues and religions. Two candidates represented the NIWC in the peace talks after an election to select delegates to negotiations on the future of Northern Ireland. The NIWC works to implement the Good Friday Agreement and a delegate of the NIWC is a signatory to the peace agreement.

Another initiative seeks to address a persistent obstacle to a peaceful development in Northern Ireland - school segregation between Catholics and Protestants. Catholic children go to Catholic religious schools while Protestant children go to the state schools. The teacher training colleges are also segregated. Neighbourhoods are segregated despite being located in parallel streets (Catholics and Protestants even watch different sports: Catholics traditionally prefer Gaelic football and Hurlly; Protestants watch soccer and hockey). 'All Children Together' is a movement started to integrate the schools which has received growing support in recent years.

home town and country. Each year in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, the organisation Women Walk Home tries to cross the demarcation line that runs through their city since 1974. When an organisation called Women in White tried to meet over the so-called Green Line in Beirut in the 1980s, they were submitted to heavy shelling. This pacifist movement was considered to be a threat to the warlords on both sides, because it expressed a protest against one of the consequences of the war: the division of the plural city of Beirut into a mainly Christian East Beirut and a mainly Muslim West Beirut. Working for peace can be a dangerous activity in a conflict area, and such organisations should therefore be accorded particular concern by international policy makers seeking an end to the conflict: these women may serve as foundations upon which to build bridges between groups of people separated by war.

2.3 The Post-conflict phase

War and peace are broad categories that most of us understand intuitively. They might describe a variety of situations which occur in varying combinations, including the transition of a society from armed conflict to post-conflict reconstruction. The term 'post-conflict' implies a historical trajectory towards the sustainability of non-violent conflict resolution in a society, but there is always the danger that the post-conflict transition can end in renewed fighting. Usually, the phrase 'post-conflict' is used more to describe a situation in which international assistance might become involved, particularly as the beginning of a post-conflict transition is marked by some form of an agreement by the parties to the conflict to halt the fighting (e.g. cease-fire, peace accords, etc.).

However, the post-conflict phase is often not very peaceful. In fact, participants noted that the phrase 'post-conflict' often masks the fact that the period after a formal halt to hostilities is usually characterised by pervasive lawlessness and often intense violence. Thus, one of the first priorities of peace operations or programmes of assistance in a post-conflict transition is often to establish basic security for the people and the protection of civilians.

In this period, which may last for several years, women tend to experience a backlash. Participants emphasised that societies tend to try to get back to what people understand as normality, with normality often defined as 'like it was before'. As part of this process, women will often find their roles being re-defined for them but will still not object. In addition, participants noted that social dislocation, lawlessness, unemployment, the absence of a judiciary or administration of justice, may result

in an increase in crime which specifically targets women, e.g. trafficking in women and prostitution.

Some of the problems women have to face after the armed conflict has ceased include the return of male combatants and prisoners of war. These men are traumatised by their experiences of war, and have little understanding - because of little knowledge - of what the women had to go through during their absence. They claim their place in the household, and thereby challenge the central role their women played during the war. Because the men often find it difficult to re-adapt – because of traumas of war, unemployment, and difficulties in the communication with the members of their family parents, children, wife and others – domestic violence may become a problem in this situation. Still, women represent the main security network for the men when they return from combat or detainee camps.

Former women combatants and prisoners of war face special problems when they return. Often they are traumatised to a greater extent than the men because many of them also have been subject to sexual violence. In fact, just the idea that this is possible can generate significant social stigma and make their reintegration to society difficult. Most women will therefore prefer not to talk about what they did, and what happened to them. Oblivion is often the simplest solution.

Widows, and above all the wives of missing persons, will meet legal and economic obstacles. In many cultures and legal systems women cannot inherit land and property, and they will therefore become dependent on the male relatives of the husband in order to be able to gain access to the land. Also, it can take a long time for a missing person to be declared dead and in the meantime the women left behind will find themselves in a kind of legal vacuum.

In most cases, prior to the eruption of an armed conflict, women have had little political experience or training. During conflict, most political activities are related to warfare. This lack of experience among women, combined with the traditional patterns of distribution of political power, are the main hindrances to women's participation in political life in post-conflict transitions. A special effort should therefore be made towards the integration of more women in political life and decision-making. Special quotas for women have been proposed and tested in some countries, but with limited impact.

Lebanon: Post-conflict Regression

The war in Lebanon started in 1975 and lasted until 1991. The period that followed was characterised as post-conflict, but more than 10 years later the situation is not peaceful. The war continued in the south with Israeli occupation and after the withdrawal of Israeli forces in 2000 the situation remained unstable.

Women responded to the war in Lebanon by emphasising traditional roles and norms. Mothers and wives who had not previously been occupied with politics responded to the conflict by politicising traditional roles and responsibilities. The idea of 'mothers of martyrs' became a slogan and the sacrifice of sons a political act. Women were partners of men in the war and helped prolong it. It is false to believe that women are more peaceful than men. Had women been in higher positions, they would also have been partners in waging the war. Indeed, some women entered guerrilla units and participated in combat.

The reconstruction of Lebanese society has been a slow process and economic decline has characterised the last 10 years of the so-called 'post-conflict' phase. With regard to women and gender relations there have been changes for the better in labour force participation, women's participation in higher education, in arts and literature and participation in public life in general. On the other hand, in political decision-making women remain close to absent. In 1975 women's labour force participation was estimated at 7.5 per cent, while in 1990 the percentage had risen to twenty-seven. Women's enrolment in higher education is close to 50 per cent and in many professions the rate of women is increasing. In the media, women constitute 32 per cent of the reporters, 75 per cent of the students, and between 35 and 50 per cent of professionals in media in general.

Women have entered many spheres of public life in Lebanon but in the realm of political representation women remain virtually excluded from decision-making positions. There are only three women in the 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament, the same result as in the 1963 elections. In the labour law there are certain clauses with special reference to women and children. Women are treated as a 'special case' and prohibited from work in certain sectors: quarries, production of explosives, glass, alcohol, organic fertilisers to mention just a few. While pensions of public servants are passed on to the wife and children upon death, a married woman cannot transfer her pension to her husband and children upon her death unless poverty or physical disability can be documented.

3 Peace Operations

The concept of peace operations has undergone important changes during the last decade, partly in response to the changing nature of contemporary wars and armed conflicts. The terminology in the field of peacekeeping embraces a broad range of definitions; ‘peace-making’, ‘peace-keeping’, and ‘peace-building’ are at present among the most commonly used terms. In addition to these, the notion of ‘preventive action’ is often used in the same context.

The changes in terminology reflect the transformations which peace operations have undergone during the same period. During the early years of peace-keeping, deployment of UN forces rested upon the consent of the parties to the conflict and in particular the host state. Often this meant that UN forces were deployed to monitor an agreed cease-fire or line of force separation.

In today’s peace operations UN forces must often operate in or near areas where there may be little or no agreement about an end to the fighting among the parties to the conflict, or subgroups within them. As described in section 2, the blurred lines between civilian and military may dominate the operational environment. This creates an extremely difficult situation on the ground, demanding, among other tasks, searching civilian persons in a context where culture sensitivity and gender sensitivity are of the greatest importance, and where the peacekeepers’ capacity to anticipate and reduce tension can be decisive for stability. Experience indicates that the presence of women peacekeepers is recommended, not least to carry out the inevitable searches of local women, and because women soldiers can bring a different approach to diffusing tense situations. Often women soldiers are more successful in attempts to convince rather than confront.

Human security, or the protection of people, is a major focus of contemporary peace operations, which have developed into multifunctional peace operations. They involve a wide range of activities, either as part of the mission itself or in operation in the area of the mission mandate: humanitarian relief, de-mining, human rights monitoring, civil policing, demobilisation, supervising and organising elections, as well as engagement in economic and institutional development. As a result, multifunctional peace missions are not limited to military personnel, but include a variety of staff with different background and training. This should create opportunities for the participation of more women in peace operations, as more women are already integrated in these components.

3.1 Protection of civilians

The process of normalisation after a conflict is unlikely to begin in the absence of some basic level of human security. This includes a minimum freedom from fear. People cannot - and will not - invest themselves or their resources in the reconstruction of the physical, social and economic infrastructure of their society if they are still under threat from armed elements. Freedom from fear is also necessary for a voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons.

During the first stages of a peace mission the tasks of the military and the civilian police components will tend to dominate the priorities of international and local planners. Small arms and land-mines are the most commonly used weapons in the armed conflicts of today. They cause the deaths and injuries of thousands of people every year, most of them civilians. Prevention of the uncontrolled spread of these weapons and the disarmament and collection of weapons in society are the first steps towards establishing security for all.

Women, children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable in these situations. They are the first to return, and constitute the majority of the population. Peacekeepers should therefore pay special attention to their need for security and protection. Houses, streets, roads and land have to be cleared of mines to facilitate the return to 'normal' life, and in rural areas to start cultivating the land again. Women, children and the elderly will also need protection from potentially hostile elements in the area. Women - and sometimes even children - may be victims of sexual violence and in a post-conflict phase domestic violence can increase. This has to be brought to the attention of the peacekeeping forces, and the presence of women among them will make it easier for local women to report such incidents to them.

In addition, the impact of the presence of peace-keepers should be closely monitored by troop contributing countries. It is a particularly disturbing fact that women and even children have been subject to sexual abuse by peace-keepers and humanitarian assistance workers. Participants noted that in many cases, prostitution flourishes near the quarters of peacekeepers and where there are many humanitarian assistance workers. These personnel - most of them men - are subject to their own national laws, and often cannot be prosecuted by local authorities. Participants noted that people should be able to trust those who are sent to provide assistance, and they should be able to hold them legally accountable for abuses.

3.2 Cultural sensitivity and gender sensitivity

Peace operations take place in countries where cultural values differ from those of the peace-keepers. It is important for the success of the mission to avoid cultural conflicts with the host society and one of the most common causes of conflict between peacekeepers and the local population is contact with local women.

Each society has its own deep-rooted assumptions about the sexual division of labour, and about which positions and roles women may hold in society, and these may be unknown to peace-keepers and other international staff. Participants noted that in many cases it is generally assumed by international personnel that women's roles in a host society are limited to the private arena, and that therefore they are not in a position to act as partners in co-operation with the peacekeepers. This may not be the case. Participants emphasised that it is important to integrate women in the peace-building and reconstruction process, because women often represent a resource which can facilitate these processes. The challenge is for international personnel to be able to identify the ways in which women's agency manifests itself.

Peace-keepers and other international personnel should be made aware of the sensitivities prior to deployment to the field. They should therefore be trained in both culture sensitivity and gender sensitivity. As the peace forces are multinational and therefore include people with different cultural backgrounds, training sessions should be arranged by the co-ordinating organisation, or left to specialists in the field. The aim should be to impart to the peacekeepers, both male and female, a minimum of knowledge of the cultural norms in the society within which they will deploy and of how to behave with the opposite sex. This training should also teach them how to approach women's special problems and needs in a particular situation.

The presence of women among the peacekeepers will facilitate the contact with local women and thereby with the host society. Experience indicates that with the presence of even a few women among the peacekeepers, the behaviour of the male members of the mission changes. Women bring a diversity of experience and perspectives to their mission, thereby increasing the range of skills, the approaches and the perspectives within a mission, potentially increasing its effectiveness. The United Nations, and particularly the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, should encourage member states to apply policies of gender balance and gender mainstreaming.

3.3 Mainstreaming gender in peace operations

Mainstreaming gender in peace operations has become a priority during the past decade. Gender mainstreaming is defined by the United Nations as ‘the process of assessing the implications for men and for women of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.’ (Document A/52/3/Rev.1).

Many multifunctional peace operations have sought to improve their gender balance, i.e. the degree to which men and women hold the full range of positions in the mission. The UNTAG mission in Namibia, 1989-90, led by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, provided the most significant example of an operation in which women were encouraged to play significant roles. In fact, 40 per cent of the professional staff recruited for UNTAG were women, including a high number in decision-making positions. This was a result of a deliberate policy to recruit trained women to military and civilian posts at all levels, including at the senior decision-making level. The tasks they performed ranged from disarmament, monitoring the return of the refugees and the release of political prisoners, to supervising voter education programmes and elections. Other missions in the first half of the 1990s also included a large number of women, like MINURSO in West Africa, MINUGUA in Guatemala and UNOMSA in South Africa, a mission which was led by a woman, Angela King, who was a Special Advisor to the Secretary-General. Women Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) have at different times led UN missions in Angola and Bosnia. The UN Mission in Cambodia from 1991 to 1993, on the other hand, was essentially an all-male operation, with no women in senior decision-making positions.

Against this background, it is striking to observe that in the year 2000 the proportion of women personnel in peace missions has decreased and that women now account for 3 - 17 per cent of the total staff, and from 0 to 32 per cent of the professional staff. Three of the ongoing UN peacekeeping operations in April 2000 had no women among their professional staff, all of them having observer forces (UNDOF, UNMOGIP, UNMOP). Many countries still hesitate to send women to mainly military missions. The UN will have to encourage the force-contributing countries to do better with regard to gender balance in the peacekeeping forces, a main component of gender mainstreaming.

Gender and Peace Support Operations: A Training Package

Peace support operations have evolved beyond strictly military missions into broader mandates in which civilians have an increasingly prominent role. Missions therefore require new skills. Understanding gender relations in different contexts and ensuring respect for women's human rights are prerequisites for more effective peace support operations.

Canadian peacekeepers are trained in gender issues as part of the preparation for international operations. A training package has been developed with the aim of integrating gender awareness in the policies, programs and practices of peace support operations.

The aim of the training package is to ensure that peacekeepers, civilian and military personnel, are able to identify how and why gender is a relevant factor in complex emergencies. Stress is put on the ways in which human rights and humanitarian law provide the framework for applying a gender perspective. In this way the peacekeepers will be better informed about the ongoing challenges to reshape peace operations to better respond to the gender dimension. Peace-keepers should then be able to develop specific strategies to effectively apply what was learned in the course in their work.

4 Women and Decision-Making

The transition from conflict to post-conflict peace-building is a crucial opportunity for the inclusion of women in domestic decision-making structures and processes. However, women's multiple roles and responsibilities during conflict do not automatically translate into participation by women in political institutions re-established or created in the transition from conflict. Participants noted that it seems to be universally true that women experience a backlash when the conflict is over.

In light of this, participants were particularly concerned that gender issues and issues of social change in general should be considered in the planning process when rebuilding post-conflict institutions. Particular attention should be paid to core issues such as the protection of women, elections and political participation, design of a constitution, jurisdiction and issues of property and land rights. The integration of gender to these issues should begin during the conflict, through the negotiations aimed at bringing the fighting to an end through an agreement of some sort.

4.1 International peace accords

Generally, gender advisors and experts are not present at the table during the negotiations preceding a peace agreement. Few women are represented among the political leaderships of the opposing parties. International diplomats at this level are, with few exceptions, men. Participants characterised the typical form of international peace negotiations as 'top-down' processes and even 'outside-down' processes, in that the teams of international negotiators were perceived to have a tendency to suggest universal solutions for different and specific conflicts.

To have any influence in these processes, local initiatives and women's groups must pay close attention, both to the preparations and the negotiations themselves. Gender relations and the ways in which those relations have been affected by the conflict, should be addressed in the preparatory stage. However, there is often a blindness to the importance of gender to the course of conflict and the implications of gender for the post-conflict transition. Women's work and approaches are simply not recognised as relevant.

Participants noted that, in several African countries, women have made attempts at peace-building. Most of the initiatives are undocumented and are not taken into account by organisations and agencies involved in conflict resolution. Participants suggested that a gender evaluation of peace agreements could identify ways to make 'top-down' processes more inclusive, participatory and equitable for women and other marginalised groups, and might also help to identify ways to integrate the lessons of women's experience to future peace-building initiatives.

Strategies for including women and women's organisations in peace processes should be developed. Participants felt that there is a need for a political framework in order to get around the lack of participation and exclusion in the preparatory or negotiating processes. The following elements should be central to such a framework:

- Making explicit the need to support women's organisations as a strategy to integrate gender issues in peace processes
- The need for increased representation of women in international agencies at higher managerial levels
- Gender awareness when negotiating the core set of political issues for reconstruction of post-conflict institutions.

Finally, participants identified a tendency to add a human rights component to a peace agreement almost as an after-thought to the political negotiations. Often major human rights treaties are merely listed in the text, although there may be additional human rights instruments added, as in the Dayton agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the prevailing view of human rights in these cases tends to be weighted in favour of civil and political rights. Social and economic rights have obtained far less attention. Human rights, including economic and social rights and gender issues, are crucial for reconstruction and reconciliation processes. If these issues are not prioritised the prospect for the post-conflict situation is less bright.

4.2 Lessons learned from the Balkans and Burundi

The international facilitators of the Dayton's Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, agreed formally in December 1995, did not see the numerous women's peace and women's human rights groups in the Balkans as potential actors for peace, reconciliation and democratisation. International recognition of the democratic and peace-building potential of women in the Balkans, organised in civil society, was

only later elaborated by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Bosnia.

When nationalist leaders on all the three sides were seen to be undermining key provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement - such as the return of the refugees and internally displaced, joint governance, etc. - international organisations began to recognise that women, organised in civil society, showed open interest for peace, reconciliation and democratisation. Once the potential of these groups became apparent, they started to get substantial support from the OSCE mission, both for their work with the victims of war, but also in their attempts to build women's political power. The program 'Women in Politics' was started to work for the enactment of a quota rule in the Provisional Electoral Law in time for the elections of 1998. The quota proposed 27 per cent of parliamentary seats would be filled by women, up from 3-5 per cent.

With the negotiation of the Stability Pact for the Balkans, there was no formal place for women. But experience in Bosnia had prepared many women and they rejected the limiting role defined for them, i.e. as victims of human trafficking. After much lobbying, women's representatives were invited to take part in a conference and a press conference on the eve of the Stability Pact Summit. The Summit indicated approval for the establishment of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force, based on the various democratic women's groups from the countries of the region, with a program based on national and regional assessments of the most urgent needs of the women in the region. Its four regional projects in 2000/2001 are focused on a single issue: the political empowerment of women.

The lesson is that adequate training and education for women voters and candidates are necessary to raise awareness around the importance of electing women representatives. Training women for politics must be part of a long-term strategy. In the preparation for the parliamentary elections in the summer 2001 no such preparation for training women voters or candidates had been made.

In addition, the multitude of organisations with gender advisors in Kosovo are not well co-ordinated. In the recent years \$ 15 million have been spent on women empowerment programmes with little effect. There is a disproportional relation between the amount of money spent and the effects of the projects. Resources must be pooled and co-ordinated, not least because of a lack of long-term strategy.

The Burundi peace process began on a more progressive note than Dayton. In the summer of 2000, Nelson Mandela, as chief negotiator, convened a meeting of 19 political parties at the Burundi peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania. Some women representatives of NGOs were granted observer status in the initial peace talks. They did not gain access to the formal political arena but used informal lobbying to influence the discussion. Women's NGOs, regional organisations and UN agencies

worked together to integrate women's issues through informal channels. A high-profile delegation of women politicians from other African countries was invited to the negotiations to speak about gender and women's issues. The 19 parties were briefed on the many ways in which gender issues were related to the peace process and they discussed various political issues, such as the draft of a constitution, electoral systems and war crimes.

An All-Party Burundi Women's Conference was subsequently held to develop further the substantial and political issues. The political parties responded positively and provided names of women representatives who could be invited to such a conference. Again funds were allocated by the facilitators of the negotiations. In the All-Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference, more than 50 Burundi women politicians gathered to discuss and formulate recommendations for the inclusion of the protection of women and women's rights in the peace accords.

The recommendations were distributed to the political parties, discussed in the negotiations and twenty-three of the recommendations were included in the final peace accords. These concerned strengthening the protection of women and girls, including the establishment of mechanisms to prosecute war crimes such as rape and sexual violence as well as the legalisation of a woman's right to inherit land and property, and girls' access to education.

The success of the project was due to co-operation between UN agencies in which an understanding for and interest in gender issues was a high priority. Regional women's networks in Africa played a key role by sending a delegation to attend the negotiations, and the Burundi political parties, once convinced, were co-operative. The perspectives of Burundi women politicians' were in this way integrated to the final peace accord. As an example of how it is possible to bring gender issues to the peace table, the positive experience from the Burundi peace process was important in promoting a wider interest in gender issues and peace processes.

4.3 Gender and International Peace-building Assistance

As noted above, women work to preserve the social order in the midst of armed and other conflicts. However, in decision-making processes related to conflict resolution and preventative diplomacy women are virtually absent.

One of the lessons from the experience in Burundi and the Balkans, is that the integration of women's perspectives to international involvement in peace processes requires organised advocacy by women. Participants noted that, in general,

international assistance programmes and peace operations tend to be planned and deployed by men. There are surprisingly few women in the highest positions within the UN system in the field. The Forum heard that out of 61 Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) there are at present no women. SRSGs are appointed in special circumstances when the UN has been asked to play an exceptional political, peacekeeping or peace-building role. In regional organisations the representation of women at senior management levels is low. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has 22 field missions. Only in the mission to Estonia is the Head of Mission a woman. At the next level, one woman is Deputy Head of Mission. Women make up only 6 per cent of staff at the third professional level below Head of Mission. It is an indication of the depth of the problem that an organisation working on democratisation and support in elections has not managed to include a higher percentage women in its own decision-making structures.

Participants emphasised that just as it becomes more widely recognised that women need to be included in peace processes, there should be a parallel effort to integrate women to the senior levels in donor organisations and as facilitators of the peace processes. The lessons of Burundi and the Balkans point to a need to develop regional and sub-regional mechanisms for full and effective participation of women in all processes of peace building. Participants noted that organisations such as the OSCE, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Co-operation (SADC) should work to ensure better representation of women in the political secretariats and the conflict management organisations of these organisations.

Indeed, it is now widely recognised that the UN will have to increase the representation of women in higher positions. However, gender perspectives involve more than an issues of gender equity. They are crucial to improving the delivery of UN services. Thus, the ambition of 'gender mainstreaming' has been to integrate gender awareness to the provision of humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping and not to isolate it to special gender advisors or in gender units. However, evaluations indicated that gender mainstreaming has not succeeded in ensuring inclusion of gender issues in all relevant programmes. The UN recently made a consolidated appeal of \$2 billion for humanitarian assistance in 19 emergencies. The Forum was told that a gender budget analysis had found only 1.5 per cent of the appeal was support for projects targeting women specifically, while 36.5 per cent of the budget had women included as beneficiaries. Of this amount, 60 per cent was provision of food, water, and nutrition. Only a tiny amount of the budget was allocated to protection of women, indicating that UN emergency assistance falls short in providing adequate support for women.

Guatemala: Returnee communities

During the civil war in Guatemala thousands of peasants fled to Mexico and settled in refugee camps in 1981-82. As part of the peace process in the beginning of the 1990s the issue of return was negotiated through the UNHCR and other agencies. In 1995 the return of communities was organised.

The experience of exile was both traumatic and a transformative process. Women's public participation started in exile through involvement in refugee women's organisations. While this was an empowering experience for some women, the organisations were not separated from organisations dominated by men. Women were not active in their communities fighting for individual rights, but on behalf of their community as a whole. The local organisations learned the democracy discourse of 'justice for all' and international human rights. 'Gender' as a concept was introduced once refugee became more familiar with the policies of international assistance. Women's activism did not arise out of home-grown feminist emancipation.

For women to continue working for equal rights, democracy and justice turned out to be more difficult in post-conflict Guatemala than during exile in Mexico. In the post-conflict society, women's roles returned to the pre-existing notions of normality. This became most obvious through the implementation of international assistance which targeted women through women's organisations in post-conflict Guatemala. One example of support to women was to introduce women's based income-generating projects. Most projects failed. When the projects were taken over by men they were more successful. An explanation for the failure can be found in local concepts of 'work'. 'Work' is a gendered concept and what was considered 'women's work' and 'men's work' in the local community decided the extent to which women could take on the projects. Women simply did not have time for income-generating activities in addition to their domestic roles.

These findings imply that gender training must be provided for the high-level managers within the UN system, both women and men. But it is just as urgent that more of the assistance work be directed towards local women's organisations. Long-term programmes for the integration of women should be based both on culture sensitivity and gender sensitivity. This will only happen when more women participate in all stages of peace operations and humanitarian assistance programmes, from the first steps of planning to implementation in the field.

4.4 Elections and political participation

In recent years, international assistance has focused on elections as one of the major outward signs of political normalisation of war-torn societies. The process of building democracy should involve the inclusion of women in the political process; as voters, activists, candidates, officials, etc.

A democracy is dependent in part on the electoral process. Its legitimacy and the legitimacy of the elected representatives rest upon a functioning electoral system which in turn helps promote political stability. There are very few countries in the world where women do not have the right to vote and the right of women to vote, participants felt, is not contested internationally. The problem is rather how to encourage women to use their right to vote and to participate in the electoral process.

Participants noted that more needed to be done to provide women with targeted information materials about candidates and parties, in addition to the materials supplied to the population in general. But voter information is only part of the problem. A more difficult challenge is how to increase the number of female candidates. Women seem to be structurally excluded from formal political decision-making structures. To counter this phenomenon, various measures have been introduced with varying degrees of success. There was a heated debate among participants about the use of quotas for women in elections. This instrument for including more women in politics is increasingly being adopted. However, there are different approaches, with some proposing a 30 per cent quota of women in parliament. The logic is similar to affirmative action policies to ensure minorities' representation in parliaments. Another approach has been to oblige the political parties to include a certain number of women in their electoral lists. In some countries a 50-50 men-women norm has been established for the party lists. In other cases, the electoral law has decreed that 30 per cent of the candidates must be women, or that 5 out of the 15 first names on a list must be women.

Some argued that the use of quotas is undemocratic, whether applied to the situation of women, minorities or religious groups. Still, women are underrepresented in political decision-making. Participants felt that there is no short-cut to integrating women into decision-making positions. A long-term perspective in which training and support are provided to women candidates can be a first step. Regional organisations monitoring elections are central in such a process. Change in political culture towards increased participation of all parts of the population should be a priority. In this sense, a gender perspective is important because it is part of a larger debate on democratisation.

4.5 Women's Legal Status in War and Peace

During conflict, international humanitarian law provides for the protection of women. The Forum heard that there are about 40 such provisions, most of them referring to honour or women's mothering roles. In the post-conflict phase, the ending of impunity and the promotion of justice are a crucial part of the reconciliation process. Mechanisms for national dialogue, such as truth commissions, as well as more specifically legal procedures can deal with war crimes and related violations.

War crimes against women should be included in these processes. Only recently, rape became legally recognised as a crime of war. However, participants emphasised, that is no guarantee that war crimes will be dealt with in the post-conflict period. It is important to pay particular attention to the ways in which war crimes are verified and monitored as well as how they are dealt with in the political

Sri Lanka

Women face a wide range of challenges in Sri Lanka. A high number of female-headed households, widows and female ex-combatants are socially stigmatised. In addition to continuous political violence, domestic violence and rape are reportedly widespread. Women and girls suffer under this situation and constitute 70 per cent of the displaced population.

Women have little access to formal decision-making structures in Sri Lanka. Powerful women are found at the top, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and her mother, a former Prime Minister. Kinship and class are powerful determinants for entry into higher political positions and public offices. Widows or daughters of political leaders have taken up such positions but in general, women are underrepresented in the executive and the legislative power structures. Women are furthermore discouraged from engaging in formal politics since 'tradition' portrays women as 'impure' when they enter politics.

Women engage in informal decision-making structures through or within women's organisations. However, women's organisations tend not to be mass based. These organisations often have strong ethnic and class dimensions and are run by upper-class women. For example; the organisations in the south are mainly run by Sinhalese middle- and upper-class women. These organisations tend to be non-confrontational in their relationship with the state and conciliatory rather than militant advocates for women's rights.

negotiations process, and to assure a gender balance and perspective among the personnel involved in this work.

In post-conflict transitions, domestic law plays a more important role and these can present significant challenges to the status of women in society. There are many legal aspects of conflict and post-conflict transitions that arise in which women are not protected. One of the core problems is that women may not be legal persons and as a result they may not possess basic official documents like an ID card. They can lose the right to land and property when they are widowed or their husband disappears, which can be a significant obstacle for refugee households trying to sustain themselves in immediate post-conflict return processes. Similarly, inheritance laws may disadvantage women significantly if there are no other legal or administrative structures due to conflict and often times there is no provision in the law to deal with the implications of male spouses who are missing and presumed dead.

It is therefore important that, in the reconstruction of legal institutions, gender issues are brought into the debate at an early stage. In the formulation of state

Jordan: Legislation and women's rights

The Jordanian experience offers lessons concerning legislation. In the Jordanian constitution women have the right to participate in and to be members of political parties. Women have held parliamentary seats, ministerial positions and have been appointed to the bench. But women's participation in politics and public offices remains limited. The Legal Division of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, established by Princess Basma bin Tallal, works to modify discriminatory laws and local customary practices. Efforts have been made in three fields in particular: labour law, election law and the personal status law.

The main issues in the labour law has been to provide women with the right to maternity leave. Today women have the right to take one year unpaid maternity leave. Women's participation in the Jordanian labour force is mainly as teachers, nurses and secretaries. To establish kindergartens at work places has been one measure to enable women to work. Until 1974 women did not have the right to vote or to run as candidates for seats in parliament. In 1993, one woman was elected to parliament. In addition, there are economic and social obstacles preventing women from entering formal political seats: election campaigns are costly and there is a fee for all candidates running for election. Change is slow, but it continues, and participants in the Forum noted that a female quota system may be one way forward.

constitutions, it may be appropriate to include a Women's Charter. Also, personal status law, family law and labour law should be examined with a gender lens to identify what sort of future society and gender relations the law anticipates or lays the foundation for.

Finally, in conflict and post-conflict situations women may face surprising challenges to their legal status. During the Turkish invasion of Cyprus a large number of women were raped. Immediately after the Turkish invasion an emergency law was introduced for a short period in which men were allowed to divorce their raped wives (divorce was legalised in Cyprus in the 1990s). This example, which participants felt was probably not unique, reminds us that men also have to be included in the healing process after such traumas, in order to promote the healing of the society as a whole.

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Gendering Human Security

During violent conflicts women are victims and survivors, but also fighters, leaders and activists. Yet, too often the memory of women's agency in conflict is short. Societies emerging from conflict may experience a redefinition of the role and status of women in society, resulting in the marginalisation or isolation of women from key peace-building processes. The resources of knowledge and capacity that women have developed during conflict are either lost or neglected. In January 2001, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science held a joint Forum in Oslo on Gender Relations in Post-Conflict Transitions. The Forum brought together over 40 professionals to explore gender and decision-making in post-conflict transitions.

Drawing on the observations and analysis presented by these participants, 'Gendering Human Security' explores some of the relevant gender dynamics and suggests recommendations for practitioners on how to integrate women in peace-building.

The NUPI-Fafo Forum on Gender Relations in Post-conflict Transitions was co-sponsored by the Government of Norway, the Government of Canada and the Government of Switzerland as part of their co-operation through the Human Security Network.



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