



## **Joint Press Release**

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## **Call for inclusion of women in peace processes: UN Women launches the global study on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in eastern and southern Africa**

**Nairobi (Kenya), 7 September 2016:** Women's empowerment contributes to the success of peace talks and the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerates economic recovery, strengthens peace operations, improves our humanitarian assistance, and can help counter violent extremism, according to the Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325): *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*.

The Study, which was launched today by UN Women in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region surveys the implementation of commitments on the Women, Peace and Security agenda around the world, as well as examines the changing landscape of global peace and security, and puts forth ambitious recommendations on the way forward.

“Together, we must ensure that the next generation knows a region founded on sustainable peace, development and gender equality,” Jebbeh Forster, UN Women’s Chief Advisor on Peace and Security said at the event.

Sahle-Work Zewde, Director General, United Nations Office at Nairobi, noted that the region is leading Africa in women’s representation in senior positions in peacekeeping operations. “Regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC), have strong commitments to the principles of 1325, which member states have signed up to.” She, however, noted that despite some of the significant areas of progress, there are areas of limited success and new threats to women’s security such as the high levels of sexual and gender based violence, violent extremism, the low visibility and representation of women in formal peace processes, and the inadequate resources allocated to women’s recovery and reintegration needs, which undermine women’s security, empowerment and gender equality, and consequently sustainable peace and development.

The United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, co-hosted the launch of the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, as well as the official launch in the region of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Great Lakes Strategy in support of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework agreement. The PSC Framework seeks to promote durable and sustainable peace in the Great Lakes region with a focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

“We globally recognize that there has been some progress on implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Eastern and Southern Africa regions. However, the challenges and gaps that remain are huge and require collective commitment, resources and efforts to address them,” Mr. Djinnit noted in his introductory remarks.

“The Strategic Framework specifically addresses the need to ensure a peaceful and stable region in the Great Lakes, free from Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), and in which women and girls are empowered to participate in peace building, in economic growth, and enjoy equal access to benefits of sustainable development,” said David Clapp, UNDP’s Sub-regional Platform Coordinator for East and Southern Africa.

The launch brought together government officials from the Eastern and Southern Africa region, members of the diplomatic community, United Nations Agencies, representatives from regional institutions, including the AU, the ICGLR and SADC Secretariats, civil society organizations, and eminent individuals who work on peace and security.

In its key findings and recommendations, the Global Study on UNSCR 1325 explores seven critical thematic areas, and looks at key actors in monitoring accountability for women, peace and security. The seven thematic areas include:

- Women's participation: women's involvement in peace processes has positive impact in pushing for the commencement, resumption or finalization of negotiations, particularly when momentum has stalled or talks have faltered.
- Protecting the rights of women and girls in humanitarian settings: increased attention has been paid to violence against women and girls, particularly sexual violence in conflict, resulting in greater visibility, high-level advocacy, and the development of technical tools. However, too little funding is allocated to programming and services for survivors.
- Toward an era of transformative justice: justice must be transformative in nature, addressing not only the singular violations experienced by women, but also the underlying inequalities which render women and girls vulnerable during times of conflict and which inform the consequences of the human rights violations they experience.
- Keeping the peace in an increasingly militarized world: there is need for a larger focus on demilitarization, and the development of effective strategies for conflict prevention and the non-violent protection of civilians. Moreover, the study highlights that women's presence in the security sector has been found to significantly lower rates of complaints of misconduct, rates of improper use of weapons, as well as raise the credibility of forces, increase access to communities and vital information, and lead to a greater reporting of sexual and gender based crimes.
- Building inclusive and peaceful societies in the aftermath of conflict: women in conflict-affected and recovering countries lack economic opportunities necessary for survival, remain confronted by daily violence in their homes and communities, struggle to cope with heavy burdens of care and dependency, and continue to endure the emotional and physical scars of conflict, without support or recognition. In the aftermath of conflict, violence against women often increases, underlining the importance of rebuilding rule of law institutions.
- Preventing conflict: states that have lower levels of gender inequality are less likely to resort to the use of force. Stronger recognition is required of the influence of gender norms, gender relations, and gender inequalities on the potential for the eruption of conflict.
- Countering violent extremism: across regions, a common thread shared by extremist groups is that in every instance their advance has been coupled with attacks on the rights of women and girls—rights to education, participation in public life and autonomous decision-making over their own bodies.

Many African countries have developed National Action Plans (NAP) on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, with Kenya launching its NAP during this year's International Women's Day by Kenya's First Lady, Margret Kenyatta.

A landmark legal and political framework, the Resolution 1325 acknowledges the importance of women's participation and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, political processes, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peacebuilding and governance.

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**UN Women** is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

**The Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes** supports and advocates for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework agreement for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region.