

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Despite promises violence against women continues unabated

Amnesty International welcomes today's open debate in the UN Security Council to assess implementation of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The organization urges all governments, the Security Council and the UN system as a whole to take concrete steps to make real the promises of Resolution 1325 for all women living in conflict affected situations.

Adopted in 2000, Resolution 1325 calls for increased protection of women during armed conflict, for an end to impunity for gender-based abuses during and after conflict, and the participation of women at all levels of decision-making related to prevention, management and resolution of conflict. Yet, notwithstanding modest progress in mainstreaming gender considerations in peace-keeping initiatives, violence against women and girls in conflict affected situations continues unabated and most acts of violence are never investigated nor are the perpetrators brought to justice.

The Security Council has before it the first Secretary-General's report on the state of implementation of Resolution 1325. Amnesty International welcomes this report and in particular its emphasis on preventing and responding to gender-based violence in armed conflict. Amnesty International shares the Secretary-General's concern that "thus far, the international community has not been able to prevent acts of violence against women from occurring during armed conflict".

Earlier this year, Amnesty International launched a global Stop Violence Against Women campaign, which aims to highlight the responsibility of the state, community and individual to take action to stop violence against women and girls and end impunity for perpetrators of such violence. Our research to date shows no reduction in this phenomenon. Rather, we are currently witnessing horrific levels of gender-based violence committed with impunity against women and girls in many conflict-affected countries, which the UN Secretary-General said "has reached almost epidemic proportions".

Amnesty International believes that the Security Council and UN system as a whole must do more to integrate the provisions of Resolution 1325 in their work. Since the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000, less than 20 percent of Security Council resolutions include language on women or gender. Together with other NGOs, Amnesty International is urging the Security Council not only to call on the Secretary-General to establish a comprehensive UN-wide action plan, but also to establish a focal point and expert working group in the Security Council to ensure further integration of Resolution 1325 in all relevant areas of its work.

Amnesty International also welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations on gender-based violence, and urges the Security Council, member states, and United Nations entities to take all necessary measures implement his recommendations:

- to apply increased pressure to parties to armed conflict to cease all violations of the human rights of women and girls,
- to end impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including sexual and gender-based violations, and
- to conduct gender-sensitive investigations and report findings systematically to the Council.