

4.2.1 Security Council Resolution 1820: Women, Peace, and Security

On 19 June 2008, the UN Security Council held an open debate titled “Women, Peace, and Security: Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict” and unanimously adopted Resolution 1820, recognizing that sexual violence as a tactic of war is not just a gender issue, but also a matter of international peace and security, especially in peacekeeping contexts. Resolution 1820 states that widespread and systematic sexual violence can exacerbate conflict, impede the restoration of international peace and security, and have negative consequences for peace, reconciliation, and development.

Resolution 1820 reinforces and is intended to complement the landmark Resolution 1325 (2000), which urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. Eight years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, member states reiterated their deep concern about

violence against women and children in armed conflict, which is becoming systematic and widespread especially in conflict zones.

This was aptly characterized by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the beginning of the June 2008 debate, when he stated that “violence against women has reached unspeakable and pandemic proportions in some societies attempting to recover from conflict.” He added that “violence poses a grave threat to women’s security in fragile post-conflict countries and undermines efforts to cement peace . . . by creating a culture that punishes violence and elevates women to their rightful role, we can lay the foundation for lasting stability, where women are not victims of violence, but agents of peace.”

The Secretary-General stated that, in order for a strategy to succeed, awareness must be raised and effective security measures must be established, including training

of national military and police forces, close monitoring of human rights, and prosecution of perpetrators.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will play a significant role in the implementation of Resolution 1820 by developing appropriate guidance and training resources for peacekeeping missions, ensuring continued engagement and partnership with troop- and police-contributing countries, facilitating the increased deployment of female uniformed personnel, and continuing to uphold the policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations. In order to comply with the provisions of the resolution, DPKO will lead a UN systemwide effort to prepare a report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution, which is due by June 2009.