



## Oral statement to the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women

### International Alliance of Women

#### Decision-making by Women in Conflict Situations

“Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development”.

This quotation from the Beijing Platform for Action opens this statement on purpose. How can there be peace in the world when there is inequality, injustice, and misery - the fertile grounds upon which hatred and violence grow?

Recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience of women has already been identified as one of the most important prerequisites for peace, sustainable development, democracy, economic development, and hence stability and security. Denying women their right to participate in the political, social, economic, and cultural life of their countries represents discrimination and is a violation of Human Rights. How much more severe is the situation of women in such countries when civil unrest erupts and no rights are respected!

At this global 15-year review, the International Alliance of Women - Equal Rights, Equal Responsibilities - once again wishes to emphasize the importance of women’s full and equal participation in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building. The shadow report of the International Alliance of Women to the Commission (published in our Journal, the International Women’s News 3/2009) contains good examples of official and individual initiatives reported by our member organisations to enhance decision-making of women in the solution of armed conflict and the reestablishment of their respective societies.

In conclusion, the International Alliance of Women wishes to make the following recommendations to governments and intergovernmental organisations:

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We urge governments and intergovernmental organisations active in the field to develop national rosters of potential women candidates and to take active steps to ensure that women are fully informed of and encouraged to apply for positions in the area of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation processes, in particular in senior management positions; to take account of the important role and the particular needs of women and girls in implementing government policies on protection and durable solutions including voluntary return, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration or repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons in safety and dignity; to provide for health care including mental health care wherever women and girls live in post-conflict situations; to guarantee that reconciliation protects women's human rights so that the status of women is not bargained away in any short-term effort to achieve stability; to provide for human rights and intercultural training to counter gender and other discriminatory stereotyping; to establish accessible and transparent early warning systems with an integrated gender perspective, and to support, encourage, finance and empower the participation of women's organizations in the building of sustainable peace.

And finally:

We are highly alarmed when the interdependence of women, peace, and security as linked in UNSCR 1325 is reduced to women and security or even gender and security as it is to be observed within the latest military strategic outlines among NATO and EU<sup>1</sup>. Security is a military goal. The military strategy is to profit from women NGOs and women's skills and expertise in conflict minimizing and peace building in the civilian-military cooperation under military command. These plans go far beyond gender-sensitive training for the troops, they include joint training for military and civilian groups as well as combined missions in order to support the military to carry out its strategic plans thus adding to its effectiveness. This certainly was not the intention of the UNSCR 1325 (2000). We therefore firmly ask for a political, not a military cooperation between women's organisations (who aim at sustainable peace in conflict and post-conflict situations) and the leading political stakeholders on an eye-to-eye level in all peace processes on all levels: peace women to the negotiation tables, not to the frontier!

Thank you for your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> See ISIS-Europe; Bi-SC Directive 40-1 "Integrating UNSCR 1325 and gender perspectives in the NATO command structure including measures for protection during armed conflict", September 2009.

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