



# UNSCR 1325 and the Ratio of Female Peacekeepers: Why Has Progress Stalled?

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## **Abstract**

In recent years, members of the international community have come to recognize the importance of incorporating gender considerations into their work. The United Nations (UN) adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in the year 2000 with the aim of addressing the unique experiences of women and elevating their roles as peacekeepers and peacemakers in conflict settings. While the UN has made some progress in achieving the objectives of Resolution 1325, obstacles remain with respect to the goal of increasing the number of female peacekeepers in the UN's forces. Four chief hurdles have contributed to this problem: 1) weak political will, 2) a lack of political commitment, 3) poor resource mobilization, and 4) the structural problem of a relatively small number of women in Troop Contributing Country (TCC) and Police Contributing Country (PCC) militaries and police forces. To solve this problem, policy solutions must be proposed and implemented by United Nation member states, including commitments to national action plans and a greater mobilization of resources. Additionally, the UN must prioritize programs that address gender norms, and support similar efforts within TCCs and PCCs.

## Introduction

Though long viewed as a niche issue, gender has gained prominence as a critical aspect of the international community's work in recent years. Organizations and individuals have started to recognize that integrating gender into their approaches is essential when seeking successful and inclusive solutions to problems faced at all levels of policy and implementation.

As one of the world's leading multilateral bodies, and with the stated aim of maintaining international peace and security, the United Nations (UN) had a key role to play in elevating the importance of this issue.<sup>1</sup> In response to calls to act, the UN Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in the year 2000. This resolution is regarded as the "starting point" of recent attempts to address the issue of gender, and is recognized for acknowledging the particular ways that the experiences and contributions of women differ from those of men in the realm of peacekeeping and conflict.<sup>2</sup> UNSCR 1325 called upon member states and all relevant stakeholders to: 1) promote the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes, 2) integrate gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping, 3) protect women in armed conflict, and 4) mainstream gender issues in UN reporting systems and programs related to peacebuilding and conflict.<sup>3</sup>

While the adoption of the resolution was a watershed moment for gender advocacy and inclusion, the UN has yet to meet all the objectives set in the document. Among other challenges, in the nine years following the resolution's adoption, the number of female peacekeepers has remained low. The participation rate of female uniformed personnel in UN global peacekeeping missions has hovered around one percent.<sup>4</sup> In 2009, in response to the fact that gender mainstreaming was facing obstacles and that rates of UN female peacekeepers failed to rise, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1888, which encouraged member states to deploy greater numbers of female police and military personnel to peacekeeping operations.<sup>5</sup> Despite this action, the ratio of female to male peacekeepers has not risen substantially; any increase has been incremental. In 2014, women still accounted for less than 4 percent of UN peacekeepers, comprising approximately 3 percent of UN military personnel and about 10 percent of UN police.<sup>6</sup> This ratio of female peacekeepers is notably less than the "gender parity" envisioned in working groups and championed in UN documents and discussions.<sup>7</sup>

The objective of my research is to answer the following question: Sixteen years after the UN Security Council adopted UNSCR 1325, why has the ratio of female to male peacekeepers plateaued

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice* (26 June 1945), <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Alex J. Bellamy, Paul D. Williams, and Stuart Griffin. *Understanding Peacekeeping*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), 361.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Sahana Dharmapuri, *Not Just a Numbers Game: Increasing Women's Participation in UN Peacekeeping* (IPI Study, No. 4, July 2013), 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Women in Peacekeeping." <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> Dharmapuri, 2.

and why is it below the objectives set in 2000? My hypothesis is that there are four central trends resulting in this state of affairs: 1) weak political will and rhetorical commitment to the objectives set forth in the resolution, 2) a lack of institutional commitments to the cause, 3) poor resource mobilization, and 4) the structural problem of a relatively small number of women in Troop Contributing Country (TCC) and Police Contributing Country (PCC) militaries and police forces. In this article, I will summarize my findings in support of this argument, and offer recommendations for how the UN should move forward and work to fulfill the objectives set in UNSCR 1325.

## **Weak Political Will and Rhetorical Commitment**

As is the case for many issues at the UN, a broad lack of political will has acted as a barrier to meeting the goals established in Resolution 1325. The fault lies mainly at the feet of the UN's member states, which have failed to take the necessary actions to encourage increased female participation in peacekeeping operations. As Diehl and Balas explain, "when it is stated that the UN...lacked the political will to act, it is really the member states that bear responsibility, not the organizational bureaucracies or their leaderships."<sup>8</sup>

One of the chief problems undercutting attempts to make progress on the goal of increased female participation in peacekeeping is that many member states fail to see a lack of gender integration as a serious problem. Though gender advocates understand that excluding women from peacekeeping and peace processes is an approach which will lead to solutions that are more comprehensive, inclusive, and likely to succeed, this is not an idea that has permeated the general consciousness of all member states.

A lack of rhetorical commitment by some of the five permanent members of the Security Council (or the P-5) has also contributed to this issue. The P-5 have been inconsistent in prioritizing and addressing the issues identified in the resolution. Their unwillingness to push this issue to the fore and make institutional commitments – which I will discuss further below – has resulted in other states failing to act.<sup>9</sup>

Another core problem that undermines political will with respect to UNSCR 1325 is that, while UN member states are aware of the resolution, most fail to understand its full implications. While most member states can conceive of the broader UN goal of promoting gender equality in the peacekeeping missions, this awareness does not necessarily result in understanding or appropriate action. For many member states, Resolution 1325 has become shorthand "policy speak" that is challenging to translate into tangible action and change within field missions.<sup>10</sup> Thus, they cannot serve as strong advocates for the objectives of UNSCR 1325.

Additionally, many in the UN report a sense of fatigue and lack of clarity about the resolution. According to Sahana Dharmapuri, who conducted numerous interviews with UN staff,

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<sup>8</sup> Paul F. Diehl and Alexandru Balas. *Peace Operations*. 2nd Ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2014), 218.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, "The Futures Past of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda," *International Affairs* 92.2 (2016), accessed December 15, 2016, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12549

<sup>10</sup> Dharmapuri, 12.

“after ten years of hearing about 1325, your eyes just glaze over.”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, some member states are unconvinced by the argument that increased participation of women in peacekeeping operations will lead to more effective missions and consequently they are neglecting to act with intention. Lastly, many feel that it is the purview of each TCC to determine who should be deployed for UN missions, and that this should not be dictated by external measures.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that at the operational level, there are many obstacles to making advances in the number of female peacekeepers in the UN, in addition to the other objectives identified in UNSCR 1325.

Though member states should be blamed for failing to muster support for these goals, the institution of the UN also bears some responsibility for neglecting to provide adequate guidance. Some member states feel that UN staff have not effectively communicated the purpose and goals of UNSCR 1325, nor provided instruction on how to implement it, and many have admitted that they do not truly understand what “gender mainstreaming” entails within their particular areas of responsibility.<sup>13</sup> Altogether, this has led to a lack of motivation to provide support for the goal of increasing the number of female peacekeepers and to follow through on the implementation of DPKO’s guidelines and policies on gender mainstreaming in peace operations.

Again, however, while the UN can be blamed to some extent for failing to outline the specific steps required to institute change and prioritize the increased participation of women in peacekeeping, they can only do so much to adjust the actions of member states. Until member states recognize the unique contributions of female peacekeepers and prioritize increasing their numbers in the ranks of UN forces, it will be challenging to meet the goals established in Resolution 1325.

## **Lack of Institutional Commitments**

A dearth of institutional commitments, such as national action plans (NAPs), has proven to be another stumbling block in efforts to increase the number of women serving in peacekeeping roles. These institutional commitments are vital in terms of translating concepts, such as the objectives offered in UNSCR 1325, into tangible steps that countries can execute.

When member states choose to incorporate policy on women, peace, and security, at the regional, national and local levels, it allows them to better articulate specific policies and permits them to take concrete steps to meet goals set by the UN in this area. As observers have noted, initiatives such as NAPs draw on women’s experiences as resources in peacebuilding and conflict avoidance efforts, and also use gender as an analytical tool for rethinking policy initiatives, actions, and goals which have proven to be some of the more challenging aspects of implementing UNSCR 1325.<sup>14</sup> In recognition of this, the UN has encouraged member states to develop distinct actions plans as one way to address problems such as poor gender mainstreaming and the low number of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Sandra Whitworth. *Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 120.

<sup>14</sup> NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, “National Action Plans & Strategies on Women, Peace, and Security” in *From Local to Global: Making Peace Work for Women*, [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Five\\_Years\\_On\\_Ch\\_2.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Five_Years_On_Ch_2.pdf), 48.

female peacekeepers.

In an official statement in 2002, the President of the Security Council encouraged “member states, the entities of the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant actors, to develop clear strategies and action plans with goals and timetables, on the integration of gender perspectives.”<sup>15</sup> Some countries have taken this guidance to heart and adopted national action plans to assist them as they work to meet the goals outlined in UNSCR 1325. There are currently 63 national action plans (NAPs) worldwide and 16 in progress. Countries who have adopted NAPs exist at all income levels and hail from six continents.<sup>16</sup>

The United States, which has been a permanent member of the Security Council since the UN’s founding in 1945, is one of the countries that has demonstrated a commitment to meeting these goals through its National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. Introduced in December 2011, the action plan “expresses the United States’ unqualified commitment to integrating women’s views and perspectives fully into our diplomatic, security, and development efforts—not simply as beneficiaries, but as agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth, and stability.” According to the document, the U.S. government welcomes the “opportunity to work with [their] international partners to make the promise of this commitment real, to advance implementation of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325, and to make significant progress toward the goal of sustainable peace and security for all.”<sup>17</sup>

Two other permanent members of the Security Council, France and the United Kingdom, have also adopted NAPs to respond to the need to better integrate women into the UN’s structure and actions.<sup>18</sup> However, despite their status as permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia have yet to institute national action plans focused on women, peace, and security.<sup>19</sup> Their unwillingness to serve as examples on this front has undermined the objectives set forth in UNSCR 1325 and has contributed to the lack of a substantial increase in women peacekeepers since the resolution’s adoption.

China and Russia are not the only countries who have cast off this responsibility. While some member states have been eager to embrace the NAPs in recent years, the governments of many others have failed on this account, neglecting to create national strategies that would enable them to fully respond to UNSCR 1325. Despite the fact that 79 member states currently have or are working on NAPs, the remaining 114 do not.<sup>20</sup> Notably, countries that have been historically known as major contributors to peacekeeping missions, such as Bangladesh, India, and Jordan, are lagging in this regard. Additionally, while there was a marked increase in states adopting NAPs around 2010 -- likely in response to the ten-year anniversary of UNSCR 1325 -- the development of such plans

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<sup>15</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, S/PRST/2002/32 (31 October 2002), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/2002/32](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/2002/32).

<sup>16</sup> “National Action Plan Resource Center,” last modified 2016, <https://actionplans.inclusivesecurity.org>.

<sup>17</sup> White House, *United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security* (December 2011), [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/email-files/US\\_National\\_Action\\_Plan\\_on\\_Women\\_Peace\\_and\\_Security.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/email-files/US_National_Action_Plan_on_Women_Peace_and_Security.pdf), 2.

<sup>18</sup> “National Action Plan Resource Center,” last modified 2016, <https://actionplans.inclusivesecurity.org>.

<sup>19</sup> Kirby and Shepherd.

<sup>20</sup> “Member States - United Nations,” <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/>.

has slowed since then.<sup>21</sup>

Beyond the adoption of national action plans, some countries have been slow to translate the content of their commitments into concrete actions. While the UK did develop a NAP in the years following the introduction of UNSCR 1325, it was only in 2014 that it first established a set of benchmarks.<sup>22</sup>

Until those states lacking action plans or other institutional commitments choose to adopt them, it will be a challenge for them to create policies that actively and intentionally prioritize the viewpoints and perspectives of women, and without the integration of these policies, it is unlikely that the number of women in peacekeeping operations will increase.

## Poor Resource Mobilization

Political will and institutional commitments provide the necessary foundation for real action to occur. With those elements in place, it is possible to mobilize the resources required to provide support to new initiatives and meet stated objectives, such as the increase in female-to-male peacekeepers. When they are absent, it is much more difficult to assemble the funding, equipment and troops necessary to make change. In the case of the goal of UNSCR 1325 and its goal of increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations, a lack of adequate resources has become a significant hurdle.

In recent years, the UN's annual peacekeeping budget has topped \$8 billion.<sup>23</sup> Despite the impressive size of this sum, the resources at hand are by no means infinite, and the UN is, to a large extent, restricted in what it can do to force the implementation of documents such as UNSCR 1325. Without adequate resources, in the form of support from member states, increasing the number of female peacekeepers has been a struggle.

As is the case for governing bodies at all levels, UN member states have a "carrying capacity" that puts a maximum limit on the services it can provide.<sup>24</sup> This capacity for activity is primarily limited by the level of resources that member states are willing to contribute. If member states are unwilling to contribute funding, equipment, or troops to the United Nations, it constrains efforts to meet the objectives set in Resolution 1325.

Poor resource mobilization in support of the resolution may take a relatively straightforward form. If countries are unwilling to send female troops for peacekeeping operations, this demonstrates a clear lack of will to abide by the objectives outlined in the UNSCR 1325. However, weak resource commitment can take other forms. Poor financial support to the UN in broader terms means that money that might be spent on activities that could bolster the credibility of and accessibility to UNSCR 1325 must be spent on personnel, equipment, rations, or offices. Money that might be spent on trainings related to turning policy into practice or the installation of gender advisors in missions (who could explain the importance of the resolution's goals) is instead spent on

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<sup>21</sup> Kirby and Shepherd.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Williams, "Peace Operations: Nuts and Bolts," (September 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Paul F. Diehl and Alexandru Balas, *Peace Operations*, 200.

helicopters, food, and accommodations for soldiers. While these are worthy uses of the budget, they fail to bring the UN closer to meeting its goal of increased female participation in peacekeeping.

Some countries demonstrate generosity by consistently offering troops to serve in peacekeeping missions. When these TCCs or PCCs agree to provide support for a mission, they sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN that outlines what support they can provide.<sup>25</sup> The level of logistical support and service varies, and not all countries offer significant assistance beyond their contingent of troops. Though all contributions to the UN's peacekeeping efforts are positive in that they permit missions to continue, they may simply be inadequate in terms of addressing the problems highlighted by Resolution 1325.

While the UN Security Council can issue documents such as UNSCR 1325 to urge stakeholders to work towards gender equality and mainstreaming in the areas identified in the resolution, it is clear that the engagement and generosity of member states is the critical piece in ensuring successful implementation of Resolution 1325's objectives. Without the resources provided by member states, the UN will face difficulties in achieving an increase in the ratio of its female peacekeepers.

### **Small Ratio of Women to Men in TCC/PCC Militaries and Police Forces**

Not all factors contributing to the plateau in the number of female peacekeepers can be attributed to the relationship between the UN and member states. The gender dynamics within countries, with particular focus on TCCs and PCCs, has also played an important role in stymieing the efforts of the UN and preventing the organization from meeting its goals with regard to Resolution 1325.

The ratio of women to men in national and domestic militaries and police forces in TCCs and PCCs has been significant in contributing to the inability of UN member states and stakeholders to meet the objectives set forth in UNSCR 1325. To a great extent, this is connected to gender norms in these TCCs and PCCs. In many countries, the military and police force are masculine spaces reserved for men, leading to lower levels of enlistment by women. As Bellamy and Williams note in *Understanding Peacekeeping*, the marginalization of women as agents in the peacekeeping process can be partially explained by "hyper-masculine values and the culture that forms the basis of most military training programmes from which peacekeepers are drawn."<sup>26</sup> Through her research and interviews with UN staff, Dharmapuri came to a similar conclusion. According to the author, the "prevalence of social norms and behaviors that perpetuate inequality between men and women...act as a barrier to women's full participation in the security sector."<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, many of these countries have a low ratio of women to men in their militaries and police forces, and thus have fewer women than men to offer to UN forces. In many countries, women were only recently permitted to serve in combat roles, or are still unable to do so. In the United States and India, for example, women have only been granted the ability to join the armed

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<sup>25</sup> United Nations. "Financing Peacekeeping." <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml>.

<sup>26</sup> Bellamy et al, 370.

<sup>27</sup> Dharmapuri, 13.

services in this capacity in the last two years.<sup>28, 29</sup>

Not all TCCs and PCCs have demonstrated an unwillingness to make strides in this area, however. In contrast to countries that have pushed back on efforts to reform gender norms, some member states have made a concerted effort in this area and established national frameworks for gender integration in their armed forces.<sup>30</sup> In this way, they have led the way in achieving a higher percentage of women to peacekeeping operations. It is important to note, however, that many countries that pushed for gender equality in their armed forces were not always so progressive. It was necessary for many of these countries to directly address the prevalence of social norms and biases that perpetuate gender inequality before they could establish robust national networks for gender integration.

Liberia is one example of a country that has successfully increased the number of women participating in its armed forces, though it required a confluence of factors and was not seamless. The presence of the famous all-female Indian police unit to the UN Mission in Liberia in 2007 appears to have set an example for women in the country. After the unit's departure, the number of Liberian women enlisting in the country's police forces increased notably. In addition to the example set by the Indian contingent, significant gains were made thanks to a clear mission mandate that laid the foundation to increase the participation of women in Liberia's police force. The mission's mandate called for the restructuring and support of the police and focused special attention on addressing sexual violence against women and girls.<sup>31</sup> UN Police also provided assistance, working with forces in Liberia to develop an educational support system when the requirement of a high school education proved to be a barrier for many women. While the imposition of gender norms continues to be an issue and has prevented the promotion of women in the Liberian police system, progress has definitely been made. Between 2006 and 2010, the percentage of women in Liberia's police force increased from 11 to 15 percent.<sup>32</sup> It was only by taking an approach that combined policy frameworks that supported gender equality, institutional support, and a consistent effort to integrate women that Liberia could succeed in increasing the number of women in its armed forces.<sup>33</sup>

South Africa is another country that shifted its gender norms, and now has one of the greatest women-to-men peacekeeping ratios. However, they faced challenges along the way, and adopting a policy directive dictating increased participation of women failed to immediately change minds and hearts. South Africa's former deputy minister of defense, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, commented on this challenge, discussing how "women who choose to join military forces have to combat both the external enemy and the patriarchal attitudes and actions within the military force itself. Whereas it was believed that the incorporation of women into the military would transform gender relations and roles ... the reality is that militarism serves to reinforce and reproduce gender

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<sup>28</sup> Matthew Rosenberg and Dave Philipps, "All Combat Roles Now Open to Women, Defense Secretary Says," *New York Times*, December 3, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> "Indian armed forces to open all combat roles to women," *Al Jazeera*, February 24, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Dharmapuri, 13.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

relations.”<sup>34</sup> Through concerted efforts to reshape gender expectations and confront this issue directly, however, South Africa created change in its police and military forces, and offer a greater number of female police officers and soldiers to the UN for its peacekeeping forces.

Though Liberia and South Africa could overcome traditional gender roles and expand the idea of what a soldier can look like, doing so was a challenge, and their ratios of female-to-male peacekeepers still fall below the level of gender parity. In all cases, the imposition of strict gender norms has proven to be a substantial obstacle to the goal of gender equality in national military and police forces and, consequently, UN peacekeeping forces. While the specific combination of solutions that each country requires to achieve full integration of women in its armed forces differs, addressing strict gender norms is necessary in all cases.

Making this sort of a change will not only increase the numbers of female peacekeepers, but also create a real sense of depth and breadth to their roles in peacekeeping. Fundamentally, “gender balancing,” or an increase in the number of women in a given role with the aim of achieving parity, is only one aspect of reaching equality. Creating depth for those roles and assigning women to positions throughout the UN and its missions is a critical element of fulfilling the goal of “gender mainstreaming.”<sup>35</sup> When women are not given a broad range of roles, it can actually reinforce perceptions of which jobs best suit women; if they are installed in posts that emphasize their perceived “pacific nature or their capacities for consensual problem solving,” they are less likely to be offered positions that deviate from those requiring such skills.<sup>36</sup> Member states should focus not only on increasing the number of women in their armed forces, but in changing the ideas of what constitutes an appropriate role for women. Until member countries can conceive of women as soldiers and soldiers as women, the UN is unlikely to see the number of women in its peacekeeping forces rise.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

When UNSCR 1325 was adopted by the Security Council in 2000, it was viewed as a pivotal moment in the history of gender issues. However, it was ultimately only a starting point in the long journey to achieve gender equality. In fact, the United Nations has faced substantial challenges in implementing the changes listed in Resolution 1325, and is far from reaching its goal of a substantially increased level of women’s participation in its peacekeeping forces. While the UN must bear some of this blame, much falls on the institution’s member states. They have demonstrated little interest in providing adequate political support and resources to meet the goals laid out in UNSCR 1325, and have also shown an unwillingness to make institutional commitments or work seriously to reform their police and military units to make room for women. Until work is undertaken to address these serious deficiencies, it will be difficult to move past this point of plateau and increase the percentage of female peacekeepers beyond 4.2%.

The UN can take several tangible steps to increase the number of women participating in

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>35</sup> Kirby and Shepherd.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

peacekeeping forces. In terms of countering weak political will and a lack of institutional commitments, the UN Security Council should take the objectives of UNSCR 1325 seriously and set an example for others. All permanent members should commit to national action plans that contain concrete steps for transforming policy into action. They can establish increased credibility of the document's objectives by taking this step and set an example for other member states to follow. The UN should also launch ongoing campaigns to ensure that attention is being paid to the issue of gender mainstreaming and related elements of the resolution on a continuous basis, as opposed to merely drawing attention to the resolution on the anniversaries of its adoption.

In addressing poor resource mobilization, the UN should encourage member states to provide greater funding so that it can fortify its peacekeeping budget, invest in trainings to properly convey the objectives of Resolution 1325, and install gender advisors in missions who can provide guidance on how to turn policy into practice. It should also request additional funding from TCCs and PCCs when negotiating the terms of MOUs, and emphasize the importance of sending female troops to missions. In addition to trainings on Resolution 1325, the UN should apply its resources to developing more trainings and programs on masculinity and altering gender norms. This may require investing more funds into the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or UN Women, which have experience implementing programs in these areas. This could be a challenge, as donors often want to see short-term results and are less inclined to invest in long-term projects. Nonetheless, this work will be necessary if the UN hopes to see more women in the domestic forces of TCCs and PCCs and consequently in the ranks of its peacekeeping forces.

Any and all of these proposed solutions will require a synthesis of political will, institutional commitment, the mobilization of resources, and an expansion of gender norms to succeed. While achieving these together sets a high bar in terms of level of effort, any less will fail to move the needle in terms of women's participation.

One of the fundamental issues to consider when observing the lack of progress on the goals of UNSCR 1325 is that the UN failed to secure buy-in from member states prior to the adoption of the resolution. Obtaining a deep commitment to the goals may have appeared to be an insurmountable challenge – and it is very possible that the resolution would have never come into existence had this been the bar to meet – but this lack of commitment from member states (including the P-5) has proven to be a substantial challenge to progress. Until norms regarding the importance of this issue change at local, regional, and international levels in member states, and is appropriately elevated within the UN, it will be difficult to make any real strides. At the end of the day, note Diehl and Balas, “there is no policy or solution that can magically alter the international political system and its operating rules. What is required is a normative change in which international interests supersede those of individual states.”<sup>37</sup> Until states are willing to elevate the goals identified in UNSCR 1325 above their national interests and make the changes necessary to move these objectives forward, progress will be very challenging to attain.

It must be noted that ultimately, if the UN's goal is to achieve real gender equality, increasing the number of female peacekeepers is not enough. While it is certainly a laudable goal, ensuring that the kind of work that women do is at all levels and in all dimensions of UN peacekeeping work is

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<sup>37</sup> Diehl and Balas, 219.

equally important. Women's representation is but one aspect of full gender equality. Fundamentally altering the perception of what women can contribute and what roles they should fill is a harder task, and global, long-term efforts to shift gender norms will be necessary before the UN and its member states can confidently say that they have met all the goals established in UNSCR 1325 – and broader aims beyond those identified in the resolution – and achieved true gender parity.