

WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

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On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, a resolution,

[r]eaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.¹

The operative language of the resolution urges Member States “to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict,”² and calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to increase participation of women, and particularly to appoint more women as special envoys and representatives on his behalf.³

Like most U.N. resolutions, Security Council Resolution 1325 has been honored more in the breach than in the observance. Non-governmental organizations have been working, however, to give the resolution meaning, and the unfolding international effort to restore and maintain peace and security in Afghanistan will be an important litmus test of U.N. and member states’ resolve to integrate the talent and resources of women into peace-building efforts.

The “war on terrorism,” launched as a war against Afghanistan, cited the abusive treatment of women in its propaganda campaign to build support for military action. Among others, United States First Lady Laura Bush, joined by the wife of the U.K. Prime Minister, Cherie Blair, spoke publicly about the plight of women in Afghanistan.⁴ For the women’s movement, which had been protesting the Taliban regime since it fought its way to power in 1996, this sudden

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1. U.N. SCOR, 55th Sess., 4213th mtg. at 1, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1325 (2000).
2. *Id.* at 2.
3. *Id.*
4. Mike Allen, *First Lady Says Fight Is for Dignity of Afghan Women, Children*, WASH. POST, Nov. 18, 2001, at A14.

and new attention created an opportunity, though not one without political challenges. The fact that the “war on terrorism” had little to do with women was underscored by the virtually simultaneous statement made by Secretary of State Colin Powell regarding the possible integration of “moderate elements” of the Taliban into a new Afghan government, despite the Taliban’s avowed commitment to the institutionalized subjugation of women as a matter of principle.⁵

In the political opportunism surrounding the situation of women in Afghanistan, Security Council Resolution 1325 proved to be instrumental in efforts to make the stated commitment to women’s rights more than a rhetorical device to justify military action. The U.N. resolution recognizes the importance of a central role for women in the political process, and a growing demand for its implementation helped to shift the focus from Afghan women as victims, as they were initially portrayed, to Afghan women as active participants in a post-Taliban political process.

Pressure for the inclusion of women in the process and an insistence on the recognition of women’s rights came from many directions—women in Congress, women Ambassadors to the United Nations, women’s rights organizations such as Equality Now, V-Day, the European Women’s Lobby and The Feminist Majority all called on governments and the United Nations to seize the moment to ensure the emancipation of the women of Afghanistan.⁶ Individual activists in the campaign, such as Gloria Steinem and Robin Morgan, were joined by celebrities such as Jane Fonda, Meryl Streep and Glenn Close, and the collective demand for serious attention to this issue was amplified.⁷

The campaign for women in Afghanistan had an impact. Secretary of State Colin Powell shifted his position and stated a strong commitment on the part of the Administration to the participation of women in the political process and to the recognition of women’s rights as fundamental to the future of Afghanistan.⁸ Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, the U.N. Special Representative for Afghanistan appointed by the Secretary-General, unveiled a multi-stage political plan that noted the importance of including women in all but the first stage of negotiations.⁹ And even then, pressure mounted and was sufficient to ensure the inclusion of women even in the first stage of negotiations in early December in

5. Luke Harding, *Taliban Moderates Offered Future Role: Powell Backs Call to Afghan Pragmatists*, THE GUARDIAN, Oct 17, 2001, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,575578,00.html> (last visited May 21, 2002).

6. See, e.g., Letter from Denise Fuchs, President of the European Women’s Lobby, Jessica Neuwirth, President of Equality Now, & Eve Ensler, Founder of V-Day, to Secretary-General Kofi Annan (Nov 15, 2001) (on file with author); Letter from NGO Working Group on Women, International Peace and Security, to Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi (Nov. 21, 2001) (on file with author).

7. See, e.g., Joint Letter from Equality Now, V-Day and The Feminist Majority, to Secretary of State Colin Powell (Nov. 5, 2001) (on file with the author) (co-signed by Gloria Steinem, Robin Morgan, Jane Fonda, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, et al.).

8. Secretary of State Colin Powell, Remarks at the Meeting with Women’s Organizations, White House (Nov. 19, 2001).

9. Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, Briefing to the Security Council, for Afghanistan (Nov. 14, 2001).

Bonn—three women as delegates and three women as observers.¹⁰ United Nations officials reportedly aided this effort by creating incentives for the Afghan delegations to include women.¹¹

During the same period of time, as the war continued and preliminary discussions for a post-Taliban administration seemed somewhat remote from reality, a collective effort was initiated by a number of international non-governmental organizations to help bring the voices of Afghan women into the political process. The Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy was initially conceived of as an initiative designed to facilitate the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, by bringing Afghan women together and giving them an opportunity to discuss the future of their country as well as their role in bringing peace to Afghanistan. The Summit was jointly convened by the Equality Now, the European Women's Lobby, V-Day, the Center for Strategic Initiatives of Women and The Feminist Majority.¹²

On December 4-5th, approximately forty Afghan women came together in Brussels—from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, Russia, Europe, the United States and Canada. Although a number of the women, primarily leaders of Afghan women's organizations working in their communities, knew each other by name or by telephone, many of them had never met before. The opening session of the Summit was an expression of global solidarity for the women of Afghanistan. Anna Diamantopoulou of the European Commission, where the Summit took place, welcomed the delegates, who were also addressed by Queen Noor (through video), Maj Britt Theorin of the European Parliament, Mary Robinson, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other high ranking United Nations officials including Angela King, the Gender Advisor to the Secretary-General who read a statement of support from the Secretary-General to the delegates. The Opening Session concluded with statements from Jordanian, Palestinian, Somali and American activists who urged the Afghan women to seize the moment of opportunity and make the most of it.

The Afghan Women's Summit was scheduled for December 4-5th before the rout of the Taliban and the acceleration of the political planning process for a post-Taliban government. By chance, the Summit ended up coinciding exactly with the Bonn deliberations, which created an opportunity for some interaction between the meetings and substantially changed the nature of the agenda for the Brussels Summit. The primary Afghan organizer of the Brussels Summit, Sima Wali from the United States, was recruited just a week prior to the Summit for the Rome delegation to Bonn, as were two other delegates invited to the Summit—Seddighe Balkhi and Amina Afzali from Iran. These three delegates traveled from Bonn to Brussels during the meeting to brief the Afghan women at the Summit on those negotiations and then returned to Bonn.

10. Sima Wali and Rona Mansuri of King's Delegation and Amina Afzali of the Northern Alliance Delegation were delegates; Seddighe Balkhi, Fatima Gailani, and a RAWA representative were observers.

11. Private conversations with UN officials in early December regarding efforts to ensure the inclusion of women in the delegations.

12. Press Release, Equality Now, V-Day & the European Women's Lobby (Nov. 27, 2001) (on file with author).

Following the opening session, which was well attended by the media, the Afghan Women's Summit continued in a closed session, chaired by Judge Navanethem Pillay, South African President of the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and facilitated by Hibaaq Osman, a Somali peace activist and founder of the Center for Strategic Initiatives of Women. With the exception of the rapporteur, Jacqui Hunt, Secretary of the Board of Equality Now, no other non-Afghan women were present for the Summit deliberations. The exclusion of non-Afghans was intended to give the Afghan women their own forum, with an element of confidentiality to promote frank discussion of differences as well as common ground. Judge Navanethem Pillay and Hibaaq Osman brought to this forum their experience in forging broad-based women's coalitions among diverse groups of women in South Africa and Somalia, respectively. Concurrently in Brussels, activists from Belgium, Croatia, France, India, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States met in solidarity to discuss strategies for support of the women of Afghanistan including advocacy for funding conditionality; raising public awareness; and providing technical support for women's rights lawyers in Afghanistan.

The final session of the Afghan Women's Summit was a combined meeting of the Afghan women and the non-Afghan activists to share the outcomes of their respective deliberations. The Brussels Proclamation, adopted by the Afghan women, represents a blueprint that outlines in detail their comprehensive vision for the future of Afghanistan and specifies immediate reconstruction needs.¹³ The Brussels Proclamation addresses four central components of Afghan society—Education, Media and Culture; Health; Human Rights and the Constitution; and Refugees and Internally Displaced Women. The Proclamation recognizes that education, information and culture empower women, stating:

For the past 23 years, Afghan people have been living in the dark. We the Afghan women should join our efforts to establish a civil society in our country and bring back democratic values through education and culture. Education and culture transcend the reality of our lives. Their healing power and creative energy could act as a catalyst for peace and as an antidote to our national wounds by safeguarding our cultural heritage from disappearance. By reviving education and culture, we Afghans can all have something common to share and be united.¹⁴

The Brussels Proclamation sets forth a range of demands including political demands such as the central inclusion of women in the Loya Jirgah (Grand Assembly) and all peace processes and matters related to reconstruction,¹⁵ and the inclusion of Afghan women lawyers in the development of a new constitution and legal framework that would include the principles of non-discrimination.¹⁶ Health demands include the rebuilding of hospitals and provision of vital medicines, treatments and services, including psychological counseling and mother

13. The Brussels Proclamation, Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy, (Dec. 4-5, 2001), available at http://www.equalitynow.org/afghan_womens_summit/solidarity_eng.html.

14. The Brussels Proclamation, *supra* note 13.

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.*

and child healthcare.¹⁷ Demands for education and media include an emergency plan for reopening schools by March 2002 for both girls and boys, a new curriculum, and training of teachers,¹⁸ and the reconstruction of TV satellites and radio stations.¹⁹ Other human rights demands include the protection of women from forced underage marriages and sexual harassment,²⁰ and the right for women to vote and to be entitled to equal pay and equal access to health care, education and employment.²¹ Demands on the international community include making all support, including monetary, from the international community conditional on the rights and treatment of women,²² and a critical focus on disarmament and de-mining in all areas of Afghanistan.²³

In their Declaration of Solidarity,²⁴ the non-Afghan group of activists made a series of commitments, including an advocacy campaign, to ensure that the funds allocated by the international community for the reconstruction of Afghanistan are conditioned on the inclusion of women.²⁵ The group also undertook to create an international task force of women's rights lawyers to support Afghan women lawyers in their efforts to ensure the inclusion of women's rights in new legislation and the constitution.²⁶ Among other initiatives, the Declaration of Solidarity also proclaimed the dedication of International Women's Day 2002 to Afghan women and a campaign entitled "Afghanistan is Everywhere" in support of the Brussels Proclamation as well as global connections between the situation of Afghan women and women everywhere.²⁷

Immediately following the Afghan Women's Summit, delegates began the process of disseminating the vision set forth in the Brussels Proclamation. On December 6th, 2001, these delegates briefed Members of the European Parliament,²⁸ which subsequently adopted a resolution on December 13 on women in Afghanistan, noting the Brussels Proclamation of the Summit and calling, *inter alia*, for the international aid for reconstruction "to be made conditional on the participation of women in decision-making and in the use of such aid," and for International Women's Day, 8 March 2002, to be declared "Afghan Women's Day."²⁹ Summit delegates also participated in a meeting on reconstruction con-

17. *Id.*

18. *Id.*

19. The Brussels Proclamation, *supra* note 13.

20. *Id.*

21. *Id.*

22. *Id.*

23. *Id.*

24. Declaration of Solidarity, Afghan Women's Summit (Dec. 4-5, 2001) available at http://www.equalitynow.org/afghan_womens_summit/solidarity_eng.html (last visited Apr. 12, 2002).

25. *Id.*

26. *Id.*

27. *Id.*

28. Press Release, Equality Now, V-Day & The Center for Strategic Initiatives of Women, Afghan Women's Summit (Dec. 20, 2001) [hereinafter Dec. 20, 2001 Press Release].

29. Resolution on Women in Afghanistan, EUR. PARL. RES. (Doc. B5-0763) ¶¶ 9, 17 (Dec. 13, 2001).

vened by UNIFEM in Brussels from 10-11 December, incorporating the demands of the Summit into the U.N. development planning process.³⁰

From December 13-22, six delegates of the Summit came to the United States for meetings with the United States Government and the United Nations, to help raise public awareness and support in the United States for the agenda adopted in Brussels.³¹ Hosted by Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Sam Brownback, the delegates met with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.³² At the invitation of Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, the Afghan women also addressed a Senate Democratic lunch with more than twenty Senators including Senator Joseph Biden, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senators Barbara Boxer, Barbara Mikulski, and Hillary Rodham Clinton.³³ The Afghan women's delegation also met with Secretary of State Colin Powell and other senior State Department and USAID officials, as well as a number of Congressional Representatives including Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney, Connie Morella and Juanita Millender-McDonald, Co-Chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus.³⁴ Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Connie Morella introduced legislation, the Access for Afghan Women's Act, that would require any Afghan aid program supported by the U.S. to include women in decision-making and to distribute some funds directly to women's organizations and programs.³⁵ The bill would also require U.S. aid to fund the rebuilding of the nation's shattered health infrastructure and to supply comprehensive reproductive health and family planning services.³⁶

In their meetings with government officials and Congressional representatives in Washington, the Afghan Women's Summit delegates stressed their need for continued support and the use of conditionality in funding to ensure that they will be able to participate fully in the political process as well as the reconstruction of Afghanistan.³⁷ They forcefully dismissed concerns that have been raised about so-called "cultural interference," insisting that Afghan women must be granted their fundamental human rights and that they are ready, willing and able to shoulder the responsibilities of rebuilding their country.³⁸

30. Press Release, UNIFEM (Dec. 11, 2001), at (http://www.unifem.undp.org/pr_afghanistan1.html).

31. The six delegates were: Leila Enayat-Seraj, Director of Afghan Art Project for Peace (based in Switzerland); Shafiqa Habibi, a former prominent broadcast journalist in Kabul and head of the Women's Radio and Television Broadcast Organization until the Taliban came to power (based in Pakistan/Afghanistan); Adeena Niazi, former Professor at Kabul University and Founder/Director of the Afghan Women's Organization in Toronto (based in Canada); Soraya Paikan, formerly with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Mazar-e-Sharif and a professor of international law at the University of Balkh (based in Pakistan/Afghanistan); Sahar Saba, representative of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) (based in Pakistan); and Sima Wali, Founder/Director of Refugee Women in Development and a Member of the Rome delegation to the Bonn negotiations (based in Washington, D.C.).

32. Dec. 20, 2001 Press Release, *supra* note 28.

33. *Id.*

34. *Id.*

35. Access for Afghan Women Act of 2001, H.R. 3342, 107th Cong. (2001).

36. *Id.* § 3(c)(5).

37. Dec. 20, 2001 Press Release, *supra* note 28.

38. *Id.*

In New York, the Afghan Women's Summit delegates addressed the United Nations Security Council, and urged them to ensure recognition of and respect for the human rights of women in Afghanistan.³⁹ They also pressed for women's full participation in the maintenance of peace as required by Security Council Resolution 1325.⁴⁰ The women called not only for the rapid deployment of U.N. peacekeeping forces, but also for disarmament by them of the warring factions.⁴¹ The Security Council meeting was chaired by Ambassador Patricia Durrant, the Permanent Representative to the United Nations from Jamaica and the one woman then serving on the Security Council.⁴² The delegates also met with Secretary-General Kofi Annan and expressed these hopes regarding the need for a central and active role of the United Nations in Afghanistan.⁴³

The Afghan Women's Summit follow-up tour concluded with a press conference moderated by Meryl Streep that resulted in a swell of newspaper and television coverage.⁴⁴ Just days later, the interim government was installed in Afghanistan.⁴⁵ The test of Security Council Resolution 1325 has just begun and in the meantime, Afghanistan has greatly disappeared from the daily news. The Afghan Women's Summit brought Afghan women together and carried their voices around the world. In a short time, these women came up with a clear and comprehensive vision of the future of Afghanistan. Their subsequent discussions with high-level government officials in the United States and Europe, and at the United Nations, illustrated the premise of Security Council Resolution 1325, that women have a central role to play in the cessation of armed conflict and the maintenance of peace.

The establishment of the new Afghan government and its institutional framework, in close coordination with the United Nations, represents a unique opportunity for the implementation of Resolution 1325. Already as of the time of this writing, reports of violence are emerging from Afghanistan. The need for security is clear, and the call of Afghan women for a substantial force of U.N. peacekeepers has now been echoed by Hamid Karzai, Chairman of the Afghan interim government, who has himself urged the Security Council to expand the peacekeeping force and broaden the scope of its work.⁴⁶ The international NGO women's movement has gone to extraordinary lengths to facilitate the presentation of the views of Afghan women to the United Nations Security Council. In the spirit of its Resolution 1325, the Security Council and its member states should heed their advice: disarmament is critical to the maintenance of peace

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.*

41. *Id.*

42. Dec. 20, 2001 Press Release, *supra* note 28.

43. Private meeting attended by the Afghan Women's Summit delegates as well as several staff members of Equality Now, December 21, 2001.

44. See, e.g., Jim Puzanghera, *Afghan Women Pressing U.S. to Help Restore Their Rights; They Want Issue Linked to Cash and Aid*, SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS, Dec. 14, 2001, at 13A; Bob Dart, *Activists Push for Afghan Women's Rights U.S. urged to Give Conditional Aid*, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, Dec. 16, 2001, at A17.

45. Amy Waldman, *New Leaders Set to Assume Power in Tranquil Kabul*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 22, 2001, at A1.

46. John F. Burns, *Fighting Erupts in Afghan City As Warlords Compete for Power*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan 31, 2002, at A1.

and security and the restoration of democracy and human rights. There is some hope that the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the role of women in the process could serve as a model for the rest of the world, but only time will tell whether there is sufficient political will and commitment to turn this hope into a reality.