

**SYMPOSIUM & OSCE PUBLICATION ON: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO
COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN,
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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CONFLICT RELATED SETTINGS,
IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325**

First of all, I wish to congratulate OSCE and especially Ms Jamila Seftaoui to the impressive work done for the Publication presented today. The problems are showed from various angles and aspects. The compendium will be a real basic literature for all of us who want to work for VAW.

VAW has been classified in three primary forms: violence in the family, in the community, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State. My observations are mostly connected to the last form, but of course there are several bridges to the first two categories.

Violence against women in wars and conflicts is really not a new phenomenon. In the old history of wars, men in armed forces took their women to follow them, to provide them with services. If not, the soldiers took what they needed for food and pleasure from the women in villages they conquered. All over Europe this was seen during the centuries of war. A parallel can be found in the recent civil wars in Africa and Asia – girls are forced to follow men as bush wives, carry their arms and ammunition, cook for them, work as sex slaves. I have met so many of them after the wars, in Sierra Leone, DRC, Somalia, Cambodia, East Timor... They can have been taken in the age of 10-12, now mostly without any future in spite of prostitution.

But one of the many grave crimes against women during modern wars have not been much mentioned. During the II World War, the Japanese Army, ie Government of Japan, forced up to 200.000 service women to give pleasure to the soldiers. They were taken from Korea, the Philippines, China, all over the region. In Seoul for years there have been demonstrations once a week in front of the Embassy of Japan. Finally women took the justice in their own hands. They organized a Truth commission-like Women's international War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery. Some of the victims could still stand up as witnesses. The amazing thing is that there were no special reactions against this arrangement from the outside world during the war. I don't want to point finger on Japan, because unfortunately I have witnessed too many similar arrangements in connection to peace keeping operations around the world. Some nations, also from Europe, have organized more or less brothels for their men, like in Eritrea.

This is creating a follow up problem. Children fathered by foreigners are more or less without rights, often abandoned by their mothers. In Africa, ECOMOG peacekeepers fathered 6000 children in Liberia 1990-98, and when their peacekeepers left Sierra Leone, women with babies lined the route to the airport. In many cases it is difficult for the mother to accept the child, a reason why so many of them are living in the streets.

This happened of course also during the war in the Former Yugoslavia. Only the important work of organisations like Medica Zenica, counselling women, giving them medical and psychological care, can save both mothers and children.

Trafficking in women is always increasing after a conflict. The amazingly large amount of trafficked women was a sad chock for me during my years in SEE countries, from 1995 until now. Women from Moldova, from Ukraina, Russia, Romania, who mostly had believed the promises given by the traffickers. They will get jobs as hairdressers, in cafés and bars. The cruel truth was very different.

A total zero tolerance from OSCE, from UN, EU, governments must be established and followed up. Women cannot be goods for the market, best article obtains the best price. I give my full support to the important work OSCE in the leadership of Eva Biaudet is doing against trafficking in human beings.

This means too an end for the impunity. We cannot accept anyone to be able to sneak out from his or her responsibility, how high the position even might be. In East Timor, in Aceh everyone knew even the names of perpetrators of VAW, high officers of the Indonesian Army. Their protection through impunity was so strong that only very few have been brought to justice.

At the same time as I am strongly committed to justice, I have to admit that the reality of justice can be too difficult for the victims. I had last summer a personal experience, called to witness in the Hague against indicted war criminals, as the indictment partly was based on my reports as UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur. The whole procedure was most disturbing for me. Total isolation during the two days my part of the trial lasted, intensive cross-examination for totally 9 hours from the counsels of defence, in a language not being my mother tongue. I though was not an outsider, not a victim. How would then a woman feel, who has perhaps never travelled outside her country, who is placed in a strange, different world from her normal life. And pressed by lawyers who want to catch you for not remembering all the details of a disgusting rape properly. The witness protection is still too weak, even if you are a protected witness certainly your home village will know, perhaps the family of the perpetrator will be aware. I cannot blame those raped women who have refused to testify.

I have so far only dealt with the victims mentioning some examples. When we deal with the UNSCR 1325, and the follow-up resolution 1820, we though must go much further than just to leave women as victims.

Women are strong, the more they have suffered, the stronger they are. When dealing with domestic violence, it seems to be very hard for a woman to report about the violence of her husband. As I was told by a lawyer in Phnom Penh: A woman can be beaten up totally by her husband 20 times, not until the 21st she will report about it. We feel a shame, oddly, all over the world, not being good enough for the husband!

The strong women around the world who have declared “enough is enough”, don’t want to take more, are a capacity for the security and work for peace which cannot be neglected anymore. Therefore the message from 1325 declaring the importance of women in peace negotiations, at the table, not behind, in the peace process as a whole is as essential as the protection of women and girls. Only if we get more women in leadership we are able to give the protection 1325 is calling for.

This is also the weakest part of the implementation of the resolution. In spite of promises, agreements, calls to action, National Action plans for the implementation of 1325, still women are not appointed to leadership positions. UN has only one SRSG, Ellen Loej in Liberia, EU has not appointed one single female Special Envoy. How about OSCE and positions covering peace and security? It is a totally wrong conclusion to believe women cannot lead missions to conflict areas. The infrastructure might be destroyed, but so are also social structures, education, environment, health services, rule of law. They are as important to reconstruct as buildings and bridges. Very few envoys are generals or colonels, why is not a civilian woman as good to lead the mission as a civilian man? It is not a question of commanding troops, it is a question of building up a society again.

The situation is as bad when it comes to the national participation. Women are not present at the negotiation tables, in the best case behind in the second row. It is not enough consulting representatives for women organisations, the inputs must be given at the negotiations themselves. I am very pleased that the issue has been raised lately on all levels.

The international Colloquium for Women Leadership last March in Monrovia, Liberia, formulated several important actions to be taken. The Colloquium was co-convened by presidents Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Tarja Halonen, who also signed the calls to action and have handled them over to UNSG Ban Ki Moon.

The call included more appointments of women to serve as SRSG and DSRSG in operations. It demanded recognition of the legal issues concerning children fathered by UN-internationals and during conflict.

Systematic rape and sexual violence in conflict must be considered a weapon of war, which should be included as a part of the disarmament process. Thus, if rape and sexual violence continues, reintegration compensation should not be processed. The climate of impunity that still persists in many countries must be brought to an end.

There must be a gender adviser included in all mediation teams, women must be included in the delegations of the parties, and peace agreements must be gender responsive. The presidents also called for a permanent UN working group on women and armed conflict, and appointment of a Special Representative for Women and Armed Conflict.

As I have said, we are still far behind the goals of a full implementation of 1325, but there are several signs that are encouraging. 23rd June an expert group will consider how to proceed in the implementation of 1820. The meeting is a joint invitation by DPA, DPKO, UNDP and UNIFEM, and the results will be taken to the Security Council in July. I am very pleased to have been invited to this expert meeting.

For us, the OSCE member states, it is extremely important to lead the road forward. It is impossible to accept shameful traditions, to accept any form of Violence against Women. I believe this initiative, the fresh report and our gathering here in Hofburg are leading to the results we all are hoping. But it means too that all of us, OSCE leadership, diplomats, organizations must take their own responsibility for change. The problems cannot be pushed on others to take care of anymore.

Thank you,