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OTAN



# briefing

Participation



Protection



Prevention

“Would a world in which women enjoyed rights equal to those of men be safer and more stable? It is difficult to say, but ultimately a lasting peace in many of the world’s most troubled areas may depend upon the answer.”

Anders Fogh Rasmussen,  
NATO Secretary General

## Women, Peace and Security

**W**ar and conflict often affects women and children more than men. As part of wider international efforts to break this historic inequality, NATO has been working to protect women and children in its areas of operations and increase the participation of women at every level to help prevent future conflicts.

Recognizing the important role women can play in building peace and resolving conflicts the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on 31 October 2000. This Resolution committed all United Nations (UN) member states, including all NATO Allies, to ensuring that gender considerations were integrated into security work.

In December 2007, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) began working with Partner nations to implement UNSCR 1325 within the Alliance. Increasing the participation of women in the armed forces is one part of the solution, but it is not the only one. Protecting women and children from the day-to-day challenges of conflict zones and giving them a voice at the highest levels of decision-making bodies in order to



“UNSCR 1325 remains a powerful call to protect those who are most vulnerable in conflicts and their aftermath, and to enhance the participation of women in building peace and security.”

Anders Fogh Rasmussen,  
NATO Secretary General

prevent future instability, are also part of NATO's UNSCR 1325 commitment. These goals can be met in a variety of ways. Some can be as simple as increasing contact with local Afghan women by re-routing patrolling troops away from the main highways to shopping areas. Others are more complex such as implementing a five track approach for greater female participation at every level of NATO to aid the mainstreaming of UNSCR 1325 into policies, operations, training and its communications. (page 10)

“The challenge for NATO is to ensure that gender perspectives are an integral part of every mission that unfolds,” says Admiral di Paola, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee.

Today the number of women employed in member states' security forces varies between 3 and 18 per cent. Many nations and Partners of NATO are working to improve this through the implementation of national action plans. Out of the 22 nations with approved plans, 13 are NATO and

Partnership for Peace nations. NATO suffers from a lack of gender specialists – male or female – and is unable to fulfil all current and potential operational requirements. Some of these problems are rooted in member countries' military traditions and can only be overcome gradually.

Progress is being made but much remains to be done. “We need to be more attentive to women's concerns in our areas of operations,” says Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. “The empowerment of women in unstable countries benefits not only them, but all of us. It is crucial component of a comprehensive approach to the security challenges of the 21st century.”

With this in mind NATO is working to mainstream gender perspectives into its operations by educating and training staff, with a view to developing better operational procedures; working with member states to increase female participation in the international military and political staff; and monitoring the outcomes of these improvements. ■

## Changing Mindsets



On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council publicly recognized the often devastating impact of war and conflict on women and children. UNSCR 1325 is the first Resolution of its kind, requiring parties involved in conflict to respect women's rights.

In 2007, through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), NATO

and its Partners adopted a policy on implementing UNSCR 1325, including in NATO operations.

The following June, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1820 recognizing the widespread use of sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war. In 2009, Resolutions 1888 and 1889 were adopted to

reinforce UNSCR 1325 through better monitoring and the appointment of a UN Special Representative to advocate for women.

In September 2009, NATO developed a set of Bi-Strategic Command guidelines for implementation of the Resolutions in NATO-led operations, which included a code of conduct for military staff.

NATO drafted recommendations on mainstreaming UNSCR 1325 into NATO-led operations in the spring of 2010, the tenth anniversary year of the first Resolution, which were approved by Defence Ministers in June 2010. It also committed to assessing the implementation of the NATO/EAPC 2007 policy.

## Participation

**I**ncreasing the numbers of women participating in peace-building, the military and decision-making bodies, is necessary to build peace. Women are both actors in and victims of armed conflict, and gender equality at NATO is an important part of security work.

Many women have risked their lives to provide vital intelligence and information to international forces, in the hope that their contribution will help create a more sustainable and effective peace-building operation. Engaging women in security

work, reconstruction and stabilization is central to achieving international objectives in Afghanistan. The inclusion of the principles of UNSCR 1325 and its related Resolutions is one of the keys to mission success. ▶

**“Sometimes we relate gender too much to standards of behaviour, codes of conduct and how many women we have in the armed forces. Gender is more than that; it is a different way of looking at the world.”**

**Lieutenant Commander  
Ella van den Heuvel,  
ISAF Gender Advisor**



## Women in Uniform

In summer 2009, the Committee on Women in the Armed Forces changed its name and terms of reference to become the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives in order to formally support UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. Within the International Military Staff a gender perspectives office was also established. Some nations have also employed quotas for the number of women in the armed forces. This is considered controversial by some, but what is clear is that whatever the method, more women need to be recruited into the military.

NATO also suffers from a lack of trained gender specialists, whether they are male or female. It is working with Partner countries to rectify this.

More than 15 NATO nations now have mandatory International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Kosovo Force (KFOR) pre-deployment training which includes gender and cultural awareness.

“Ensuring operational and tactical plans include women to conduct sensitive tasks such as body searches of females; work as language interpreters; work in engagement teams; and provide medical care are just a few vivid examples of integrating gender perspectives,” says Lieutenant Colonel Pierre Duchesne, Allied Command Operations, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

Education and training is essential to raise staff awareness of UNSCR 1325. The NATO Defense College and the NATO School in Oberam-

mergau in addition to NATO Headquarters itself have begun teaching modules on gender awareness. In summer 2010 the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) military training plan was submitted to the NATO Military Committee. Support is also being offered to nations to help compliment national programmes.

Within NATO Headquarters, a policy of gender balance and diversity is now agreed by the NAC annually. Work has also been undertaken in recruitment to increase the number of women working within the organization. This includes targeting information to nations, which propose candidates for higher level positions.

### Afghanistan

Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have tried to regularly engage Afghan women in dialogue to improve their daily operations. Female officers will approach women in the local community working in business, or through visits to PRT headquarters, or on daily patrols. This dialogue can lead to timely information being shared on critical security situations. Gender Advisors have also been installed at ISAF Joint Command and ISAF Headquarters to help boost gender considerations in all aspects of the force's work. ▶

“In all countries in the world women are organized, in a different way to perhaps how we in the Western world are organized, but...[in Afghanistan] we have many women’s organizations with sometimes very strong women leading them,” says Lieutenant Commander Ella van den Heuvel, ISAF Gender Advisor. “They represent sometimes more than a thousand women and they are asking for attention. We should give them the role; they have the right to participate. But beyond rights, it is smart to let them participate so we should include them.” Information provided by local women can prove useful in verifying the progress of stabilization in areas where NATO troops normally have very limited access. Advice given by Gender Advisors has specifically improved this area of ISAF operations.

Gender Advisors who have done their tour of duty in Afghanistan are also working to train others and encourage people to understand the need for gender perspectives. ▶



## Advising on Gender

Three months into her deployment during 2009 as ISAF’s first Gender Advisor, Lieutenant Commander Ella van den Heuvel, invited 17-year-old Zhulina and her mother Shakila, to ISAF Joint Command (IJC) to present their perspective on Afghanistan to commanding officers.

Wearing matching green headscarves coupled with dark jeans and tuniques Zhulina, a telecommunications worker, translated her mother’s words for the shoeless officers sat opposite her in ISAF’s *shura* room.

“I could have provided the training myself,” says Lt. Cdr. van den Heuvel, the daughter of a Dutch farmer with three brothers. “But, I think it is important that their voices were heard. The women of Afghanistan, they told me it feels like they are forgotten.”

Over pastries and tea, the women presented the officers with an often unheard perspective on life in Afghanistan. They explained how integral women are to the country’s society and success.

“ISAF is playing such an important role in Afghanistan and most



of the women are so happy we are there to help,” explains Lt. Cdr. van den Heuvel, adding that it is their right to be heard.

After facing resistance to her role within the force Lt. Cdr. van den Heuvel says she had to explain to soldiers what having a gender perspective meant. “Sometimes we relate gender too much to standards of behaviours, codes of conduct and how many women we have in the armed forces. Gender is more than that; it is a different way of looking at the world,” she says. “The reality is that this is a new field...You can fight against this, but that is pointless. You need to prove your worth.”

Lt. Cdr van den Heuvel was first deployed in Afghanistan in a Dutch PRT in Baghlan province during 2005/2006. On her return to the Netherlands she began training in gender awareness issues within the Dutch armed forces and took part in a Swedish Gender Field Advisor course. Since serving as ISAF’s first-Gender Advisor, Lt. Cdr. van den Heuvel now uses her experience to educate and train new recruits going into the field.



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General Mohammadezai Khatool is one of two female generals in the Afghan National Army (ANA).

A former paratrooper, she jumped more than 500 times before taking her job at the Ministry of Defence.

“I was at ease when heading for the ground,” she says. “When I hit the ground I felt like I’d stepped off a stair.”

## Trust Funds

The challenges of today’s conflicts require more than a military solution. The participation of women in the development of their societies is also part of stabilizing post-conflict economies.

NATO Allies and Partner countries are using a Trust Fund mechanism to address this issue. Any partner country may request assistance from the fund, which is most often used to support practical demilitarization projects. Between 2000-

2008 some €40 million has been contributed to Trust Fund projects and 5000 former military personnel were reintegrated into society.

UNSCR 1325 principles have been included in new Trust Fund projects, particularly in reintegration projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Afghanistan, ISAF troop contributing nations have begun hiring local female employees and contracting female-owned companies in their regions. Afghan women contributed to this process by coming to NATO HQ and meeting with officers. ■

## The Female Afghan General

General Khatool joined the army in 1984 during the Soviet War as she had a keen interest in sports. Today over 300 women work within the ANA, mostly in the medical, logistical and financial sections of the force.

In July 2010 the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) began training the first 30 women to enter the ANA’s Officer Cadet training school. These recruits, trained in a culturally sensitive environment, will get to choose between going into logistical or financial roles within the force. However, they have to explain to their families why they want to be in the army.

“We let families know that it is an honor to serve in both the police and the army,” says Brigadier General Anne Macdonald, one of the highest ranking US females in the NTM-A. “[We have to show] that the system will take care of their sisters, their daughter, their wives and that they are safe and that they will be able to make a contribution to provide stability to Afghanistan.”

After working hard to pave the way for women joining that ANA today, General Khatool says her biggest wish is that one day she will see an Afghan woman on the moon. “Women in Afghanistan are very talented,” she says.



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# Protection

**Implementing the rights of women and children and protecting them from gender-based violence is vital to building a peaceful and secure environment in unstable areas.**

Women and children face some of the greatest hardships presented by an environment of conflict and war. Struggling to feed their families, look after the unwell and educate their sons and daughters, women are the first to suffer from restrictions in movement, and the closure of schools and shops. They are often exposed to further hardship due to the loss of breadwinners, along with, sometimes, lethal physical violence and victimisation. This often goes unreported in societies where access to protection is limited.

Conflict can cause civilians to be forcibly displaced, injured and lose their livelihoods. However, while

these situations are difficult for all those involved, women and children are regularly more adversely affected by such changes in circumstances. Pre-existing social inequalities are often magnified by conflict, making women and children more vulnerable to certain forms of violence, particularly sexual violence. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war is increasingly being documented by the UN. Such violence often has deep health and social ramifications which, in addition to the loss of male family members, can leave women and children destitute. In such vulnerable circumstances, women and children can often turn to measures not ▶

**“Sexual violence against women is not cultural it is criminal, and it’s not a women’s issue it is a human rights issue. This affects how we look at security. Women define security often very differently from men and this has to be acknowledged.”**

**Margot Wallström,  
UN Special Representative on  
Sexual Violence in Conflict**

always beneficial to themselves and be open to gross exploitation.

The number of women acting as the head of households also increases during conflicts. In societies where this is not normally the case, it can lead to marginalization due to their low status. According to UN reports this can lead to women being forced into marriage in order to cope financially.

### Creating security

Security considerations are often very different for women and men.

NATO has been working to take these considerations onboard and protect women and children in its areas of operations. PRTs in Afghanistan have been building and running medical facilities as well as schools for boys and girls. By including women in the decision-making process these schools have been built with protective walls and in places easily reached by women.

On a more general level, the NATO/EAPC policy on UNSCR 1325 highlighted the link to NATO's policy on combating trafficking in human

beings. The Alliance aims to continually cross-reference these two policies to improve education and training of staff. In June 2009 a training course in Armenia on combating human trafficking included a module on UNSCR 1325 for the first time. One of the key concepts of September 2009's Bi-Strategic Command Directive was to look at measures available within the Alliance to protect women against gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse and violence in situations of war and armed conflict. ■



## Afghanistan Statistics

- Every 30 minutes an Afghan woman dies during childbirth (IRIN 2007)
- 87 per cent of Afghan women are illiterate (IRIN 2007)
- 30 per cent of Afghan girls have access to education (IRIN 2007)
- 1 in 3 Afghan women experience physical, psychological or sexual violence (IRIN 2007)
- 1.5 in every 10 girls aged 15-19 in Afghanistan have given birth (WHO 2010)
- In 1990, 20 per cent of children were inoculated against measles; in 2008 the figure was 75 per cent (WHO 2010)



## Making Policy

In summer 2008, the NAC tasked the NATO Strategic Commands to provide a set of guidelines on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. This resulted in the Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 delivered in September of the following year which proposed guidelines to integrate gender perspectives in the NATO command structure and included a code of conduct. To support interoperability, this Directive is consistent with UN and European Union policies on UNSCR 1325, but also with national action plans.

Arguably, the Directive is most notable for paving the way for the deployment of Gender Advisors to ISAF Headquarters from October 2009 onwards. It's key concepts include:

- Striving for a representative workforce, expanding the role of women within the organization and missions at all levels.
- Consideration and implementation of measures to meet the needs of female staff members.
- Training staff on gender-awareness issues.

- Ensuring adherence to NATO's standards of behaviour.

While the implementation of the Directive has already demonstrated positive results in NATO-led operations, the Alliance recognizes that mainstreaming gender perspectives and truly changing the behaviour of the organization, cannot happen over night and requires a continuous effort by all Staff and members. With this in mind, it continues to evaluate and improve these measures.

## Prevention

**Women have a significant role to play in conflict prevention, management and resolution by being actively involved as decision-makers at all levels. UNSCR 1325 urged all member states to improve these mechanisms to reflect and represent women's concerns.**

The disproportionate effect of war and conflict on women and children means that they are often the first to suffer the consequences of conflict and the last to be included in decisions aimed at bringing stability. In many unstable areas this means that some 50 per cent of the population is not given a voice in important decisions. UNSCR 1325 called for greater inclusion of women at all decision-making levels – not just at national or international, but at local

and regional – so that they may use their experiences to help prevent future generations from suffering the same disenfranchisement.

At NATO's Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009, Allied leaders stressed that the Alliance "remain[s] actively engaged with [its] Partners in supporting the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, with the aim of having a comprehensive set of measures in ►

**“Women everywhere continue to face challenges and barriers to productive participation... nevertheless progress is occurring, but at a pace that is still too slow.”**

**Melanne Vermeer,  
US Ambassador-at-Large for  
Global Women's Issues**



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“There cannot be true democracy unless women’s voices are heard.”

Hillary Clinton,  
US Secretary of State



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## Voicing concerns

Afghanistan is the biggest operation ever undertaken by NATO and is its top operational priority. Discussions are ongoing as to how better to reflect and promote the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan.

Every province in Afghanistan has a provincial council that is 25 per cent female. On top of this, women’s rights are enshrined, as equal to a man’s, in the country’s constitution adopted in January 2004. Some 28 per cent of the Afghanistan National Assembly is comprised of women; 25 per cent of these seats can only be represented by women.

When given the chance, women often identify as a priority infrastructure, education, and other needs, which vary from those proposed by male community leaders via other more traditional forums. More often than not, women tend to focus on family well-being and long-term sustainability. By contributing to decision-making, Afghan women gained a sense of ownership of their country’s reconstruction and it enhances the image of NATO within the community.

A Canadian PRT in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, reported that women with no prior understanding of NATO’s objectives began to feel a

place by autumn 2010. We are also contributing with our Partners to international efforts to put an end to the trafficking in human beings.”

An important element in implementing UNSCR 1325 is to make sure women within the organization have access to professional development opportunities to increase their representation at management level.

To change mindsets and behaviours within the Alliance, NATO is working to engage more women in its decision-making processes. Its five track approach focuses on:

- mainstreaming UNSCR 1325 into policies, programmes and documentation;
- cooperating with other International Organisations and civil society on the issue;
- adding gender perspectives to operations;
- educating and training staff;
- and informing the public of what has been done, and what is still left to do.

## Provisional Reconstruction Teams

In an independent report studying the operational effectiveness of UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan PRTs during 2009, it was found that the integration of gender considerations was varied or sometimes not present in daily PRT tasks. The study found that in most cases where UNSCR 1325 was integrated in a more systematic manner, the PRT had home support in the form of national action plans.

Integration of UNSCR 1325 is a multi-dimensional process requiring a comprehensive strategy. Communication with both men and women on the ground means “operations receive a

more complete and nuanced intelligence picture. Using Resolution 1325 could therefore translate into more effective protection of the civilian population against violence.”

Political and military leadership play a crucial role in promoting and assuming responsibility for integrating gender perspectives into NATO’s operations. More experts are needed to enhance competence and support the use of UNSCR 1325. Many of the PRTs have their own gender advisors from their national armies. ISAF is the first NATO-led force which includes gender advisors under NATO command and

is working hard to include and protect women.

As illiteracy is widespread in Afghanistan, especially among women, ISAF has distributed grind radios in rural areas. By using radio programs on local radio stations, ISAF informs a larger proportion of the local population about its activities. In Kabul, ISAF used the radio system to organize a meeting between female members of parliament, business women, women’s groups and military personnel. This type of inclusion gives women in the community a voice in the decision-making process.

sense of commitment to the Alliance’s success in their country after they had a chance to participate in community decisions. More importantly, they also reported discouraging their son’s sympathy towards the insurgency helping prevent future conflict.

### **Consultation with local and international women’s groups**

In the spirit of the Alliance’s contribution to the international community’s comprehensive approach to security, initiatives have been undertaken to engage with other international organizations and civil society

in order to identify where NATO can add value by exchanging best practices and pooling resources.

For the first time, in January 2010, NATO and the European Union co-sponsored a public high level conference on women, peace and security in Brussels, Belgium. This included keynote speeches from NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright and UN Special Representative for women, Margot Wallström. It demonstrated the public commitment of NATO and the international community’s common approach to this issue of global security. ■



# Looking to the Future

While NATO has begun the slow process of changing mindsets and behaviours and introducing gender perspectives throughout its operations, more needs to be done to have more women participating at all levels to prevent conflicts and to protect those on the ground. There are a number of projects aiming to achieve this, run by different working groups within NATO.

Formally, a number of NATO entities are taking forward the mainstreaming of UNSCR 1325 of the Alliance's activities. The Political and Partnerships Committee is taking the lead, looking at a wide range of gender issues. NATO will also continue to work with Partnership for Peace nations sharing information and training advice. The Public Diplomacy division of NATO is working to increase awareness of the organization's contribution to UNSCR 1325

and the visibility of the issue within the public eye.

Allied Command Operations (ACO) is working to promote the role of Gender Advisors so that all current and future NATO-led operations have established positions at the appropriate level. Ideally, all nations would appoint full-time Gender Field Advisors, or as a minimum, employ Gender Focal Points at the tactical level to work with NATO's advisors in the field.

Peace-building is the most important task NATO has, and it will continue to explore ways to do this more effectively. Having women participating at every level, offering the full range of perspectives to help prevent future conflicts and to protect women and children from some of the consequences of war, is an important part of achieving this goal. ■



For more information: • NATO's implementation of UNSCR 1325: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_56984.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_56984.htm)  
• Operational Effectiveness and UN Resolution 1325: [www2.foi.se/rapp/foir2760.pdf](http://www2.foi.se/rapp/foir2760.pdf)  
• Comprehensive Approach: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_51633.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51633.htm)

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