

## From rhetoric to reality – Women Peace and Security Agenda must be implemented without further delay

Amnesty International welcomes UN Member States' renewed commitments to full and effective implementation of [UN Security Council resolution 1325 \(2000\)](#) and all subsequent resolutions that form the Women Peace and Security agenda. Marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this landmark resolution, which recognized the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls, over 100 Member States joined UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the Security Council open debate held on 13 and 14 October 2015 in New York.

Three representatives of women-led civil society organisations – [Julienne Lusenge](#) (Democratic Republic of Congo), [Yanar Mohammed](#) (Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq) both representing the NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security, of which Amnesty International is a member, and Alaa Murabit (Libya) also addressed the Security Council, and gave powerful accounts of the many challenges women and girls face in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Amnesty International welcomes the adoption by consensus of a further resolution - [UN Security Council resolution 2242 \(2015\)](#) - on the occasion of the open debate. The resolution reaffirms the previous seven resolutions in the area of women peace and security, and highlights areas that require particular attention. In line with already existing obligations and commitments, UN Member States and all relevant UN entities must use this new resolution as a further impetus to renew and intensify their efforts to genuinely protect and promote the human rights of women and girls as part of the Women Peace and Security Agenda.

If UN Member States and the wider UN system are serious about making the Women Peace and Security agenda a reality for women and girls, they must redouble their efforts and translate the commitments made in New York into tangible progress on the ground.

In particular, Amnesty International wishes to convey the following recommendations to UN Member States and the wider UN system:

- **Support women-led civil society organizations and Women Human Rights Defenders:**  
Women who stand up for their human rights and those of others, who raise concerns about human rights violations and abuses, who provide services to survivors of sexual violence, or who claim a place at the table of political and other processes, are facing increasing threats, intimidation and attacks in many parts of the world. UN Member States and UN agencies must recognize the important role that women-led CSOs and WHRDs play in advancing the Women Peace and Security agenda, and human rights more broadly, at national, regional

and international levels. These individuals and groups must be provided the support and protection they need to be able to carry out their important work.

- **Ensure full and effective participation of women and girls:** Amnesty International welcomes the calls made in paragraph 1 of Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) on much needed efforts to ensure increased representation of women at all levels. Women and girls continue to be excluded from key decision-making processes in conflict and post-conflict situations, but also in times of peace. It is essential to remove all barriers in law and practice, which perpetuate gender stereotypes and roles. These barriers are among the main reasons that women and girls continue to be denied a seat at the table. UN Member States must reform discriminatory laws, policies and practices to remove all barriers to women and girls' meaningful and effective engagement.
- **Respect human rights while countering violent extremism:** Much attention of the international community is currently directed towards countering violent extremism, but this requires greater conceptual clarity. It is necessary to generate more gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations in order to develop targeted policies and programme response to it, as reflected in paragraphs 11 and 12 of resolution 2242 (2015). Amnesty International reminds UN Member States that all counter-terrorism efforts must be carried out fully in line with their obligations under human rights and international law.
- **Access to justice:** Amnesty International welcomes that resolution 2242 (2015) in paragraph 14 urges Member States to strengthen access to justice for women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Amnesty International urges States to remove all barriers to investigation and prosecution of crimes of sexual and gender-based violence and under international law, including statutes of limitation and discriminatory laws, policies and practices; enact and exercise universal jurisdiction and other forms of extraterritorial jurisdiction over rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence that amount to crimes under international law; build capacity to map, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate such crimes and commit to supporting genuine initiatives in intergovernmental bodies to establish commissions of inquiry or referrals to international or hybrid justice mechanisms to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate sexual and gender-based violence crimes in conflict.
- **Access to support services, including sexual and reproductive health care:** While paragraph 16 refers to the need to ensure **gender considerations across humanitarian programming** including the provision of services, the resolution should have spelled out in clearer terms the obligation of states to ensure that survivors of gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, can access to comprehensive medical treatment, mental health care, psychosocial support and remedies. Amnesty International calls on all UN Member States to ensure, as called for under international law, that survivors of crimes of sexual and gender-based violence have access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services and information if required, including psychological support and counselling, emergency contraception, HIV counselling, testing and post-exposure prophylaxis, safe and legal abortion and maternal health support.

- **End sexual exploitation and abuse:** Amnesty International welcomes that the resolution recognizes the urgent need to effectively implement the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse (operative paragraphs 9 and 10). These recommendations must be put in practice without delay, and need to be carried forward also as part of the outcomes of the ongoing peacekeeping review. The UN – including all troop-contributing countries - must ensure that potential and actual peacekeepers and all other staff receive comprehensive human rights training, including substantive gender-sensitive training, on an ongoing basis, and that relevant codes of conduct and protocols are adopted and adhered to. Survivors of sexual violence crimes committed by UN peacekeepers and civilian staff must have access to support services, and perpetrators must be brought to justice.
  
- **Ensure effective implementation of the WPS agenda within the Security Council's work:** Amnesty International welcomes that SC resolution 2242 (2015) in paragraph 5a) expresses the intention to convene meetings of Security Council experts to facilitate a more systematic approach to WPS within its own work. Amnesty International urges the Security Council to establish such a mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review of the Council's activities for the implementation of WPS agenda, thereby ensuring greater accountability and more efficient integration of the Women Peace and Security agenda across the Council's work on all country-specific and thematic considerations.
  
- **Ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to WPS:** The importance of gender equality and women's human rights has been recognized under the WPS agenda, the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Sustainable Development Goals. There is an urgent need to make good on these obligations and commitments, and to implement them in an integrated manner, thereby moving away from a siloed approach, and to finally make women and girls' human rights a reality.