

**BEYOND VICTIMHOOD:  
WOMEN'S PEACEBUILDING IN SUDAN, CONGO AND UGANDA**

Africa Report N°112 – 28 June 2006

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## BEYOND VICTIMHOOD:

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Peacebuilding cannot succeed if half the population is excluded from the process. Crisis Group's research in Sudan, Congo (DRC) and Uganda suggests that peace agreements, post-conflict reconstruction, and governance do better when women are involved. Women make a difference, in part because they adopt a more inclusive approach toward security and address key social and economic issues that would otherwise be ignored. But in all three countries, as different as each is, they remain marginalised in formal processes and under-represented in the security sector as a whole. Governments and the international community must do much more to support women peace activists.

The scale of discrimination and violence against women in each armed conflict – and the impunity with which it continues to be committed – remain the central obstacles to expanding the good work being done by women peacebuilders. The international community speaks a great deal about including women in formal peace-making processes and recognising their peacebuilding contributions but fails to do so in a systematic, meaningful way. Advances have been made in understanding the links between gender, development, human rights, peace, security and justice. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 reaffirmed the role of women in preventing and resolving conflicts and mandates UN member states to take steps to increase women's participation in decision-making. However, endemic discrimination and sexual violence are significant barriers to achieving Resolution 1325's goal of inclusivity.

The stereotype of "women as only victims" should not be reinforced. An array of women's organisations and women leaders are doing remarkable work in each of the three countries, under difficult circumstances. The daily struggle for survival greatly limits the numbers who have become peace activists but their potential is significant. Because those who are courageous and capable enough to involve themselves as catalysts in peacebuilding are an endangered minority, they should be safeguarded and strengthened with funding, training and inclusion in assessment missions and other decision-making mechanisms that shape fundamental questions of security.

Properly supported, women's peace movements can affect large sectors of the population and be a powerful force for reducing violence and building democratic and participatory public institutions, particularly in the post-conflict period. Their organisations should be identified at the outset of peacemaking processes and helped to work within broader peace initiatives and to communicate their messages to both national leaders and the international community.

The role of Sudanese women varies by region. Though women contribute prominently to peacebuilding through civil society, they were largely excluded from both the North-South and Darfur peace negotiations. Two pressing issues for women peace activists are the return of refugees and the internally displaced, and increasing women's capacity to enter the democratisation processes set in motion this past year. Neither the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement nor the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement provide guarantees for women's participation in the implementation processes. Women are under-represented at national and local levels, and even stated commitments to their participation in formal government structures have not been fulfilled.

Congolese women have registered and voted in impressive numbers and secured commitments on paper for greater roles in governance. However, in practice they remain badly under-represented and violence against them, often rape, is widespread and committed with impunity. Without greater political representation and more robust efforts to deal with the flood of weapons and militias that make the East highly unstable, women will continue to suffer disproportionately from the impacts of this conflict, and their potential as peacebuilders will not be fully achieved.

Though the situation is far from ideal, Uganda has by far the most advanced, articulate and organised women's peace movement of the three countries – one whose basic principles can be replicated. The model that has evolved there relies on autonomy, including to some extent in funding, which makes its organisations both more independent and sustainable. It relies on networking to share common experiences among disparate regions and

offer practical training for conflict resolution and trauma counselling both within families and in wider community and inter-community disputes – an approach with a proven success rate in reducing violence. With careful consultation, a commitment to learn lessons and a strong budgetary mechanism, and if leadership remains with the women who have created it, it could serve as the basis for a women's regional peace initiative.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the Sudanese Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan:**

1. Fulfil stated commitments to women's participation in all formal government structures.
2. Ensure at least 25 per cent women's participation in implementation of all phases of the Darfur Peace Agreement, including the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, aiming for targets similar to those set in Southern Sudan.
3. Extend land ownership to women and include women in all resource-sharing discussions, including those governing land and oil.
4. Establish a fund within the Multi-Donor Trust Fund to train women to participate in the security sector and government, and include women's organisations in the Fund's management and disbursement of monies.
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to prepare women for political roles as the country moves toward elections.
6. Stop the support that still goes from within the National Congress Party and the army to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda; act with the Ugandan government to protect female abductees who escape the LRA and are detained by the Sudanese army and give them appropriate protection as mandated by the Geneva Convention.
7. Amend the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act (2006) to conform to international law, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998).
8. Educate police and medical personnel to handle rape cases correctly and implement the Amended Circular (2005), which allows women to seek medical care without first filing Criminal Form Eight.
9. Ensure that disarmament and demobilisation programs cover women who will be left behind when the army deploys north, and when the Sudan

People's Liberation Army (SPLA) deploys south pursuant to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

### **To the Government of Congo:**

10. Establish commissions to apply and monitor measures related to women in the new constitution, especially Article 15 on the elimination of sexual violence, and promote equal opportunities for women.
11. Include promotion of women's rights in the job description of all ministers, not only the ministry for women and the family.
12. Strengthen the justice system by promoting reforms to end impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, give legal aid to victims and establish special police and prosecutorial units to investigate sexual crimes.

### **To the Government of Uganda:**

13. Immediately enact and provide funding for laws related to domestic relations, sexual offences, succession and domestic violence to protect the rights of women and children in the family and educate the population about those laws.
14. Support Betty Bigombe's efforts to mediate the conflict with the LRA, work with Sudanese authorities to assist abducted girls and women who escape the LRA in southern Sudan and develop a strategy for cooperation with the Congolese government to eliminate LRA bases in eastern Congo.
15. Support communities to implement healing and reconciliation processes in conflict areas and build the capacity of female and male leaders to manage traumatised returnees, as stated in Article 9 of the Amnesty Act (2000); complement that law by strengthening the demobilisation and reintegration process, including by protecting returnees and giving the full resettlement packages promised.

### **To the Governments of all Three Countries and Other Members of the International Community:**

#### ***On Human Security***

16. Consult with local women to design, implement and monitor budgets, policies and programs to enhance the effectiveness of state spending to promote women's rights.
17. Make education and training accessible to women and girls living in unstable environments and offer women training in leadership, management, finance, land tenure, communication, peace and security to

promote their entry into state institutions, particularly those in charge of security.

18. End impunity for sexual violence and exploitation, whether by husbands, family members, officials, or military or police personnel, and establish special police and prosecutor units that include women, trained to investigate and help prosecute crimes of sexual and domestic violence.

#### ***On Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) and Small Arms***

19. Ensure that DDR programs take into account the different needs of female and male ex-combatants, combatant associates and dependents by including women on demobilisation design committees, and empower women to lobby and assist in reintegration efforts by providing them with access to resources and training.

#### ***On Security Sector and Judicial Reform and Justice***

20. Implement laws to end impunity for rape and sexual assault by punishing perpetrators and facilitating survivors' access to timely and appropriate judicial support and redress, and encourage the International Criminal Court, when investigating war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sudan, Congo and Uganda, to prosecute gender-based violence, which has been ruled a crime against humanity.
21. Open police and military recruitment to women, ensure parity in all training, including weapons handling, and institute recruitment and training programs and policies, including quota systems, to promote women police and army officers into senior positions.
22. Establish cooperative forums for police and women peacemakers, particularly in rural areas where police services rarely exist, and in camps for internally displaced persons; train women peace activists to record and report on crimes such as domestic violence, rape, illicit weapons and other security-related issues; and protect women informants, witnesses and survivors from harassment, intimidation and violence.

#### ***On Reproductive Health Care***

23. Support government health institutions to provide healthcare for women in conflict and high-violence zones and to offer free treatment in cases of sexual violence.
24. Combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, which is exacerbated by armed conflict, by offering voluntary counselling, testing and anti-retroviral treatment;

prioritise health education and counselling on sexual violence to help overcome the stigmatisation, exclusion and abandonment of rape survivors, especially those who are HIV positive.

#### ***On Regional and Cross-Border Security***

25. Facilitate women's participation in regional and cross-border peacebuilding forums, such as the Amani Forum in the Great Lakes region, especially with regard to LRA incursions; assist community-based organisations working to return women abducted across borders and coordinate these efforts with the UN peacekeeping missions in Sudan and Congo and Betty Bigombe's mediation efforts in Uganda.

#### ***On Legal Rights***

26. Ensure the primacy of laws that honour and protect women's rights over customary law and other traditional practices and guarantee the enforcement of those laws; include men in discussions on promoting women's rights.

**Nairobi/Brussels, 28 June 2006**

## BEYOND VICTIMHOOD:

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

The passage of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on 31 October 2000, dealing with "Women, Peace and Security", was a groundbreaking moment for women's peace activism.<sup>1</sup> The unified product of two distinct groups of women – peace activists working on the ground and those within the UN and other international organisations – the resolution established, for the first time, a coherent policy framework for promoting women's inclusion in a wide array of issues related to peace and security. It has made a measurable impression on governments, donors, and local and international institutions but its impact has been greatest on those who already supported women as agents of peace and security.<sup>2</sup>

Progress has been more limited in countries where leaderships remain hostile to a greater role for women in peacemaking and peacebuilding. This comparative study of women's activities in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda assesses the extent to which UNSCR 1325 has driven decisions related to women's roles in organising and implementing peace and security activities and assesses what women have been able to achieve in three countries that remain highly militarised.

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<sup>1</sup> UNSCR 1325 (full text at Appendix B below) reaffirms "the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and ... [stresses] the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security". It also mandates that states "ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict".

<sup>2</sup> In some cases, this contribution may only have been to point out the failures of "gender mainstreaming" and other policies intended to promote women in peacebuilding, a problem highlighted in two recent UN Development Program reports. Jennifer Klot, "Gender Mainstreaming in Crisis Prevention and Recovery: A Forward-Looking Review", UNDP/BCPR, 6 February 2006; Nafis Sadak et al, "Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP", UNDP Evaluations Office, January 2006.

There is historical indifference and resistance in Sudan, Congo and Uganda toward giving women entry into one of the most male-dominated of enclaves, the security sector, and women continue to experience high levels of physical and emotional insecurity, frequently in the form of sexual violence perpetrated by men. The central question in the context of UNSCR 1325 is what can be done to dismantle the barriers that prevent women from greater participation – at leadership levels – in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict governance.

Across the three lands, women peacebuilders, often without formal support, are trying to bring security to their communities, countries and regions. Yet, for too many policymakers, recognising and supporting the role and capacities of women in preventing and mitigating conflict remains an afterthought. Against a backdrop of persistent violence, exclusion and decaying social services, many see improving the status of women as an issue to be addressed further down the road, in a time of peace. This argument must be challenged: there are specific steps to better the status of women which, if taken now, would make the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable peace far more likely.

Women can make peace agreements and post-conflict efforts more viable, effective and practical by engaging in a wide variety of actions, including but not limited to participating in peace talks; rehabilitating children associated with armed groups; convening people across conflict lines to discuss common concerns such as access to clean water; and advocating budget priorities that emphasise social services rather than military expenditures.

The work that women do in these countries to challenge the dominance of militarised solutions to violent conflict has great potential but is seriously constrained. The peace activists expose themselves to extraordinary personal risks in their daily work to make their communities safer. Often they receive few resources to support their efforts, and their experience and advice on peacebuilding are ignored by policymakers. Those women who do make it into

leadership positions frequently face considerable backlash when they try to continue to advance gender equality.<sup>3</sup>

It is important, however, to avoid approaching women's roles in peacebuilding as uniform or "women" in general as an undifferentiated group. Most women in these countries are focused on survival, which means remaining out of sight as far as possible rather than publicly opposing politicians and military leaders. The courageous women who actively work as catalysts in peacebuilding are a distinct minority but they are not elites, although they are usually more literate and organised than other women.

Despite increasing international rhetoric about keeping women safe in armed conflict, women in the three countries face broad and persistent violence, which is frequently perpetrated by uniformed soldiers and police. Denial of the scale of this violence and impunity for the actions are widespread. In general, international solutions to armed conflict – negotiations, peacekeeping missions, governmental reform, disarmament processes and economic sanctions – do not offer women and girls adequate protection.

Although actively used by those women's peace groups that have been educated about it, UNSCR 1325 is largely unknown in the corridors of power. There have been no large-scale, organised efforts to explain its contents to the three governments or to civil society organisations not expressly involved in working with women, and it has had little, if any, impact on development of new policy, government spending and security sector reform. There is still no measurable commitment or significant funding to support women's entry into security arenas, whether in police, prison and wildlife services, armies, defence ministries or other institutions of national security.

## II. SUDAN'S SHIFTING CONFLICTS

Sudan is a militarised society. Despite a series of patchwork peace and power-sharing deals, decision-making remains highly centralised, and society is marked by gross inequities and intolerance.<sup>4</sup> However, the situation of women varies dramatically by region. For example, it is quite different in the parts of the Islamic North where Sharia (Islamic) law is more strictly observed than elsewhere. It is challenging, therefore, to make general observations about the potential of Sudanese women peacebuilders during a period that hovers between war and post-conflict, and while Darfur, the East and large parts of the South are unsettled. Nonetheless, women should be fully included in all efforts to resolve the several persistent conflicts.

In the more than 40 years of war that have plagued the country since independence in 1956, more than two million lives have been lost due to violence and associated causes, and over four million – the majority women with their children – have been internally displaced. Although Sudan is divided by conflicts between its centre in Khartoum and its peripheral regions, many key women leaders and women's organisations play important roles, both formal and informal, in the several peace processes and have consistently transcended conflict lines across the country.

Some of the most notable include: Rebecca Garang, the minister for transport and roads in the Government of Southern Sudan; Dr Anne Itto, the minister of state (agriculture) in the Government of National Unity and Mary Kiden, the minister for gender, social welfare & religious affairs; Awut Deng Achuil, who participated in the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) delegation at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace negotiations and is now adviser on gender and human rights to Vice President Salva Kiir; Agnes Lukudu, adviser on development in the Government of Southern Sudan; and Sidiga Washi, the dean of family sciences at Afhad University for Women. Organisations such as the Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace have also been active.<sup>5</sup>

These leaders have worked with the international community to advance the argument that increased

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<sup>3</sup> Crisis Group interviews, women government officials, Juba, 14 March 2006, Kinshasa, 21 March 2006, Bukavu, 24 March 2006, Kampala, 3 April 2006.

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<sup>4</sup> Alex De Waal and Yoanes Ajamin (eds.), *When Peace Comes: Civil Society and Development in Sudan*, Justice Africa (Lawrenceville and Asmara, 2002), p. xiv.

<sup>5</sup> There are two women ministers in the 22-member Government of Southern Sudan cabinet, and two of seven presidential advisers are also women. Profiles of women peacebuilders in Sudan can be found at Inclusive Security's webpage, [http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/conflict\\_areas/sudan.asp](http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/conflict_areas/sudan.asp).

participation of women in all aspects of the peace process is critical if the country is to be stabilised. There have been some successes. For example, UNSCR 1590, which established the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), contained groundbreaking language consistent with UNSCR 1325.<sup>6</sup> Women also participated, albeit in a limited way, in the April 2005 Oslo Donors Conference. Nevertheless, many women are precluded from a greater role in public life, particularly in Darfur, where the numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee women are appallingly high, and it remains unclear whether a sufficiently robust international security presence will be established to allow returns to begin.

### A. SQUANDERED POTENTIAL?

Neither the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan nor the international community has yet to engage this critical constituency adequately. There is need to do this particularly in Darfur and other parts of the country where violent conflict continues, including the East. Women are organising to ensure they are represented at all stages of implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), signed on 5 May 2006, including the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation. To strengthen that fragile agreement, the international community should ensure women's participation in all the preparatory and experts committees as well as convene specific women's consultations.<sup>7</sup>

Sudanese power structures are still a long way from guaranteeing the safety of women, especially the poorest and most marginalised in the IDP camps. A displaced woman commented:

Men have been talking about this peace all these years. Can you tell us what they have been discussing? We know that this Comprehensive Peace Agreement<sup>8</sup> is about change but we think the future is gloomy for us women. There will be no peace and security as long as war is going on in any part of Sudan, and we have to stay here, far from home, while our children are still taken into the military. Women want freedom. For us this means to return home in safety.<sup>9</sup>

These women highlight one of the most difficult issues facing Sudan's uncertain peace processes. For the millions of IDPs who bear the daily ignominy of poverty, drought, hunger, imprisonment and degradation, the most pressing concern is to go home without harassment. All other issues, from gender equality to wider political participation, are subsumed into that desire, and while peace agreements are laudable, much remains to be done to ensure a secure environment and transform the words on paper into reality.

Sudanese women have long been active in civil society. Becoming increasingly aware of their political importance, partly through exposure to global peace activities and women's rights movements, they began to organise through NGO and civil society organisations, which they have consolidated into networks since the 1980s. Despite repression from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), these are important in maintaining a social fabric that is under tremendous stress because of conflict, especially among refugees and IDPs. The work frequently includes offering the most basic support – sharing food or helping to care for the children of southern IDP women who are routinely arrested and imprisoned, sometimes for long periods, for traditional income-generating activities such as beer brewing which are illegal in the North.<sup>10</sup> Women have increasingly learned to participate in public and political processes, and some have emerged as leaders capable of making effective contributions in post-conflict reconstruction and to peacebuilding goals.<sup>11</sup>

Their experiences and activities, however, cannot be classified uniformly. Some senior women participate in the NCP but they can only contribute to policy implementation within bounds set by the strict Islamic code.<sup>12</sup> They tend not to oppose laws which discriminate against women, preferring to argue that Western-style secularism exploits women. Thus, in a recent article on International Women's Day, 8 March 2006, Farida Ibrahim, a presidential legal adviser, characterised the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as "against Sharia law and it does not represent the government's stance on women's rights. It destroys family values, legalises abortion and prostitution under the umbrella of family

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unmis.org/english/documents/resolutions/res1590.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of the DPA, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°39, *Darfur's Fragile Peace Agreement*, 20 June 2006.

<sup>8</sup> The reference is to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 by the former SPLM insurgency and the Khartoum government. See below, and Crisis Group Africa Report N°96, *The Khartoum-SPLM Agreement: Sudan's Uncertain Peace*, 25 July 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Crisis Group interview, Jaber-rona 10 March 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Such imprisonment has severe consequences for family members, especially young children who are left to fend for themselves. Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 10, 13-14 February 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum and Juba, March 2006.

<sup>12</sup> At an NCP-sponsored event to commemorate International Women's Day in Khartoum, 8 March 2006, women were invoked as "mothers, educators and...supporters of women's work," and told they were "decision-makers within the household, while political decisions must be left to men".



values, gives equality to prostitutes and married women and legalises lesbianism. It is a disaster for human beings".<sup>13</sup>

Her view is not widely shared by women in other parts of the country. Sudan is, as a Southern peace activist explained, "one country with two systems. On the issue of CEDAW in the North they see it from the point of Islam, but in the South it is not a problem. The difficult part is that the South can't ratify CEDAW because it is a national issue."<sup>14</sup> The promotion of women affiliated with the NCP who support conservative views on women's rights is a deliberate tactic to undermine those rights and women's solidarity. A woman activist asserted: "Those women are there [in government], because it is a way to lock other women away – to focus on those women who will only mobilise for the men".<sup>15</sup> While some women may work for reform from within the NCP, the tactic described by the activist is consistent with the party's divide-and-rule approach to a range of political issues and groups.

New laws are still being promulgated by the Government of National Unity that may undermine women's peacebuilding work, such as the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act (2006), which – allegedly to prevent terrorism and money laundering – gives wide powers to the government-appointed Commissioner General and Registrar General for Humanitarian and Voluntary work to review the activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and refuse to re-register them. The act authorises broad and vaguely defined controls on NGO activities, which while not specifically intended to control the civil society work of women, is likely to impact on their peacebuilding activity. Likewise, the restrictions on organisations involved in health care, human rights and education could affect the status of women, directly or indirectly. The law is inconsistent with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998) and should be amended or repealed.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Farida Ibrahim, in *Osirati (My Family)*, a monthly magazine published in Khartoum, March 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Crisis Group interview, Sudanese woman peace activist, 27 April 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 15 March 2006.

<sup>16</sup> In particular the law is inconsistent with Article 1 of the UN declaration, which states that "everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels"; and does not guarantee the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the country in accordance with the National Interim Constitution which provides under Article 40 (1) that "...every person shall have the right to freedom of association with others including the right to form or join political parties, associations and trade or professional unions for the protection

## B. WOMEN AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT

The role of women in nurturing peace in the long struggle between SPLM and the central government has been mixed. Women were largely excluded from the negotiations that forged the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) but they have taken a greater role in implementing post-conflict projects and in transitional institutions.

### 1. The agreement

Despite years of peacebuilding activism, particularly through networks such as the New Sudan Women's Federation (NSWF) and the growing international awareness of the need to include women in peace negotiations fostered by UNSCR 1325, the CPA negotiations were, in the view of an international child protection specialist in Sudan, "wholly owned by two implacable military forces, so that everyone else had to negotiate their way into the talks".<sup>17</sup> In part because women were not involved in any substantive way, issues with a particular gender impact were not elaborated in the document signed on 9 January 2005. Instead, the CPA is "gender neutral" which has, according to Dr Anne Itto, "led to the development of a framework for power and wealth sharing and related reconstruction processes [that] have no gender dimension".<sup>18</sup> There are no timelines, targets or indicators for monitoring progress on women's inclusion.

The constituent parts of the CPA have a number of important gaps from a gender perspective. The *Machakos Protocol* contains a framework for governance through which power and wealth is to be equally shared and human rights guaranteed but there is no mention of women's specific needs in the sharing criteria. The differential impacts the war had are recognised in terms of geography but not gender. These lacunae fundamentally weaken the agreement and its potential to foster sustainable peace.

The *Power-sharing Protocol* protects human rights and freedoms, devolves power from the centre to the periphery and enshrines equal participation, which means, although it is not explicitly stated, that women should receive some of the benefits of progress and development. It also calls for transparency in decision-making and budget allocations.

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of his [or her] interest". General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144. This declaration is not legally binding.

<sup>17</sup> Crisis Group interview, Juba, 13 March 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Anne Itto, "Issues, Concerns and Opportunities for Sudanese Women in the Six Protocols (CPA)", SPLM Advance Team to Khartoum, unpublished paper, July 2005.

Yet, while there are quotas for regional and political representatives in the Government of National Unity, there are none for women. Nor are there provisions for women members of the Joint National Transition Team (JNTT), which is to prepare and allocate budgets for post-conflict reconstruction.

The *Protocol on Security Arrangements* covers the status of the government army – Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) – the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other armed groups, as well as the ceasefire and the formation of Joint Integrated Units. Specific gender concerns will likely arise in three areas: ceasefire monitoring; redeployment, which should include training for UN military observers to assist in identifying women and girls associated with the fighting forces in non-combatant roles who will be left behind when the SAF and SPLA forces begin to move; and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), where gender needs have not been differentiated.

There are no accurate figures for the women associated with fighting forces and groups who will be left behind when the SAF and SPLA troops are re-deployed but they are believed to be numerous. The gender adviser of the UNMIS DDR unit points out that they will need basic reintegration support including food, shelter, health care and access to sustainable livelihoods. Social reintegration will be particularly difficult because of the stigma attached to women who have suffered sexual violence, resorted to prostitution or are in non-formal marriages where dowry has not been paid, no family blessing has been given and/or the relationship is adulterous.<sup>19</sup>

## **2. Implementing the peace deal**

Women were not involved in negotiating the CPA but have a critical role in the peacebuilding process. Strengthened by Resolution 1325, the committee coordinating the UN's Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) charged with assessing post-conflict needs made gender mainstreaming a priority in reconstruction. The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) assigned two gender experts, who consulted extensively with Sudanese women and developed comprehensive analysis and recommendations to help the JAM create a gender sensitive framework for sustainable peace.

A January 2005 program in Nairobi and Khartoum led by an international NGO, the Initiative for Inclusive Security, trained more than 100 Sudanese women activists from North and South to play key roles in CPA implementation. In April 2005, Norway arranged for 50 women to attend the Oslo donors conference and participate in a gender

symposium sponsored by the foreign ministry, where they expressed solidarity across communities, asserted a common women's agenda for post-war reconstruction and chose two women to argue for them at the conference for more gender-responsive budgeting and projects. This level of participation was not, however, in evidence at the follow-up meeting of the Sudan Consortium in Paris in March 2006, which suggests that the international commitment to supporting a central role for women in peacebuilding in Sudan is still somewhat arbitrary.

Southern women's groups successfully lobbied the new Government of Southern Sudan to endorse pro-women policies. Its interim constitution provides for gender equality and for women to have 25 per cent of the positions in government commissions and decision-making bodies as promised in a 1994 SPLA convention. However, many believe there are not enough qualified women to fill these positions, and there is little to entice qualified women in the diaspora to return to Juba, where living conditions are difficult.<sup>20</sup> The gender ministry, like most others, is understaffed and under-resourced. If women are to participate fully in the government, urgent support is needed: three to nine-month leadership training and management (including financial management) programs and a systematic program to identify and train young women leaders, many of whom are in the diaspora or displaced in the North.<sup>21</sup>

The interim constitution calls for the Government of Southern Sudan to revise customs that undermine women's rights. Women in the five regions of the South are now represented by a secretariat for women, child welfare and gender, and women are also participating in both the regional and the national governments. Those governments should take on the task of revising legislation and customary practice that undermine women's rights.

The Government of Southern Sudan, the Government of National Unity and the international community have a joint responsibility to plan, finance and implement return programs for IDPs and to facilitate their involvement in the local economy. Programs should be started as a priority where and when security is sufficient. Speedy returns would help increase human capacities in the South rapidly, including through identification of current and future women leaders. Unfortunately, the international community has not acted on this.

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<sup>19</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 11 March 2006.

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<sup>20</sup> Crisis Group interview, Government of Southern Sudan woman official, Juba, 13 March 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Crisis Group interview, Juba, 13 March 2006. Exchanges or other contacts with women parliamentarians from elsewhere in Africa would also be helpful

## C. DARFUR

An indiscriminate counter-insurgency campaign directed by the government and its proxy Janjaweed militias has led to more than 200,000 deaths in Darfur and the forcible displacement of more than two million, mostly from the Zaghawa, Fur and Massaleit peoples. Women have been subjected to gender-specific attacks, especially forced impregnation through rape, and have had to make difficult decisions, including fleeing to remove young sons from the war zone and save them from military service. They have become heads of household while living with poverty and deprivation, and suffering discrimination, marginalisation in all decision-making.<sup>22</sup> The systematic violence has still not been adequately addressed, as Louise Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated after her recent visit:

Despite the overwhelming presence of the national security apparatus throughout Darfur, there is no apparent minimum level of physical protection for the communities affected by the conflict. On the contrary, the pervasive presence of the national security apparatus inspires fear and apprehension among IDPs and their host communities.<sup>23</sup>

UNMIS is developing cooperative strategies to help implement the Government of National Unity's National Action Plan on gender-based violence in Darfur. Four entry points have been identified as priorities: awareness-raising on "Criminal Form Eight";<sup>24</sup> establishment of victim-friendly centres in the IDP camps; building the capacity of civil society organisations; and advocacy.<sup>25</sup> While rape victims no longer need to complete the Criminal Form Eight, a medical evidence document, to receive emergency medical assistance,<sup>26</sup> too little has been done to inform women and the police (both Sudanese and the African Union civilian police) of this change. In the past, women were often denied treatment because a physician was unavailable or unwilling to fill out such a form, and in some cases, they were subjected to abusive medical exams.<sup>27</sup>

The DPA signed on 5 May 2006 between the faction of the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and the government rests on several shaky pillars that all need urgent shoring up if it is to hold. Of most concern is the ceasefire protocol; implementation of its security provisions will determine if the rebels will disarm, and the IDPs and refugees will be able to return. Unfortunately, the DPA relies far too much on the government. For example, Khartoum is solely responsible for disarming the Janjaweed despite its repeated failure to fulfill its promises and commitments under UN Security Council resolutions to do this in the past.

The DPA does contain an impressive amount of gender sensitive language, especially when compared with the CPA. There are provisions calling for the participation of women in decision-making bodies and improved mechanisms for dealing with gender-based violence, as well as special attention to peacebuilding issues as they affect women. However, the attention to gender-specific concerns, although pervasive, is superficial in many respects. There are no quotas to ensure women's participation in either decision-making bodies or security structures and no mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of protection from gender-based violence. This is consistent with a widespread impression that Khartoum struck the deal more out of a desire to sidestep international pressure than a commitment to alter fundamentally its centralised approach to wielding power.

Darfur women were kept away from the first six rounds of negotiations at Abuja held under African Union (AU) auspices. For the seventh and decisive round and with support from the AU and its international partners, they formed a Gender Expert Support Team (GEST) to represent them, led by Safaa Elagib Adam, the secretary general of the Community Development Association, an NGO working to build peace in Darfur.<sup>28</sup> The team gathered women from all three Darfur states and a variety of tribal and ethnic backgrounds to create a unified platform of women's priorities and gender issues and call for their incorporation in the peace agreement. With the help of UNIFEM, Norway, Canada and Sweden, these women lobbied the AU and many other members of the international community to press for women's engagement at the Abuja negotiations.

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<sup>22</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum and Juba, March 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Louise Arbour, 5 May 2006, at <http://coalitionfordarfur.blogspot.com/2006/05/darfur-statement-by-louise-arbour.html>.

<sup>24</sup> The police form on which rape and other sexual violations, murder and assault are reported.

<sup>25</sup> Personal communication, UNMIS Gender Unit, 5 May 2006.

<sup>26</sup> As set out in the Amended Circular of 2005 issued by the minister of justice.

<sup>27</sup> See "Access to Justice for Victims of Sexual Violence", UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 29 July 2005, at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/press/docs/20050729Darfurreport.pdf>.

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<sup>28</sup> The GEST was established between the sixth and seventh rounds and was supported in particular by the AU Gender Desk and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 15 March 2006. An account of the AU contribution can be found at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSUDAN/Resources/AUProgressonPeaceTalksPARISFeb06.doc>.

The team presented a paper in December 2005, "Women's Priorities in the Peace Process and Reconstruction in Darfur", which addressed the core issues being dealt with by commissions on security arrangements, power sharing and wealth sharing.<sup>29</sup> During the round, the team argued that the Government of National Unity needed Darfur women advisers to help shape policy, distribute wealth, decide the resettlement process and work with parliament, and that such involvement on practical issues would more effectively link the political dialogue to the people.

Another main GEST point was that women should be included in discussions on resource sharing and land reform and that land ownership should be extended to women. On security, they urged the complete disarmament of militias so women could again move freely. While the technical aspects of disarmament were discussed and developed at length during the talks, the DPA, as indicated above, is seriously deficient in this regard. Unless women are consulted as efforts are made to deal with these deficiencies and develop an effective DDR policy, violence against them will continue. However, there is little chance for disarmament to succeed as long as a number of the armed groups active in the region refuse even to sign the agreement.

While the DPA was welcome, it will not bring peace unless the many questions about its security provisions and its holdouts are answered. The numerous women victims of the conflict will not be able to return home without a robust and effective international peacekeeping presence on the ground, a topic that the DPA skirts entirely because Khartoum refused to discuss the urgent priority of replacing the AU mission with a larger, stronger UN mission.

In the somewhat chaotic nature of the last-minute negotiations to secure an agreement, the concerns of those who in many ways have been most affected by the conflict and will be most affected by the DPA were largely treated as an afterthought. But women were able to achieve some progress at least in the wording of the agreement on specifically gender-related issues in the mere three weeks that they were permitted to take part in the negotiations. Had they been included from the beginning, they might well have been able to do much more, including on the core security and political issues.

The AU should be commended for bringing women into the Abuja negotiations, as for its efforts to produce the DPA against so many obstacles, but the fact that women were not included until virtually the end of the negotiations suggests that policymakers continue to view the peace process as something that is done for, rather than by those

who directly bear the consequences of armed violence. If the DPA is to achieve its objectives, however, a great deal of further work is needed, including to persuade the rebel hold-outs to sign on and to form a supporting consensus throughout the population. The key vehicle for this part of the ongoing process will be the "Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation" the DPA calls for. This time the GEST team and other representatives of women and civil society in general need to be welcomed to play central roles from the start.

#### **D. OTHER ISSUES**

Because Sudanese women have been marginalised for so long, there should be a specific targeted program to assess their numbers in the security services and those interested in joining those services (particularly among women ex-combatants and women formerly associated with fighting forces). This should be part of a training program that focuses on increasing women's capacities in areas such as language and literacy. There is a clear need within the Multi-Donor Trust Funds established by the World Bank to assist reconstruction in Sudan to establish a fund to support women and girl-specific training and development programs in the security sector and governance. Likewise, there is a need to include women's organisations in the management and disbursement of funds.<sup>30</sup> However, more intensive engagement with the government on security sector reform will remain difficult if the Darfur situation does not improve.

The Government of National Unity should pass laws guaranteeing women equal rights to security sector positions, particularly those that will increase access to services responsive to their specific concerns, such as gender-based violence. International bodies (like the World Bank) should dedicate funding to support women's advance into this sector, including salaries, where this budget line is supported by the international community.<sup>31</sup>

Recent advances in UN policy on gender and DDR, encapsulated in the forthcoming Integrated DDR Standards, should be implemented as a matter of urgency. Women should participate in national demobilisation commissions to guarantee that their rights are protected and assist in identifying women combatants and women associated with fighting forces and groups.<sup>32</sup> They should also take part in

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<sup>29</sup> Available at [http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Sudan/Womens\\_Priorities.doc](http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Sudan/Womens_Priorities.doc).

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<sup>30</sup> Two World Bank-administered Multi-Donor Trust Funds (National and South) have been designed to provide substantial funding for Sudan's recovery and development activities.

<sup>31</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 11 March 2006.

<sup>32</sup> The UN has been developing a set of integrated DDR standards across fifteen of its agencies, funds and programs as well as field mission staff in an effort to establish a coherent,

raising awareness about the DDR program. Finally, women's peace groups are an important asset in reintegration processes, particularly because of their experience in counselling, violence reduction strategies and community healing and reconciliation. They should be able to access resources and training to facilitate this work. Men who feel disempowered after demobilisation, especially when reinsertion packages do not allow them to provide adequately for their dependents or when reintegration programs are slow starting, can present a particular danger. An essential aspect of all DDR programs, therefore, should be to educate men on women's rights and non-violent conflict resolution strategies.

### III. THE CONGO

The death toll from Congo's conflict and the associated breakdown in human services between 1998 and 2004 is estimated to be near four million. As many as 38,000 people continue to die monthly as a result of the ongoing conflict, with most of these deaths resulting from malnutrition and easily preventable diseases that remain largely unabated because insecurity restricts access to basic infrastructure and sanitation.<sup>33</sup> The country suffers from weak and often abusive state institutions, in particular the army, which has been guilty of widespread human rights abuses. Armed militias and periodic foreign interventions in the East have meant that many Congolese still live in considerable insecurity. Around one million small arms and light weapons are believed to be in circulation in the area,<sup>34</sup> some with the army and police, but also private citizens, self-defence units, militias, thugs and bandits. Disarmament initiatives have produced limited results, and lawlessness continues, while the credibility of the security sector reform has been severely compromised.<sup>35</sup>

Women have been disproportionately affected. Sexual violence is regarded as the most widespread form of criminality in Congo, and there are indications it has increased during the period since the 2002 Sun City peace agreement.<sup>36</sup> The government that is tentatively scheduled to be elected in July 2006 will be challenged to implement the principles of the constitution and address discrimination against women, in particular sexual violence.

It is in these difficult circumstances that Congolese women have been engaged as peacebuilders. They have grown weary of a transitional government that shows limited interest in addressing legitimate citizen needs, while focussing on power and personal gain. The approaching

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<sup>33</sup> Benjamin Goghlan et al., "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Nationwide Survey", *The Lancet*, vol. 367, 7 January 2006, at [www.theLancet.com](http://www.theLancet.com).

<sup>34</sup> "Guns out of Control; the continuing threat of small arms", UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, May 2006, at <http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/small-arms/default.asp>. See also "The Call for Tough Arms Control: Voices from the Democratic Republic of the Congo", Amnesty International, IANSA and Oxfam, January 2006, at [http://www.oxfam.qc.ca/pdf/etudes/DRC\\_5\\_1\\_06.pdf](http://www.oxfam.qc.ca/pdf/etudes/DRC_5_1_06.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, 20 March 2006 and Bukavu, 24 March 2006. Crisis Group Africa Report N°104, *Security Sector Reform in the Congo*, 13 February 2006.

<sup>36</sup> "Focus on rampant rape, despite end of war", IRIN News, 8 March 2004; Crisis Group interview, senior security specialists, Kinshasa, November 2005. In one centre in Bukavu, cases rose from 50 a month to 200 between 2002 and 2004. "Seeking Justice: The Prosecution of Sexual Violence in the Congo War", Human Rights Watch Report, March 2005.

elections give women the chance to make their collective voices heard, and they have already turned out in large numbers to register and vote for the constitution in December 2005.

Women played an important part in producing the peace that has made elections possible, although they often were frustrated in efforts to get a seat at the peace table. They were systematically excluded from high-level negotiations: no women participated in the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire talks, and they were only 10 per cent of the 2002 Inter-Congolese Dialogue, the national post-war convention aimed at political and social reconciliation.<sup>37</sup> Congolese women used UNSCR 1325 as the basis for an international campaign to secure their inclusion in the Dialogue, and with the support of such partners as former African heads of state, UNIFEM, UNDP and the AU, they led a series of initiatives aimed at creating a common agenda for women and raising its national and international profile.

These efforts culminated later in 2002 with a national forum in Kenya, at which 60 women represented all major parties from the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and produced the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, which called for its incorporation into the agenda of the Dialogue and the resources to ensure its implementation. Modest success was demonstrated by the fact that when the Dialogue resumed in 2003, 36 of 300 participants were women, and Article 51 was added to the transitional constitution, guaranteeing women's participation in the transition. However, expanding on these achievements will require demonstrable improvements in security and governance.

Congolese women have been able to mobilise collectively and individually, at grassroots level and higher, nationally and internationally. But their organisations face very high male resistance. A woman in Bukavu reported how, during a march her local group organised on 8 March 2006, some men exclaimed in a low voice: "Hawa wote ni mboga zetu!" – "whatever they say or do, all these women are nothing more than our vegetables [prey]".<sup>38</sup>

## A. THE BURDEN OF VIOLENCE

The population of eastern Congo has experienced successive waves of violence in a multi-year, complex emergency. International experts agree that sexual assault

is the most common form of violence.<sup>39</sup> In research in South Kivu and Maniema provinces, Goma and Kalemie between 1998 and 2003, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) cited more than 51,000 rapes.<sup>40</sup> Even these numbers are believed to be gross underestimates: the stigma attached to rape means it is severely underreported.<sup>41</sup> The broad patterns of violence have had a chilling effect on the ability of women to be effective peacebuilders.

Commanders may at times give explicit orders to use rape as an instrument of war.<sup>42</sup> However, the broad tolerance for it and the lack of sanctions against rapists have made such violence common even when it is not part of a military strategy. The army and legal systems in the East are dysfunctional, and the largely demoralised and under-trained police have made little effort to deal with the problem. Given the high prevalence, specially trained and equipped squads should be established to deal with sexual violence against women and child abuse as a priority. There is also a need to recruit and promote women so as to establish much greater parity in the police. Members of the army (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo, FARDC) are known perpetrators of sexual violence against women. An international gender analyst suggests that their terrible living conditions, including non-payment of salaries, has resulted in increasing violence toward civilians generally.<sup>43</sup> Security sector reform has been uneven, and the reorganisation and professionalisation of the services are not yet sufficient to deal with the broad violence.<sup>44</sup>

Allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers (MONUC) of the population in the East made headlines in mid-2004.<sup>45</sup> In response, Secretary-General Kofi Annan instituted a zero tolerance policy for the UN system and asked Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan to advise him on sexual exploitation and abuse and conduct a review. On receiving Zeid's report in 2005, the General Assembly adopted a comprehensive

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<sup>39</sup> Crisis Group Africa Report N°108, *Congo's Elections: Making or Breaking the Peace*, 27 April 2006.

<sup>40</sup> M. Pratt and L. Werchik, "Sexual Terrorism: Rape as a Strategy of War in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. An assessment of programmatic responses to sexual violence in North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema, and Orientale Provinces", USAID Assessment Report, 18 March 2004, <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/DRC/USAIDDCHADRC.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Congo, April-May 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kinshasa, 20 March 2006.

<sup>44</sup> See Crisis Group Report, *Security Sector Reform in the Congo*, op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Higate, "Gender and Peacekeeping. Case Studies: The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone", Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria) Monograph Series 91, March 2004.

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<sup>37</sup> Emily Schroeder, "A Window of Opportunity in the Congo: Incorporating Gender Considerations in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Process", in *Peace, Conflict & Development*, Vol. 5, University of Bradford, July 2004, <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/docs/AWindowofOpportunity.PDF>.

<sup>38</sup> Crisis Group interview, Bukavu, 24 March 2006.

strategy focusing on prevention and enforcement. As outlined in a March 2005 presidential statement, the Security Council now considers prevention, monitoring, and reporting of misconduct when authorising or renewing mandates of peacekeeping missions, and the Secretary-General must include information on implementation of the zero tolerance policy in his regular reports on such missions.<sup>46</sup>

While rapes and sexual violence of all kinds have been reported by local and international agencies over the past five years, the majority of women and girls live in remote rural areas favoured as hiding places by militias, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), and are out of reach of HIV/AIDS and sexual violence prevention initiatives, with little or no chance of accessing adequate reproductive health care or justice.<sup>47</sup> They live daily with the multiple threats of violence, insecurity and impunity, the impact of HIV/AIDS and other unattended health complications, deepening food insecurity and poverty, and failing governance.

These problems are exacerbated by the attrition of trained human resources and functioning services in key sectors such as public administration, agriculture, education and health as well as security.<sup>48</sup> The justice system has neither laws nor expertise to deal with violent sexual assault. Only six of 119 judges in the East are women. The legal definition of rape is limited, requiring evidence of violence and actual intercourse but not including sexual mutilation, assault with objects and forced pregnancy. Other forms of sexual abuse are unrecognised, and sexual assault is generally treated exactly like other forms of assault.

Yet, even where the magnitude of women's suffering has been revealed, and women have access, efforts to establish consistent, reliable rape crisis and reproductive health services have been minimal. Locally-based government services are difficult to establish and sustain, and few are available to women. Access to reproductive health services is most difficult in the remotest parts of the East, where sexual violence is worst, and programs are too severely

under-resourced and unprotected to offer any outreach.<sup>49</sup> While a new law on sexual violence was proposed to parliament in March 2005 under NGO pressure, the commission that was to study it has made little progress, allegedly due to inefficiency and lack of interest.<sup>50</sup>

UNDP's rapid reaction mechanism for DDR admits it has failed to prepare adequate programs for women and children associated with fighting forces and groups in non-combat roles. This failure is acknowledged to have "created critical humanitarian crises" at specific points during the demobilisation process, for example when men went into cantonment sites.<sup>51</sup> Remedies have been proposed but according to women peace activists, the damage has been done. UNDP's community recovery program has made a commitment to change current strategies to include women more meaningfully but this needs to be followed by concrete action.<sup>52</sup>

The national DDR program considers women associated with armed groups and forces as beneficiaries only if they carried a weapon and are subsequently registered as combatants. But other women who did not have combat roles were also associated with the forces. They are economically dependant on the armed groups, and once the men are demobilised, they are forced to return to their communities with nothing. They often suffer exclusion and discrimination for having been associated with the armed groups.<sup>53</sup> It is incumbent upon governments to ensure that DDR processes include such women, especially in community peacebuilding, while the UN and the World Bank should implement the proposals in their 2005 study and workshop on gender in the Great Lakes region.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See also the UN Secretary-General's "Investigation into sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa", 11 October 2002 and subsequent statements; UNSCR 1590 on Sudan (24 March 2005), which makes a number of references to women, is the first resolution explicitly to forbid sexual exploitation and abuse of women by UN peacekeeping forces.

<sup>47</sup> "The War Within the War: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo", Human Rights Watch, 2002; "Women's Bodies as a Battleground: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls During the War in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Kivu (1996-2003)", International Alert, 2004/5; "The call for tough arms control: Voices from the Democratic Republic of Congo", Control Arms, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Crisis Group interview, Bukavu, 24 March 2006.

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<sup>49</sup> Crisis Group interview, Bukavu, 24 March 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Kinshasa, May 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Atelier "Expérience de PNUD dans l'opérationnalisation des Sites de transit dans le PO-DRC et des Centres d'Orientation dans le PN-DDR", Kinshasa, 20 March 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Crisis Group interview, Bukavu, 25 March 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Crisis Group interview, international gender analyst, Kinshasa, 20 March 2006.

<sup>54</sup> The recommendations include, but are not limited to: "strong programming on the rights of women and girls; creating awareness of human rights in community programs; improving collaboration and cooperation with other existing programs through better sharing of existing data on on-going projects and programs and reinforcing partnerships with operational field actors; improving support to dependants of ex-combatants (basic needs, such as adequate nutrition, water, health care and transportation) and improving links to other national programs and community projects (reconstruction, health, sexual violence and child protection); increasing the number of female staff and recruiting full-time gender specialists to assist the technical teams". "Taking a Gender-Perspective to Strengthen the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Program (MDRP) in the

## B. WOMEN, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

Congo has made important strides: 25.6 million voters have registered, of whom 70 per cent took part in the 18-19 December 2005 referendum, which approved a new constitution. Civil society organisations played a significant role in promoting registration and participation and were particularly successful in mobilising women, who are 51 per cent of the electorate. During the registration period, women's organisations helped mobilise and train women, contributing to a high female turn-out.<sup>55</sup>

During the transition period, only 2 per cent of the senators, 11 per cent of the members of government, and 16 per cent of the parliamentarians have been women. There are none in the presidential office<sup>56</sup> and only four presidential candidates. Political exclusion and inexperience are the main obstacles to a greater role. The first democratic elections are an important opportunity to improve the situation but no provisions ensure adequate representation. Article 14 of the constitution does stipulate that government should work toward equal gender representation in national, provincial and local institutions, as follows:

- ❑ the authorities should ensure elimination of all forms of discrimination toward women and the protection and promotion of their rights;
- ❑ women should participate in all sectors, particularly the civil, political, economic, social and cultural;
- ❑ measures should be taken to fight against all forms of violence against women in public and private life;
- ❑ women have the right to fair representation in national, provincial and local institutions, and the state guarantees the implementation of gender equality in these institutions; and
- ❑ the law should set down the terms and conditions for applying these rights.

Nevertheless, no law has been passed to apply Article 14, and no requirement is in place to encourage women's equal representation on party lists.<sup>57</sup> A mere 10 per cent of

legislative candidates are female.<sup>58</sup> In the words of a woman peace activist, "with regard to principles, the existing national and international laws, women have the green light, but in reality they will be discriminated against by men". Or as a woman government official stated:

Men discuss politics, security, the military, everything. They are all men, speaking to each other. But on the ground, where the conflict is, women bear the consequences of these men's decisions. There is a discourse on gender but no real progress. We are backward compared to the rest of Africa.<sup>59</sup>

The interim government should immediately set out to persuade the parties to commit to nominating women for at least 20 per cent of all appointed positions, including ministerial, as well as judicial and public administration bodies. It should also establish special commissions to apply and monitor existing measures and decisions favourable to women in the new constitution, especially Article 15 on the elimination of sexual violence, and to promote women's right to equal opportunities. The government and donors should also consider creating a fund to train women candidates and provide some financial support for their campaigns. Finally, promotion of women's rights should be an element in the description of each ministerial position and budgeted for, notably, of course, in the ministry for women and the family.

It is essential to build local capacity and promote good governance, in particular by supporting the drafting and implementation of development plans to help ensure a community participatory approach that includes human rights and gender equity. To sustain the reconstruction process, local authorities and structures need to participate in monitoring all recovery and development activities, but state structures are very weak in many provinces, and local authorities lack the means to do much.

Women can and should play a vital role in changing budget priorities but corruption and fraudulent deals in the natural resources sector continue to deprive the state treasury of valuable resources and make it more difficult to deliver vital and long-neglected social services such as health and education.

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greater Great Lakes Region", UNIFEM/World Bank Kigali, Rwanda. 31 October-2 November 2005.

<sup>55</sup> "Référéndum 2005: Rapport finale, Mission d'Observation Électorale de l'Union Européenne en RDC", 21 February 2006, p. 41. While there is no reliable data on female turn-out, EU election observers believe it may have been much higher than the male vote.

<sup>56</sup> Emily Schroeder, "A Window of Opportunity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Incorporating a Gender Perspective in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Process", *Peace Studies Journal*, vol. 5, issue 5, October 2003-July 2004.

<sup>57</sup> Article 13 of the electoral law states: "Each [candidate] list is put together taking into consideration equality between men and

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women...However, not realising equality...during the coming elections is not a reason for rejecting a list".

<sup>58</sup> Crisis Group Report, *Congo's Elections*, op. cit. The presidential candidates are Catherine Nzuzi wa Mbombo (Popular Movement for the Révolution, MPR), Marie Thérèse Nlandu (Party for Peace in the Congo, Congo Pax), Wivine Nlandu (Union for the Defence of the Republic, UDR) and Justine Kasavubu (Movement of Democrats, MD).

<sup>59</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kinshasa, 21 March 2006.



#### IV. UGANDA

The northern Uganda conflict is in its 21st year. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) still mounts brutal attacks against civilians in a civil war that has produced more than 1.4 million IDPs. An estimated 25,000 children have been abducted, including 7,500 girls, who have conceived more than 1,000 babies in captivity.<sup>60</sup> Instability also stems from escalating, economically-driven cattle raiding by the Karamojong people in the North East.

An act promulgated in 2000 in an attempt to end the LRA insurgency offers amnesty to "any Ugandan who has at any time since the 26th day of January, 1986 engaged in or is engaging in war or armed rebellion against the government of the Republic of Uganda". The commission designated to implement it, however, has not developed concrete programs. The need to address rehabilitation of LRA victims, as well as the social and political questions that force individuals and groups into violent activities against the state are critical challenges.<sup>61</sup>

Both the LRA insurgency and the Karamojong raids are marked by brutal sexual violence against women, wide-scale and long-term displacement, and severe psychological trauma that has devastated entire communities. Women bear the brunt of the violence but are also forced to take on additional burdens to maintain their families. A peace activist in Katakwi district explained: "A man drinks all the money he makes, and he takes all the benefits from his wife's work. He will say he is married and can do what he likes. Tradition says a woman has no voice, so we're not given a chance to manage money or make decisions".<sup>62</sup>

Acholi women in the North have assumed a variety of roles in relation to the conflict, from combatants to victims. Many have also done important work as leaders of community peace initiatives. In 1989, when very few dared to speak out about the conflict, the Gulu District Women's Development Committee initiated a peaceful demonstration, marching through town singing funeral hymns and calling for an end to the bloodshed. Across the North, women lead many of the community-based initiatives to facilitate reconciliation between former LRA members and their communities. Acholi women have been involved in national as well as community peacebuilding efforts. Most prominently, Betty Bigombe, an Acholi woman and former government minister, has been deeply involved in the mediation efforts between the LRA and the Ugandan government since 1994.

These women activists face many problems, but of the three countries surveyed, Uganda has by far the most advanced, articulate and organised women's peace movement. With support from NGOs such as Isis Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) in Kampala, creative and courageous networks of "peace animators" have been set up in the most vulnerable and remote rural areas. These are informal associations of like-minded activists who, after their own training, recruit and train other women in the community to manage inter-personal and inter-community conflict. They are largely self-funded, so are fairly limited in their outreach:

They grow from a vision of women activists who form a group with a 10,000 Ugandan shillings [approximately \$6] membership fee. This money is used to purchase stationery and for communication. Then each member has to find her own transport to go to her county to mobilise interested members to join peace committees and peace animators. The poorest women don't pay at all for the training they receive.<sup>63</sup>

The basic principles of the Ugandan women's peace work are replicable in other regions and countries, and donors should develop funding mechanisms to support and expand this kind of work. The peace groups are autonomous and do not rely exclusively on external funding, which makes them less vulnerable to cooptation and more sustainable, though also perhaps unnecessarily modest in their activities. Their reliance on networking women from disparate regions to share experiences of armed violence and its resolution has positive impacts on women's self-esteem and reduces their isolation. The practical conflict resolution training they offer both within families and in wider community and inter-community disputes has a proven success rate in reducing violence.

If there is careful consultation and a commitment to learn the lessons of such groups, and if leadership and evolution remain entirely in the hands of the women who have created them, the basis of a women's regional peace initiative, with local adaptations, already exists.

However, the Ugandan government could do far more to recognise and strengthen this indigenous resource. It may even be weakening its potential through its reluctance to pass women-friendly laws. It should immediately enact legislation that protects the rights of women and children in the family – especially domestic relations, sexual offences and domestic violence laws – and educate the population about their benefits. It should also ensure women's equal right to own, lease and sell land pursuant to Section 40 of the 1998 Land Act, a particularly difficult challenge in a country where large numbers have been displaced from

<sup>60</sup> "Humanitarian Situation Report", UNICEF, August 2005.

<sup>61</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Uganda.

<sup>62</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 31 March 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 1 April 2006.

their land, and men continue to manage land ownership. Violent, even murderous, disputes over land succession continue to rob widows and their children of an essential resource for their survival.<sup>64</sup>

## A. THE LRA INSURGENCY

Since a ceasefire collapsed at the end of 2004, Betty Bigombe, with President Museveni's authorisation, has sought to bring the LRA into a genuine dialogue but the effort has moved in fits and starts, with only occasional hopeful signs. In September 2005, Bigombe prepared an extensive draft peace proposal, which Museveni accepted as the starting point for substantive negotiations. She is in regular contact with both the government and the LRA, and her activity demonstrates at the least that the heavy-lifting of diplomacy need not be solely the purview of men, as it essentially has been in the other conflicts considered in this report.<sup>65</sup>

The government should vigorously support Bigombe, while at the same time developing cooperative strategies with the Congo to eliminate LRA bases in the East of that country and with Sudan to address the insurgents' activity in the South there. It should pay particular attention, in conjunction with the Government of Southern Sudan, to addressing the plight of abducted girls and women who escape. Female escapees from the LRA are believed to have been absorbed into households in Juba, where they are likely to be in sexually coercive relationships (informal marriages or sexual slavery) and unable to access the only NGO in the city specialising in return of abductees.

There are also documented instances of the Sudanese army arresting female escapees and holding them for interrogation. According to a child's rights NGO, they are sometimes subjected to further sexual abuse while in prison.<sup>66</sup> While there have been many instances of the successful repatriation of female escapees from the LRA, boys are generally easier to track and return. More intensive efforts need to be made to recover girls, some of whom may have been in Sudanese border towns for years.<sup>67</sup>

An immediate practical measure to address LRA movements between northern Uganda, southern Sudan and, recently, the eastern Congo would be to hold a cross-border consultation meeting of women's peace groups and leaders, including Bigombe and Sudan's Anne Itto. Its purpose would be to devise strategies not only to return women abducted by armed forces across international borders but also to establish monitoring strategies and research capacities to find out more about the extent of the problem.<sup>68</sup>

While LRA attacks are known to target women as well as men, women peace activists in areas of LRA activity report that women are not properly included in the welcoming and cleansing ceremonies for those who escape from the insurgents and return home. While the entire community attends such occasions for part of the time, only men are permitted to go through the complete process, and they refuse to tell women what is involved in the restricted portions. The effect on returning girls is to increase their trauma.

The commission charged with overseeing the 2000 Amnesty Act faces specific challenges in attending to the needs of women and girls. These include lack of reliable information on the numbers of abductees, because escaped females, especially young girls who return with children, sometimes fade into the background to escape the stigma of having been associated with the LRA.

There should be more high-level support for traditional healing and reconciliation institutions in conflict areas but these should include women and build the capacity of female and male leaders to manage traumatised returnees, as the Amnesty Act provides.<sup>69</sup> It is the government's responsibility to develop adequate social justice mechanisms for survivors to complement the Amnesty Act, including strengthening the DDR process by properly resettling and protecting returnees<sup>70</sup> and giving them the full resettlement packages promised.

Uganda's Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) is a specialised mechanism within the national police to provide friendly support to women and children who have been sexually assaulted. It could serve as a regional model and source of training materials and best practices for dealing with such crimes. The government should increase its support for and enlarge this innovative unit, giving it its own budget and building up its capacities in

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<sup>64</sup> Crisis Group interviews, women peace activists, Katakwi, 31 March 2006, and Kampala, 4 April 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Crisis Group has reported extensively on the Northern Uganda conflict. See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°35, *A Strategy for Ending Northern Uganda's Crisis*, 11 January 2006; Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°27, *Building a Comprehensive Peace Strategy for Northern Uganda*, 23 June 2005; and Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°23, *Shock Therapy for Northern Uganda's Peace Process*, 11 April 2005.

<sup>66</sup> Crisis Group interview, Juba, 14 March 2006.

<sup>67</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Juba, 13 and 14 March 2006.

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<sup>68</sup> See also Refugee International's recommendation that UNMIS's mandate be expanded to protect Sudanese civilians from LRA violence, 17 May 2006.

<sup>69</sup> Article 9 on promotion of sensitisation, dialogue and reconciliation.

<sup>70</sup> The Amnesty Act calls such returnees "reporters".

the North and North East, where armed violence and displacement are ongoing.<sup>71</sup>

## B. THE CONFLICT IN THE NORTH EAST

While the impact of the LRA rebellion in Gulu district is well known internationally, the effect in Kitgum, where the abduction of children, women and men is ongoing, is under-reported and less visible. The area is also vulnerable to Karamojong raids, so its people are caught in a crossfire between the army, the LRA and the Karamojong.

For 50 years, the lifestyle and development in the mid-north eastern region of Uganda, Teso, has been shaped by its relationship with the arid area, Karamoja, whose nomadic population has traditionally raided its neighbours but has done so with increasing brutality since small arms began to proliferate in the 1970s. Karamojong "raids have gone beyond mere cattle rustling for filling their kraals and paying bride price. Raiding is now a commercialised business where raiders are being protected by some officials in the region, to enrich themselves and their associates".<sup>72</sup> The LRA has also been active in the area. A series of its attacks reached their height in 2003 before a Teso militia, the Arrow Boys, repulsed them without government assistance.

The Teso region is characterised by wide-scale and lengthy displacement. The breakdown in cultural and social norms that this leads to has had significant effects on gender relations. A local peace activist said:

The civilian population has experienced numerous violations committed against them with no opportunity to enjoy their human rights. "Women have come out of these conflicts worse off but more resilient than their male counterparts, even though the major players have been men in possession of arms".<sup>73</sup>

LRA depredations are well documented by the women's peace movement and increasingly by international observers.<sup>74</sup> A Kitgum women's peace activist recounted what she has heard in her work with returned abductees:

While in captivity, even shy girls were forced to murder those condemned to die. They had to kill while others were looking on. All the girls and

women abducted were defiled, raped and married off to rebel leaders or used for sexual service to rebels. If the husband died either at the war front or of sickness, the "girl wives" would be put aside for ritual cleansing and married off to another rebel after some months.<sup>75</sup>

Despite such horrific testimony, the leader of a women's peace group said, "the government is doing nothing. It has created institutions – gender and labour desks, a women's commission and an amnesty commission – but they are ever quiet, as if they have not even heard of the war".<sup>76</sup>

In the absence of formal services, women peace activists have established their own, self-funded project, the Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative (KIWEPI), to assist those who manage to return. Its activities include sensitising the community on the Amnesty Act and peace building approaches and providing alternatives to violence, both at community level in interpersonal disputes and more broadly in its work with survivors of the LRA. It runs a small reception centre where formerly abducted girls are offered counselling services and life skills, such as tailoring and baking, and it documents women survivors' stories to help with those counselling programs.

Unlike Teso women, Karamojong women have had little or no exposure to education and peacemaking activities; indeed, the least educated women are the most highly valued because they are likeliest to follow customary practice blindly: "The less literate a woman is, the more cows she receives. A woman with education is seen as adulterated. There are no laws to protect Karamojong women, and they are told by men what to do".<sup>77</sup>

In the face of strong resistance from men on both sides, the Teso Women's Peace Association (TEWPA) has been trying to build cross-cultural coalitions since 2002. Its members have had several successful meetings with Karamojong women whom they have reached by travelling into Karamoja as members of church and civil society groups working in the area. They make these journeys because they believe, like many in Teso, that "the government is capable of disarming the Karamojong but it has no will to do so". The solution, they argue, is for:

[women] to push to enter the peace missions. Men think they caused war and so they should bring peace, but we say women are also responsible for what they say to men to encourage them to make

<sup>71</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 4 April 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Crisis Group interview, Katakwi, 31 March 2006.

<sup>73</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 30 March 2006.

<sup>74</sup> For examples see "Women, Armed Conflict and Food Insecurity in Uganda: An Exploratory Study of Four Districts", Isis-WICCE, Kampala, 2004; and "Suffering in Silence: A Study of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); In Pabbo Camp, Gulu District, Northern Uganda", UNICEF, January 2005.

<sup>75</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 1 April 2006.

<sup>76</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 1 April 2006.

<sup>77</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 30 March 2006.

war, and also for raising men as warriors, because they are the gatekeepers of this culture.<sup>78</sup>

Karamojong women are key to both conflict initiation and peace building. It is the Karamojong women who incite their husbands to go and raid. This could be partly attributed to the fact that the level of poverty is high and there is no other form of economic activity. It is actually the women who perform the rituals before their husbands and sons go for raids and return from raids. But the women now need peace because they are fed up at losing their husbands and sons, and the women need to know their rights.<sup>79</sup>

These peacebuilding efforts of women are undertaken in conditions of great danger and difficulty but remain almost entirely invisible to male leaders in the region and do not appear to be recognised at government level at all. Women peace activists in Teso maintain that government structures, particularly health services that should help them, are inaccessible because, "while the government says we have rights, we always have to struggle for money to enjoy them. Women should be in a position to build our own country but the government does not organise much to help us do that".<sup>80</sup>

### C. THE WAY FORWARD

The Ugandan government has signed most of the international conventions and protocols that guarantee non-discrimination and equal opportunity to participate in economic, social and cultural development and provide protection against torture and for human dignity.<sup>81</sup> With respect to armed conflict, the government is bound by International Humanitarian Law as codified in the Geneva Conventions, and it has not only accepted the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) but has also invited that tribunal to exercise jurisdiction over atrocity crimes committed during the LRA insurgency since 1 July 2002.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless the North and North East in particular have suffered widespread human rights violations, violence – much of it gender based – and

displacement, as well as the destruction of social, cultural, economic and political infrastructures.

Although it has ratified CEDAW, Uganda has no specific law protecting women: for 45 years, women activists have called in vain for a domestic relations bill to protect them against violence. In parliamentary debate, the present draft has been amended in ways that women peace activists fear might make it toothless.<sup>83</sup> The lack of a specific law to protect women has hindered their participation in political, social and economic decision-making. Women bear much of the cost of the several conflicts but receive limited recognition and support from the government. Their efforts are rarely acknowledged, and they are often excluded from policy structures; nor is priority given to building their capacity to manage the little that is left in their control. The action plans and policies put in place to reduce armed conflict tend to ignore their specific needs, so women's issues remain all too invisible in post-conflict reconstruction, reintegration and rehabilitation processes.

Because their involvement in peacebuilding is overlooked, women are largely unrepresented when it comes to negotiating treaties and peace agreements and enacting laws, and they continue to suffer quietly the consequences of the conflict with little redress. In a workshop on UNSCR 1325, a woman peace activist explained:

You may think Uganda is a country supposedly leading on women's issues, supporting women's empowerment. But what is happening to [Congo] and Sudan has happened to Uganda. Donors *invented* the gender ministry but it was never part of government strategy. To begin with we had powerful women so we did see some changes. But when donor money ended, so did the work: the ministry changed names and took on everything, and gender is the least part of its work today. The ministry can do nothing for women now. It just promotes and supports women who are in the armpit of men.<sup>84</sup>

The population in general, but women peace activists in particular, are struggling not just against the government's inadequate response to their plight but against the international perception that, as one donor put it, Uganda represents the best Africa has to offer.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Crisis Group interviews, local government official, Katakwi, 31 March 2006 and woman peace activist, Kampala, 3 April 2006.

<sup>79</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 30 March 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Crisis Group interview, Katakwi, 31 March 2006.

<sup>81</sup> Uganda is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its optional protocol; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>82</sup> That is the date of the Rome Statute's entry into force.

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<sup>83</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Kampala, 30 March and 4 April 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Woman peace activist, Crisis Group workshop, Nairobi, 2 February 2006. The original ministry of women in development is now the ministry of gender, labour and social development.

<sup>85</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Uganda, 2006.

## V. COMMON CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

The international community's knowledge of how women build peace in Sudan, Congo and Uganda remains shallow, and there has been little commitment to including women as sources of information in the conduct of baseline security assessments, small arms surveys and joint assessment missions. Information from the ground tends to be haphazard and often not disaggregated for sex, leaving the international community frequently to make educated guesses about women's capacities and needs, without the empirical research that should drive the development of policies and programs to resolve conflict and build peace. Over-generalised conclusions remain the norm in discussions of how women enter leadership positions in the security arena.

Specifically, there has been too little comparative research on women's peacebuilding activities in complex emergencies that cross national borders. And there have been few attempts to analyse how women are affected by the cross-border movements of militias or to assess their existing or potential contributions to cross-border and regional peacebuilding initiatives.

In the three countries considered in this report, efforts by women to promote peace are heard only sporadically, because, as a woman academic and activist in Uganda commented, "when we do write, no one reads us".<sup>86</sup> Peace activists complain that they are pigeonholed as people who are paid to provide services but not to think. Many of these women are almost entirely reliant on funding from NGOs and civil society organisations. They are expected to provide a wide range of public services in cases where normal government functions are limited due to inefficiency and corruption but they have little capacity to influence public policy or spending.<sup>87</sup>

Women peace activists also face many dilemmas common to peace activists of every type. If they remain in the conflict zones where their interventions are most effective and needed, they are in constant danger and cannot properly tell the outside world about the human rights violations they witness, bring justice to the violated or efficiently raise funds. If they move to larger towns, they can be subjected to surveillance, and lack of money, particularly for transport, makes it almost impossible to continue outreach work.<sup>88</sup>

The women who are able to enter the international arena are frustrated by inability to retain influence at home and fear being thought to have opted out.<sup>89</sup> Women also face significant challenges when they try to assume leadership positions, especially the risk of being co-opted. As a male Ugandan official said, "women only have authority when it is given by men; so it's authority without power. They say, 'this is a big woman, but her basket is empty'".<sup>90</sup>

In all three countries, peacebuilders face entrenched, male-dominated institutions in which elites cling to power, often violently. A male Ugandan peace activist said: "Men here generally like to be identified with coercive measures and force. You cannot be a man unless you have power, so you cannot talk about a non-violent approach".<sup>91</sup> Since peacebuilders work under difficult conditions, and the space given to their issues is small, women often organise apart from other post-conflict civil society groups. This partly explains why it often is easy for those who oppose women's empowerment to ignore the violence against them and dismiss their contributions, while excluding them from decision-making structures that might enhance their security. A South Kivu woman activist said: "Some male leaders cried out that the application of Resolution 1325 would give too much power to women who do not deserve it. 'Women remain women', they said, 'and they have no experience to deserve such posts'".<sup>92</sup>

Women peace activists in all three countries complained about vague and inappropriate programs that, they believe, are designed less to empower women than as a sop to donors, international observers and, all too frequently, local women themselves. A Ugandan woman human rights specialist asserted: "Donors interest themselves only in the politics of the day. They talk about democracy, but they do nothing to make it participatory, restorative or based on care. They give aid but they don't monitor how it gets spent. No wonder 1325 is ignored".<sup>93</sup>

Unsurprisingly, then, while women peace activists try to use that important resolution, the results are often limited.<sup>94</sup> A prominent woman peace activist in Uganda said bitterly:

You ignore what we women in civil society tell you.  
Why do we have to wait for a white man to come

<sup>86</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 4 April 2006.

<sup>87</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 4 April 2006.

<sup>88</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, 15 March 2006, Kinshasa, 21 March 2006, Kampala, 3 April 2006. In all three countries, women reported that their peace activities are monitored either by national government or local security authorities.

<sup>89</sup> Women peace activists, Crisis Group workshop, Nairobi, 2-3 February 2006.

<sup>90</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, 2 February 2006 and Soroti, 2 April 2006.

<sup>91</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 6 April 2006.

<sup>92</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Congo, 12 April 2006.

<sup>93</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 3 April 2006.

<sup>94</sup> On the failure of interventions to promote women's peace and security, also see Klot, op. cit.

and verify what we report? Why does no one listen to a black woman's voice when she talks about war trauma? I believe my advocacy since 2000 would have stopped more than 10,000 deaths in this country. But no one has had the courtesy to come and check my findings. You don't care that we run around in dangerous places to do our work. You don't care that a woman comes crying to us, she opens her legs and you see things you cannot even imagine, and she tells you 25 men stood in a row and raped her.

We see things that break our hearts, things we can't forget. We tell you about them, but you refuse to listen to what we say. Our data is always referred to as unprofessional but when we challenge you to provide us with the skills to produce data you will accept and use, you don't follow up. It is so traumatic. You focus only on political democracy but don't think about the social democracy that we are trying to build. We tell you what we experience but you do not listen; you weaken our efforts, and you add to our trauma".<sup>95</sup>

## **A. LACK OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Women activists in each of the countries are struggling to bring to public attention the fact that women and children (girls and boys, including infants) are experiencing extremely high levels of violence, predominantly sexual, by men. Whether this violence is perpetrated by individuals in the home or by large numbers in areas of armed conflict, it has enormous political and economic implications. Rape affects women's marital status and eligibility to marry, and this has significant economic impact on women because they are caught in what a Ugandan activist called "the trap of the dependence they individually and collectively have toward men and clans".<sup>96</sup>

Violence against women in war is never intended only to devastate the life of the immediate victims but also to destroy the fabric of society. Accordingly, the spill-over from violence against women affects the men in their lives as well. An elderly Darfur man displaced in Khartoum explained:

They destroyed my business, and my wife was raped by Janjaweed. They split her and raped her and she couldn't tell me. I only knew when she became too ill to walk. I came to Khartoum to look for work so I could get help for her. I have no plans to divorce her. I only want her to be well again, but here I can only work as a labourer and it is hard to get money.<sup>97</sup>

It is precisely because the impacts of sexual violence are so broad, affecting everyone in the society under attack, that rape is used as a weapon of war. Its ongoing effects, long after the war is over, should be of primary concern to those who advocate more inclusion of women in peacebuilding institutions. Strategies to prevent violence against women during war are simultaneously strategies to protect women's participation in reconstruction and democracy-building in the aftermath.

The general lack of access to justice for survivors of sexual assault is a major problem. Violence against women in the private sphere is drastically under-reported even in countries with a vigorous women's movement and an advanced commitment to judicial and security sector reform. When law and order break down in war, as in Sudan, Congo and Uganda, few records are kept of how women's security, including their health and nutrition, is impacted. This contributes to impunity for male violators – especially those in the security sector or governmental authority – which directly undercuts women's ability to enter positions that might allow them to change public policy or get laws against sexual crimes enforced. A Congolese woman peace activist described the problem:

During the armed conflicts, most insecurity for women in the DRC came from violence and rapes. Although women have pleaded and demanded, the authors of crimes were not punished – to the contrary, they were promoted. Women's objections have not been taken into account and do not seem to concern the current decision-makers at the highest level. The lack of punishment, the lack of male concern, means women are even more frightened. They don't want to move around in a system which doesn't consider their rights, where they have to mix with the rapists of yesterday or be subjected to their authority.<sup>98</sup>

Recording the full extent of gender-based violence is next to impossible but women peace activists consider it to be the single biggest source of injury and death for women

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<sup>95</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Kampala, 4 April 2006. She is referring to a visit to North Uganda by Jan Egeland, UN Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, in November 2003, after which he said: "The conflict in northern Uganda is the biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today", <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/e1f176894430fdeec1256ddb0056ea4c>.

<sup>96</sup> Crisis Group interviews, women peace activists, Uganda and Congo.

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<sup>97</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 8 March 2006. Women who have been infibulated, an extreme form of female genital mutilation practised in parts of Sudan, suffer particularly horribly from the consequences of forced sexual intercourse.

<sup>98</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Congo.

and girls.<sup>99</sup> It is particularly difficult to determine the severity in the areas most affected by armed conflict. To address this, efforts are needed to provide specialised police and social services in conflict areas. Although sexual and other forms of violence are usually highest in over-crowded and under-resourced IDP camps, they are often the most poorly protected areas.

UNSCR 1325 recognises that adherence to international law applicable to women and girls is an essential means to include women in post-conflict reconstruction. Judicial reform and restorative justice strategies should, therefore, become a priority in each country: by offering mechanisms for survivors to report violence, including sexual violence, they provide an essential avenue for healing trauma and can help women gain reparations. Restorative justice can be community-based and owned, for example through the training of paralegals and development of the capacity for peer-counselling by community organisations. Particularly in areas where men traditionally dominate customary law, however, care must always be taken to ensure that they serve women adequately. As it conducts its investigations, the ICC should remain firmly and consistently committed to exposing and prosecuting perpetrators of sexual violence, including those in positions of authority.

## **B. LACK OF ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE**

Given that forcible impregnation is a crime and women forced to bear children of rape are subject to hostility, social exclusion and mental trauma, and that the health systems in all three countries operate under considerable duress, a review of the extent to which reproductive health services meet the needs of women caught up in armed conflict is urgently needed. The UN, donors and governments should give priority to making reproductive health care and social support more accessible. Government health institutions need to be the major healthcare providers for women in conflict and high-violence zones, with free treatment available in cases of sexual violence.

Reproductive health care institutions need to be sustainable as well as politically and culturally neutral. Specialised gynaecological support for survivors should be widely available, with particular efforts to reach women in remote regions and a commitment to address the on-going needs of raped women in the decades after armed conflict ends. That these services are expensive and difficult to maintain

in the face of an insurgency is not an excuse not to provide them. The high financial costs of healing and caring for desperately injured and traumatised women and children should be an added spur to preventing sexual violence.

## **C. HIV-AIDS**

In July 2000, UNSCR 1308 recognized that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is “exacerbated by conditions of violence and instability”. Complex emergencies are characterised by conflict, social instability, poverty, powerlessness and the breakdown of health services, which favours the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Mass displacements can spread HIV, especially when IDPs migrate to cities with overcrowded, unsanitary living conditions and high levels of violence, and there are inadequate healthcare services or a lack of resources to pay for medical assistance. Uganda is often praised for its efforts to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS but the Uganda AIDS Commission Study found very high prevalence in the North and North East, the areas affected by armed conflict.<sup>100</sup> This has a serious gender impact because women bear the major cost of HIV/AIDS, both as caregivers and as victims of infection; it also is a barrier to women's full participation in conflict prevention.

Social stigma and fear of HIV/AIDS have increased the number of marriage break-ups in the three countries surveyed, because husbands reject rape victims on the suspicion they may be HIV positive. When men die first, widows and their children may lose inheritances because male elders in the clan divide the property among themselves, sometimes in direct contravention of the law.<sup>101</sup> The breakdown of social networks and support mechanisms places women, girls and boys at an increased risk of violence. Rejection by spouses and the influx of armed men into conflict areas, whether as combatants or peacekeepers, can force women and children into survival sex in order to gain access to food, water and security.

When women are placed in extreme circumstances, the fear of HIV/AIDS contends with the reality of survival; as a respondent in Uganda explained, “Hunger can kill me in a short time but with HIV/AIDS, I can live for a year and care for my children”.<sup>102</sup>

Recognising the link between the spread of the virus and women's capacity to influence and benefit from peace and security processes, UNSCR 1325 calls for HIV/AIDS

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<sup>99</sup> This view is supported by World Health Organisation estimates that violence is, globally, the leading cause of death for women aged fifteen to 44, more than cancer, traffic accidents and malaria combined, [www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-gender-violence.html](http://www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-gender-violence.html).

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<sup>100</sup> See “The National Strategic Framework of HIV/AIDS Activities in Uganda 2000/1 to 2005/6”, Uganda Aids Commission, 2000.

<sup>101</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 4 April 2006.

<sup>102</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Uganda.

awareness training for all military and civilian police personnel. Health education and counselling on sexual violence should be designed to help overcome stigmatisation, exclusion and abandonment of rape survivors, especially those who are HIV positive. More resources should be provided so women and men, girls and boys, have access to voluntary counselling, testing and anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment. Abstinence education is inadequate to prevent HIV/AIDS in violence-prone settings where women often cannot refuse to have sex. Women and men should have easy access to condoms and receive education about their proper use.

Respondents in all three countries spoke repeatedly of the psychological burdens of women who are HIV positive or caring for people with AIDS but a Uganda peace activist said the problem "is usually ignored, underplayed or simply denied in determining the rehabilitation and democratic transformation of society".<sup>103</sup> Apart from the informal aid given by severely under-resourced local women's peace groups, no systematic attempts appear to have been made to create safe areas where traumatised women can receive psychological care. In conflict zones, where it is needed most, access to HIV-related services, including information, is poorest. Women may also be excluded from community healing rituals, in what is sometimes a distortion of traditional community practices.<sup>104</sup>

In the words of a male peace activist in Uganda, "the levels of trauma are very high and yet there are no services to help the women come to terms with this problem. The person who made you an orphan, raped you, is your leader today, and yet there are no services for you within your village. How do you cope with such feelings?"<sup>105</sup>

#### **D. LIMITED INFORMATION**

In all three countries, women have difficulty gaining access to what little information there is about peacebuilding and security. To get their message across, activists make creative use of communication strategies, especially for illiterate audiences. For example, in Uganda and Congo they use theatre-in-education techniques to communicate messages of non-violence and reconciliation to all members of a community. Listening circles are reportedly a useful tool by which literate women reach others through reading aloud. Materials should continue to be translated into local languages to facilitate this type of outreach. Translations of UNSCR 1325 have proven particularly useful for

engaging women with the aspects of peace and security most relevant to them.<sup>106</sup>

Radio was cited as a good way to reach women, and the potential of other technologies, including the computer and the internet, was also discussed. However, few women own radios, and even fewer can afford batteries to run them, so men often control whether and when women can listen.<sup>107</sup> Efforts should be made to supply wind-up and solar powered radios to women, and women-specific programs should be broadcast at times when they are most likely to tune in. Congolese women formerly made good use of field tape recorders to create interactive radio shows in which women could record responses to a show, which were edited and broadcast the next week. This low cost way to bring radio to the community ended when equipment was looted as armed violence escalated. Replacement resources have not been found.<sup>108</sup> Similar programs in Uganda were not systematically backed by government and local media services and came to a halt when donor funding for them ended.<sup>109</sup>

While digital technologies are the most difficult to make accessible to women, especially in rural areas where electricity and telephone lines are unreliable, if available at all, Ugandan women peace workers manage rural information units which include computers, printers, television, video and landline telephones. This model, and the best practices learned from it, should be replicated elsewhere.<sup>110</sup>

The media has a significant role to play in promoting women's rights. Journalists and others in media should be trained so that information is produced and distributed which upholds women's rights and raises gender awareness.

#### **E. CROSS-BORDER ISSUES**

Only a small amount of research has been conducted on cross-border dimensions of armed conflicts that stem from the uncontrolled movement of armed forces and groups across the poorly patrolled Sudanese, Ugandan and Congolese frontiers. Not much is known about how women and girls are specifically affected, although women's peace groups regularly deal with the impacts.

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<sup>103</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Uganda.

<sup>104</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 1 April 2006.

<sup>105</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 31 March 2006.

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<sup>106</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Bukavu, 24 March 2006 and Katakwi, 31 March 2006.

<sup>107</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Jaber-rona, 10 March 2006, Bukavu, 24 March 2006 and Katakwi, 31 March 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Crisis Group interview, Goma, 26 March 2006.

<sup>109</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Kampala, 3 April 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman peace activist, Uganda, 2006; "Impact: Empower Women to Communicate", Isis-WICCE, vol. 5, Kampala.



Women associated with fighting forces and groups move across borders in two primary ways: by choice or coercion. Some choose to accompany husbands or partners who are returning to their country after official or unofficial deployment in another land. Such is the case of a small group of Congolese women who moved back with their men after Ugandan troops left the Congo in 2002. Others, however, are moved across borders by force when they are abducted, as in northern and north eastern Uganda, where the LRA routinely captures women and girls and takes them into southern Sudan (and, more recently, into north eastern Congo).

It is difficult to verify precisely what happens to these women because they tend to disappear into their new communities and assimilate fairly quickly in order to survive. However, it appears that the Congolese women in Uganda have been abandoned because they were not married, brought no dowry and were often superseded by the acknowledged wives of the men they accompanied. Many are now HIV positive and live in extreme poverty. They have neither knowledge of international repatriation processes nor the resources to go home. Congolese-based women's networks report that they are trying to bring these women back but it was impossible to establish whether any local networks on the Ugandan side of the border had joined the effort.<sup>111</sup>

Further research is needed on women's cross-border movements. Since no formal, and very few informal, cross-border networks exist between women's peacebuilding groups, women's participation in regional peacebuilding institutions such as the Amani Forum in the Great Lakes region should be boosted by establishment of a task force to examine women-specific cross-border concerns. The Amani Forum should also be extended to include Sudan.

## **F. THE ROLE OF MEN**

Women's capacity for peacebuilding and decision-making is severely undermined because of the high levels of male aggression directed against them, especially during protracted emergencies, as roles change and violence becomes increasingly entrenched as a means to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Expansion of women's roles as peacebuilders will be impossible unless male attitudes can be changed. In the words of a male human rights activist in Uganda, "men who stop women's peace activism need to be engaged. We need to build their confidence that

women can be trusted. A good leader understands the need for balance and respects women".<sup>112</sup>

Men may lose some of their status and authority as armed conflict devastates traditional family and clan structures, disrupts economic activities, including the productive use of land and removes people from other support systems that uphold male power.<sup>113</sup> A woman IDP in Sudan explained the impact of her imprisonment on her family:

I was a casual domestic labourer. I used to leave my children at home in the displaced camp; I also worked as a brewer, and was arrested and imprisoned for three months. The children lived with no support...and the oldest the boy was abducted and raped during my imprisonment and afterwards became a street kid. His father didn't take care of them, because he had nothing. He was just drinking alcohol. Then this child began to hate his father: he thought he should be taking care of them. It was very hard for a little boy to have so much hatred. Now I've been released, and I am growing stronger; I've gone through hardship, imprisonment, beatings, but I continued to look for and care for my children. Their father, by contrast, adds no value. It's as if he doesn't exist.

At the end of the interview, the husband expressed despair: "Why are you not also talking to me?" he asked. "What about my insecurity? I wish I could die because there is nothing for me to do to take care of my family".<sup>114</sup>

Many men interviewed appeared unable to adjust to the social changes from war, which they saw only in negative terms. They especially resented what they perceived as interference in the male domain of security, particularly when women's alternative strategies achieved more success than the traditional reliance on escalated aggression. A notable tendency was to belittle and undermine the new roles women have taken on to resolve conflict and violence. In Teso, Uganda, a male traditional leader asked about the impacts of women's peacebuilding activities was unable to focus on their achievements. Instead, he lamented that their activities were only possible because men were disempowered:

Yes, women speak to men now about violence. Men are not happy in the IDP camps; they feel almost like women. They can't take control over their women and children. So the men have just left this [anti-violence] work to women because

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<sup>111</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Goma, 26 March 2006 and Kampala, 3 April 2006.

<sup>112</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 25 March 2006.

<sup>113</sup> This problem was articulated in Crisis Group interviews conducted in all three countries, March-April 2006.

<sup>114</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 8 March 2006.

they feel almost like women themselves. Men have given up, they feel they've been destroyed. ...So the women have taken over, and the men don't care.<sup>115</sup>

In all three countries, women spoke of men's distrust of their activities. To make their messages clear to all community members, women include men in their discussions. Although they know this exposes them to being co-opted, they are beginning to see benefits in the approach. In Uganda, a male human rights activist noted: "Some women's groups have started inviting men to their meetings to enable them to understand the issues that women discuss and how they benefit the entire household. Such men are in turn passing on the message to other men".<sup>116</sup>

There continues to be very limited social space, however, for male sympathisers to express support for women's peacebuilding and promotion of non-violence, let alone to articulate a similar position. "Men who support women will have no respect in our communities", remarked an activist in Sudan, while a male Congolese leader admitted:

To be truthful, men who seem to understand nothing and do not accept Resolution 1325 are only frightened of losing their land. They have submitted women to manipulation since the world began, whenever they wanted to, and they don't want to stop now.<sup>117</sup>

Further, when war disrupts economic activity or makes a man's cattle more vulnerable to armed raiders, older men often cling to power. Sometimes they marry more young wives to consolidate their wealth, or as a Sudanese activist put it, "to build an empire", but are reluctant to set their sons up by giving cattle for a dowry to establish a new household. The result is a generation of frustrated, angry young men caught in perpetual adolescence that often makes them idle, addicted to alcohol and drugs, without hope and a serious threat to community stability.<sup>118</sup>

To address this challenge systematically, it is necessary to strengthen inter-generational contact and offer all men education on women's human rights and peacebuilding. It is particularly important to address marginalised men such as former combatants and those in IDP camps and to ensure that customary law and other traditional practices that

are misused by men to control women do not contradict national constitutions and violate women's rights.

## G. SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

With Sudan, Uganda and Congo awash with weapons, civilian disarmament should be a priority. The security of both women and men is tenuous in post-conflict settings where small arms and light weapons are prolific, although the increased violence is usually experienced differently. Peace activists in the countries confirmed that sexual violence by men against women at gunpoint has steadily increased with the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons.

Recognising the complex ways in which women and men respond to and are affected by small arms that remain in their communities is critical to finding the most convincing arguments for disarmament. It is crucial in each country to develop disarmament policies and to ensure that women are consulted so they understand and support the process. Disarmament should also be connected to domestic and family violence laws so that perpetrators of such violence have their weapons seized and are prohibited from applying for gun licenses. Local law enforcement officers should be trained to respond to domestic and family violence sensitively and effectively, including by recording the type of weapon used and its legal status.

Arms trafficking across borders may often be connected with the trafficking of people and other illicit activities. Women are likely to be involved, either willingly or through coercion, and are often an excellent source of information on arms proliferation in their communities. In Uganda and Congo, where arms control and disarmament have long been public issues, women have actively participated in awareness-raising and weapons collection programs and are reported to have influenced men to give up their arms. In Sudan, however, disarmament is a more difficult topic because there is insufficient trust on all sides and a tradition of arms ownership explicitly tied to images of masculinity.<sup>119</sup> No gun laws have yet been put in place in the South.

It is imperative to involve a wide range of women and men in the development and implementation of arms control policies, violence prevention strategies and disarmament initiatives. Evidence from other African countries, such as Sierra Leone, shows that if women are not consulted when disarmament policy is decided, violence against women continues.<sup>120</sup> There should also be a zero-tolerance policy

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<sup>115</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 1 April 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 31 March 2006.

<sup>117</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Sobā-Aradi, 10 March 2006 and Goma, 26 March 2006.

<sup>118</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Sudan, Congo and Uganda. Also see Chris Dolan, "Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States – A case study from Northern Uganda", in F. Cleaver (ed.), *Masculinities Matter: Men, gender and development* (London, 2003).

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<sup>119</sup> Crisis Group interview, Juba 14 March 2006.

<sup>120</sup> Derek Miller, Daniel Ladouceur and Zoe Dugal *From Research to Roadmap: Learning from the Arms for Development Initiative in Sierra Leone*, UNIDIR/UNDP (Geneva, 2006).

for police and military violence against women and girls, including large-scale efforts to educate all police and military personnel on women's and girls' rights.

The picture should not, however, be over-simplified. In situations of prolonged instability, gun ownership and use become entwined with identity in complex ways. Even though women tend not to own small arms, this does not mean they are opposed to their use. A peace activist in Uganda explained:

Women are mostly victims of small arms: if they do own them, it's not to such an extent that we know about it, but a man might have ten guns and a woman might have access to these without owning one. This is not to say women are peaceful. They have to take responsibility for what they say to men to encourage them to use arms, and also for raising men as warriors – acting as gatekeepers of this violent culture.<sup>121</sup>

Also in Uganda, a Karamojong respondent spoke of the impact on his own identity of handing in his weapon: "My giving up the gun to the government has exposed me to ridicule from my wife. I am no longer a man; I am like her. I don't bring meat or milk for the children".<sup>122</sup>

## VI. CONCLUSION

Women's peace groups in Sudan, Congo and Uganda create significant, sometimes the sole, safe spaces for men and women to discuss once taboo subjects that have become a painfully common part of life in their war-torn societies. An elderly Darfurian described how "in my village, I could not speak, for shame, about what had happened to my wife. But when I came to Khartoum and met these women, I realised these people were speaking about this kind of violence, and finally I could tell my story".<sup>123</sup> For women, relief from finally being able to speak out is possibly even more palpable:

We visited IDPs and returnees with our organisation, "Women to Women", and spoke to women about sexual and gender-based violence. One woman stood up and told her own story about what happened to her when she learned to help survivors like herself. She said: 'My dynamism was lost until I became a teacher of others like me'.<sup>124</sup>

Speaking for all the women Crisis Group interviewed, a peace activist in Uganda said: "Give women money for peace, and there will be peace."<sup>125</sup> Women's groups are doing a great deal of work with few resources. Sometimes they offer the only recourse available to victims of war because government help is so degraded. If properly resourced, they could do much more but it is equally important that governments fulfil their responsibilities to establish and maintain women-friendly security, health and education services.

Women activists in the three countries are bringing some measure of relief, justice and change and will continue to address the interlinked issues of peacebuilding, reconciliation and post-conflict redevelopment. As a peace activist said, "we have lived through the war, and we have been studying, thinking and preparing for peace. We can do good work".<sup>126</sup> The evidence collected by Crisis Group supports her claim. But to turn their vision of peace into reality, governments, donors and others in the international community all need to do much more to convert into sustainable support what is too often mostly rhetorical backing for their efforts.

**Nairobi/Brussels, 28 June 2006**

<sup>121</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 28 March 2006.

<sup>122</sup> Crisis Group interview, Katakwi, 30 March 2006.

<sup>123</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, 8 March, 2006.

<sup>124</sup> Crisis Group interview, Bukavu, 24 March 2006.

<sup>125</sup> Crisis Group interview, Soroti, 2 April 2006.

<sup>126</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kampala, 4 April 2006.

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF SUDAN, CONGO AND UGANDA



## APPENDIX B

### UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

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United Nations S/RES/1325 (2000)

**Security Council** Distr.: General

31 October 2000

00-72018 (E)

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#### **Resolution 1325 (2000)**

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000**

*The Security Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its

President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

*Recalling also* the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

*Bearing in mind* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

*Reaffirming also* the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

*Emphasizing* the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

*Recognizing also* the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

*Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decisionmaking levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;
7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;
8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:
  - (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
  - (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;
  - (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;
9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;
11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;
12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;
13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;
15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;
16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;
17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;
18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

## APPENDIX C

### GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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ARV	Anti-retroviral Treatment
AU	African Union
CBO	Civil Society-based Organisations
CEDAW	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFPU	Child and Family Protection Unit, mechanism within Ugandan national police
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the new integrated army composed of former belligerents now participating in the transitional government
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, rebel movement comprised mostly of ethnic Hutu from Rwanda operating in the eastern Congo
GEST	Gender Expert Support Team, represented Darfur women at the negotiations in Abuja
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority on Development
IRC	International Rescue Committee
Isis-WICCE	Isis Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange
JAM	UN Joint Assessment Mission, charged with assessing post-conflict needs in Sudan
JNTT	Joint National Transition Team, prepares and allocates budgets for reconstruction in Sudan
KIWEPI	Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDRP	Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Program for the Great Lakes Region
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NCP	National Congress Party, ruling party of Sudan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSWF	New Sudan Women's Federation
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SLA/MM	Sudan Liberation Army, faction led by Minni Minawi
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TEWPA	Teso Women Peace Activists
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development