

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Humanitarian Settings in Ethiopia

Policy Brief

Why Gender, Peace and Security in Ethiopia

Ethiopia plays a critical role in peace negotiations and mediation in the Horn of Africa, with the recent leadership of the South Sudan Peace Negotiations notable and recognized. To this effect Ethiopia has generously opened its doors for women from the Horn to engage in peace negotiations. The 2014 Ethiopia National Report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action suggests the need to address humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia from a gender perspective (MOWCYAs, 2014). Women and children constitute the majority of the more than 630,000 refugees in Ethiopia who are currently residing in 23 camps around Assosa, Dollo Ado, Gambella, Jijiga, Semera and Shire (UNHCR, 2015). This makes Ethiopia the largest hosting nation of refugees in Africa (UNICEF, 2015). In addition to this, nearly 414,000 Ethiopians are internally displaced of which 46 percent are women (IDMC report 2015). Besides Ethiopia's response to IDPs and refugees another argument for the need to integrate gender through UNSCR1325 in the national peace and security agenda is that globally Ethiopia is the lead country in sending female peacekeepers and in fourth place in Africa in the overall contribution of peacekeepers. At the same time the number of women in Ethiopia's police and army is significantly increasing. Furthermore, Ethiopia, as a founding member of IGAD endorsed the 2013 IGAD's regional action Plan for Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

Main Findings

- Ethiopia has been implementing the elements of UNSCR1325 without necessarily developing a specific UNSCR1325 National Action Plan;
- The four pillars of UNSCR1325 align with Ethiopia's legal and policy provisions and gender equality is mainstreamed in all social, economic, and political spheres.
- Women's issues are mainstreamed in the country's peace culture, development process as well as early warning systems and responses to conflict at all levels;
- Efforts are also underway to mainstream gender in Ethiopia's peacekeeping role regionally and globally;
- Ethiopia has not developed a policy on peace building in general and no specific framework that addresses the women, peace and security agenda and national strategies
- Stakeholders have limited knowledge about UNSCR1325
- Ethiopia's gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment agenda emanates from the constitution and gender is mainstreamed across many other policies and legal frameworks, like the national security policy.
- A review of Ethiopia's existing policy and legislation on peace and security confirms that women's concerns and their socio-economic needs in humanitarian settings and contexts have significant recognition.
- The main focus of interventions related to gender equality in humanitarian settings in Ethiopia is on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) while other aspects of gender equality are not given equal attention.
- The focus on SGBV has been found mostly attributed to the Inter- Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines for the integration of SGBV while other guidelines for the integration of gender are not available or known by stakeholders.
- At the organizational level, Implementing Partners (IPs) reported that their organizational gender policies and gender mainstreaming guidelines are referred to in their humanitarian activities including refugee related interventions, however, none of the IPs have adopted major elements of UNSCR1325 into their refugee related activities.

UNSCR 1325 is structured around 4 main pillars: Prevention, Protection, Participation, Peacebuilding and Recovery - addressing the main areas relevant to women, peace and security. The assessment found the following results analyzing the pillars and their application in the Ethiopian humanitarian context.

PREVENTION: The assessment found that in Ethiopia mechanisms to prevent conflict and SGBV are in place using both formal and informal as well as traditional systems. Applying a human rights based approach, IPs recognize the need for special consideration of women's rights and needs but have not adopted major elements of UNSCR1325. In addition, systems put in place mostly do not address overall gender power imbalances that could challenge prevalent gender inequalities in refugees countries of origin. Therefore, the interventions often fail to address root causes of gender inequalities and consequently ways to prevent discriminations against women, including SGBV amongst others.

PROTECTION: Protecting women and girls' physical safety, especially from SGBV and other forms of violence is incorporated in humanitarian context in general and in refugee settings in particular. National legal provisions are in place at policy level and in practice, strengthened through coordination committees at all levels. While women's physical safety is given a lot of recognition, other insecurities are not sufficiently addressed. For example economic security. Even though women are often given priority to work at camp level they are not often awarded employment and face economic insecurities due to low levels of education and cultural restrictions. This is further exaggerated by the Ethiopian encampment policy. Legal protection was also addressed as a concern and the need to reduce the time to processes cases.

PARTICIPATION: Findings show that women's participation has gained significant recognition by the Ethiopian government in policy and program implementation processes. Nevertheless, despite requirements and efforts to bring women on board by the government and IPs, refugee women are not yet actively engaged in the governance structures at all level. This includes that women are often not involved in the Refugee Central Committees (RCCs), which are involved in major decision making processes in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes. Thus, if women are not represented in the RCCs, their concerns and voices are not integrated. It was observed that IPs do not make it a requirement and did not establish reinforcement of the 50 percent female representation principle in the refugee camps.

RELIEF AND RECOVERY: Findings indicate that the relief and recovery related activities are aimed at being gender sensitive and women and girls are differently treated than boys and men. Nevertheless, all basic socio-economic services are criticized for the inadequacy, irregularity in terms of timelines and quality. In addition, relief and recovery services lack services that enhance women and girls' social, psychological, economic and political empowerment. Existing economic empowerment initiatives are not considering women's status in their context of origin and related challenges to engage in economic activities. Furthermore, initiatives are also not looking into possibilities for sustainable development of beneficiaries in general and women in particular.

BACKGROUND: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) through generous support by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in September 2015 conducted an assessment to evaluate the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) in humanitarian settings in Ethiopia, targeting in particular the refugee camps in Shire and Gambella. The assessment was led by UN Women and benefited from technical inputs by members of the Donor Group on Gender Equality in Ethiopia, in particular ADA, the Embassy of Sweden, UNFPA and the Italian Development Cooperation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy

- Mainstream UNSCR1325 in existing national policies and instruments and harmonize with existing legal frameworks
- Hold policy dialogues on UNSCR 1325 for information sharing with key stakeholders and actors at all levels to discuss strengthening the implementation of UNSCR1325 in Ethiopia
- Develop guidelines for IPs for integration of UNSCR1325 in programme planning, implementation and monitoring
- Collect sex-disaggregated data on women's participation related to all pillars of UNSCR1325
- Establish quotas for women's participation in governing structures of humanitarian settings (i.e. RCCs)

Programme

- Provide Gender mainstreaming and UNSR 1325 trainings for various stakeholders
- Develop awareness raising programmes on gender equality and women's empowerment
- Allocate dedicated resource allocation for gender equality programming in humanitarian responses
- Hold gender trainings to Ethiopian peacekeepers
- Recruit more female staff to work in camp settings
- Establish gender sensitive committee and community structures that promote women's participation
- Develop new and innovative women's economic empowerment programmes in humanitarian settings to address short and long-term economic empowerment
- Enhance education and skill development programmes for youth
- Offer life skills trainings (leadership and decision-making) for women beneficiaries in humanitarian settings