

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

A UNFPA Strategy
for Gender
Mainstreaming in
Areas of Conflict
and Reconstruction

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Girls
A Consultative Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in
Areas of Conflict and Reconstruction

Bratislava, Slovakia
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UNFPA
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FOREWORD

The nature of armed conflicts changed dramatically during the latter half of the twentieth century, with casualties among civilians increasingly outnumbering those of military personnel. Women and girls became especially vulnerable in such conflicts. Because of this, significant ethical, analytical and operational challenges have emerged for the United Nations system, not least for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). One of the most critical challenges is the need to develop integrated, gender-sensitive strategies and programme interventions for addressing conflict situations.

UNFPA has been at the forefront of addressing reproductive health issues and gender-based violence during armed conflicts. In collaboration with national and international partners and donors, UNFPA has supported emergency reproductive health projects in more than 30 countries worldwide, most recently in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries. Within the scope of the UNFPA mandate and limited financial and human resources, UNFPA has increasingly played an important advocacy role for reproductive health and human rights of women and adolescent girls in emergency situations.

The impact of conflicts on women and girls' reproductive and sexual health can never be underestimated. Their psychological, reproductive and overall well-being is often severely compromised in times of conflict. Conflicts tend to increase the incidence of sexual violence; rape; sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS; and unwanted pregnancies. In addition, essential social services, such as medical facilities, on which women heavily depend for their well-being, are greatly disrupted by armed conflicts.

Despite these negative outcomes, women have acted as peace mediators in families and societies for generations and have proved instrumental in conflict prevention. The international community should reinforce these skills. Women's economic power and social status must be strengthened. By taking into account women's capabilities and vulnerabilities, by supporting initiatives that offer protection from sexual and gender-based violence, by improving the availability of quality health care and reproductive health services, by providing access to education and skills development training and by providing assistance to income-generating and other economic activities for women, the international community can promote the full participation of women in conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

This report of a consultative meeting is intended to contribute to the United Nations study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Girls, requested by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1325, and adopted on 31 October 2000. The Gender Issues Branch of the Technical Support Division,

UNFPA, organized the meeting with overall coordination by Ms. Sahir Abdul-Hadi. The Country Technical Services Team (CST) based in Bratislava, Slovakia, assisted in organizing the consultative meeting.

In today's world, women remain grossly underrepresented in decision-making forums related to conflict prevention and peace-building. This must change. As a multilateral organization committed to all dimensions of women's and girls' health and well-being, UNFPA has clear comparative advantages in helping to strengthen women's contributions. This important meeting has helped UNFPA clarify its role and broaden its possibilities.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHAD	Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (DFID)
CST	Country Technical Services Team
DFID	British Department for International Development
DPKO	Department of Peace-keeping Operations
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IAWG	Inter-agency Working Group
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDP	Internally displaced person
IEC	Information, education, and communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPTF	International Police Task Force
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KEGME	Mediterranean Women's Studies Center
KFOR	NATO Kosovo Forces
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MISP	Minimum Initial Services Package
MSI	Marie Stopes International
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office Coordinator of Human Affairs
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNMIBH United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMIK United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNOHCHR United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for
Human Rights
WFP World Food Programme
WHO World Health Organization

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