

Gender Mainstreaming: UNSCR 1325 as a Global Response to Mainstreaming Women in Peace Building, its Challenges and the Role of Religious leaders

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Abstract

This study examines “Gender Mainstreaming: UNSCR 1325 as a Global Response to Mainstreaming Women in Peace Building, its Challenges and the Role of Religious leaders. This resolution has sought to mainstream women in peace building by requiring greater recognition of their unique needs and experiences. With secondary data, this paper discussed Resolution 1325 as a global response to mainstreaming women in peace building, its challenges and the role of religious leaders in achieving its objectives. The paper observed that despite the positive intents of Resolution 1325, several challenges are militating against achieving its objectives. Some of these challenges include impunity and widespread of sexual and gender-based violence despite increase in training and legislation; low levels of women in peace negotiations; and limited gains in female uniformed personnel among security sector institutions and low advocacy on women involvement in peace building. Therefore religious leaders should be involved in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 for a better result. The paper recommended that the United Nations should develop stringent punitive measures against perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence for both preventive measures and deterrence; international and local organizations should work toward ameliorating representation imbalance through gender-sensitive programming, legal activism and sustained lobbying / advocacies. Additionally, religious leaders should be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to advocate of gender mainstreaming and peace building. The paper concluded that UN needs to ensure effective implementation of the components of the Resolution 1325 through the involvement of religious leaders because of their influence in the society.

Keywords: Gender; United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325; Gender Mainstreaming, Peace building and Religious leaders.

Introduction

From the founding of the earth, mankind has been in a state of constant conflicts. That conflict is inherently part of human existence as demonstrated by Rumme (1976) when he said that conflict is universal. Our very experience presupposes conflict in its generation. Our learning about ourselves, others, and reality, our growth and progress, and our increasing ability to create our own heaven or hell, comes through conflict. As conflicts change, mankind has continued struggling to address or resolve them. However, often, the conflicts escalate to violence generally, during violent conflicts, women, as well as other vulnerable groups are the major victims. According to Holmes and Hussein (2012), gender inequality and discrimination faced by women and girls puts them at higher risk. Women and girls often face greater barriers than men and boys. These

barriers include restrictions on mobility; lack of access to decision-making power; lower literacy rates; discriminatory attitudes of communities; and lack of equal opportunities to access training and awareness on empowerment. Shepherd (2015) aptly explained that women are disproportionately impacted by war and their experiences are distinct from men. Although women may carry a heavier burden than men during wartimes, their experiences, views, and skills are often under-valued and under-utilized in the resolution of conflict. As a result, women continue to be under-represented in leadership positions throughout the world.

Notably, peace building has been one of the major efforts geared towards addressing violent conflicts across the globe. According to Conciliation Resources, peace building seeks to address the underlying causes of conflict,

helping people to resolve their differences peacefully and lay the foundations to prevent future violence. Surprisingly, during peace building, women, as well as other vulnerable groups are often marginalized. Remarkably, incessantly growing research base has now acknowledged the importance of women's involvement in peace and security issues in order to achieve a long-lasting stability. This acknowledgment stems from the efforts by international organizations, national governments and civil society organizations around the world to establish what we now know as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. In October 2020, the international community marked the twentieth anniversary of U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its two decades of efforts to integrate women and their perspectives in peace and security. Thus, this paper would discuss Resolution 1325 as a global response to mainstreaming women in peace building, its challenges and the role of religious leaders. With secondary data, the paper clearly explained the meanings of gender; UNSCR 1325; gender mainstreaming; and peace building. The paper used peace building and theories of gender operations to explain the essence of gender mainstreaming in peace building. The paper highlighted some challenges being faced in mainstreaming women in peace building, the role of religious leaders and provided recommendations therein (Cazalu and Caparoni, 2017, p.17).

Gender:

According to Lindqvist and Fredrik (2018), gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behavior and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change overtime. Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender

identity and sexual orientation, among others. From the foregoing, it is clear that gender is actually socially assigned to individuals and it encompasses rules, behaviour and roles given to them. However, these rules, behaviour and roles are not static as they vary from place to place and susceptible to gender inequality. In some climes, gender and sex have been mixed up. The Canadian Institute of Health Research distinctively differentiates between gender and sex. It said that gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. On the other hand, it said that sex refers to a set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive / sexual anatomy. Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed. Thus, this paper defines gender as socially construed attributes assigned to individuals – girls, boys, men, women and trans gender – and can change overtime or from one place to another. It is apt to say that gender is not about being a man or woman or transgender. It is about the social roles that each community assigns to individuals (Caln and Heyness, 2016)

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325

According to the United State Institute for Peace, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325), on women, peace, and security, was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on 31 October 2000, after recal lingre solutions 1261 (1999), 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000) and 1314 (2000). There solution acknowledged the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It calls for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction. Resolution 1325 was the first

formal and legal document from the Security Council that required parties in a conflict to prevent violations of women's rights, to support women's participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction, and to protect women and girls from wartime sexual violence. It was also the first United Nations Security Council resolution to specifically mention the impact of conflict on women. The resolution has since become an organizing framework for the women, peace, and security agenda, which focuses on advancing the components of Resolution 1325. In other words, the Resolution 1325 was a monumental and historic effort geared towards eliminating all forms of gender discrimination against women and promoting gender mainstreaming in peace building.

The major elements of the Resolution 1325 are preventing sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict; peace negotiations; protection of women and girls in refugee settings; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); Women's political participation; incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations; consider gender in Security Council missions and consult with international and local women's organizations; provide training for the UN and member states on the protection, rights, and needs of women; gender sensitivity; and the importance of involving women in peacekeeping and peace-building measures; gender balancing in the UN; reporting study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building, the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and on gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping missions. The Resolution 1325 has four pillars:

Prevention which focuses on preventing sexual and gender-based violence, as well as gender awareness in conflict prevention and early warning systems. This includes preventing sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping forces.

Protection involves improving women and girls' safety, physical and mental health, economic security, and overall well-being. It also focuses on improving the rights of women and girls and their legal protections

Participation refers to promoting women's participation in peace processes, increasing the

numbers of women at all levels of decision-making institutions, and increasing partnerships with local women's organizations. It also includes increasing women's participation in the UN senior positions, as Special Representatives and in peacekeeping missions and operations.

Relief and recovery efforts should ensure the equal distribution of aid to women and girls and incorporate gender perspectives into relief and recovery efforts.

In 2009, Resolution 1889 called on the Secretary-General to develop a set of indicators to track the implementation of Resolution 1325. The indicators are used for UN programming, but have also been adopted by member states and NGOs. The indicators developed are the four pillars of prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery highlighted above. However, the major criticisms of UNSCR 1325 hinge on gender essentialism and exclusive focus on women:

Gender essentialism portrays and renders women as perpetual victims, and ignoring women's action that could bring about both violence and peace. For example, reports of violence against civilians tend to emphasize that "women and children" as victims to illustrate the brutal nature of violence. Conversely, men too are major victims of violence. Also, Gender essentialism assumes that women are innately peaceful, usually due to their experience as mothers, which is one of the main reasons that people use to argue for including women in peace processes. Another frequently cited gender essentialist argument is that women are natural coalition builders and are more likely to work with members of other groups.

Exclusive focus on women implies focusing exclusively on women and overlooking the role of men. According to this line of criticism, the values and attitudes among both men and women are more important than biological sex for violence and peace. Both men and women who hold feminist values, and thus are positive to gender equality, tend to be less warlike and intolerant. Since gender does not equal biological sex, it is more relevant to focus on masculinities and femininities. For example, a study of political activists in Thailand found that men who identify with ideals of manhood emphasizing male superiority over women and the need for real men to be fierce and tough are

more likely to participate in political violence.

Gender Mainstreaming:

According to the UN Women, gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects. More so, the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicated that gender mainstreaming is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. Mainstreaming includes gender-specific activities and affirmative action, whenever women or men are in a particularly disadvantageous position. Gender-specific interventions can target two men exclusively, men and women together, or only men, to enable them to participate in and benefit equally from development efforts. These are necessary temporary measures designed to combat the direct and indirect consequences of past discrimination. In fact, Resolution 1325 supports gender mainstreaming, or the incorporation of a gender perspective into all policies and programs, in peacekeeping missions and other UN programs related to peace and security (UNSCR 1325 Explained). So, this paper defined gender mainstreaming as a systematic and deliberate efforts to ensure that men and women are not advertently or inadvertently excluded in gender-specific activities and affirmative action. It is a conscious effort to eliminate any form of biases and discrimination against men and women, girls and boys.

Peace building:

Joakim, Jan, Maria and Hanna (2021) defined

Peace building as an institutionalized practice through which war-torn societies are helped by UN missions and other multi- and bilateral actors to stop armed conflicts, engage in effective peace negotiations, sign peace treaties, commit to reconciliation efforts, hold democratic elections, build state institutions capable of engaging in good stable governance, and thus achieve peace. Laderach (1997) said that peace building is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. Moreso, Joan (2005), said that peace building is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in non-violent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Peace building can include conflict prevention; conflict management; conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation. In 2007, the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee defined peace building as a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and sustainable development. Peace building strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives (Peace building and the United Nations). Therefore, this paper defines peace building as a generality and totality of activities aimed at conflict prevention, conflict mitigation, conflict transformation, conflict resolution, conflict management and post-conflict reconciliation aimed at elimination of negative aspects of conflict and fostering peaceful coexistence.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted peace building theory and theories of gender oppression to clearly explain the concepts of peace building and gender respectively.

Peace Building Theory

Ndeche and Iroye (2020) pointed out that peace building theory assumes that there is first a conflict requiring reactive or proactive intervention by a third party. Peace building in theory and practice envisages a multilateral rather than a unilateral process of active pro-social civic engagements behaviour (author, forthcoming). It is argued that peace building must incorporate the critical elements of conflict resolution and social justice simultaneously. Peace building must address the underlying causes of violent conflict so that they become less likely in the future. Peace building theory provides a conceptual and operational framework for reconciliation, distributive and restorative justice particularly in situations of recovery from mass violence, armed conflict, or violations of human rights. From the foregoing, for reconciliation, distributive and restorative justice processes to be effective, mainstreaming women in the processes is crucial. It also goes to say that without conflict, peace building would be irrelevant and without peace building, mainstreaming women in peace building would have become inconsequential. As a matter of fact, peace building theory is relevant to this paper for in as much as there is conflict, there would always be need for peace building. Ideally, peace building would incorporate all relevant elements, which include gender.

Theories of Gender Oppression

Ashley (2020) explained that theories of gender oppression argue that not only are women different from or unequal to men, but that they are actively oppressed, subordinated, and even abused by men. Power is the key variable in the two main theories of gender oppression: “psychoanalytic feminism” and “radical feminism”. Psychoanalytic feminists attempt to explain power relations between men and women by reformulating Sigmund Freud's theories of human emotions, childhood development, and the workings of the subconscious and unconscious. They believe that conscious calculation cannot fully explain the production and reproduction of patriarchy. Radical feminists argue that being a woman is a positive thing in and of itself, but that this is not acknowledged in patriarchal societies where

women are oppressed. They identify physical violence as being at the base of patriarchy, but they think that patriarchy can be defeated if women recognize their own value and strength, establish a sisterhood of trust with other women, confront oppression critically, and form female-based separatist networks in the private and public spheres. The theories of gender oppression aptly describe the treatments being meted out to women across ages. The women have been oppressed, subordinated, and even abused by men. Some of the oppressions and abuses include discriminatory attitudes of and practices in communities; subjection to sexual and gender-based violence; restrictions on mobility; denial of access to decision-making power; marginalization in peace building processes; subjection to lower literacy rates; denial of equal opportunities and access to training and awareness on empowerment. However, this does not mean that the situation is hopeless. In fact, it is believed that patriarchy and its associated threats can be defeated if women recognize their own value and strength; take advantage of available legislation like Resolution 1325; develop strong collaboration and networks among themselves.

Mainstreaming Women in Peace Building

Shepherd (2015) explained that in the context of international conflicts, adopting a collaborative or compromising conflict handling style, rather than a competitive one, can be of great advantage. Given women's actual or perceived aims of maintaining long-term, relational harmony and their sensitivity to interpersonal cues, women are likely to be more successful in delicate conflicts involving future relationships. These gender distinctions need to be recognized and utilized in conflict resolution. In other words, women's unique characteristics put them at a vantage position to thrive better than men in peace building. This has been proven to be valid across ages. Evidences abound of the involvement of women in peace processes that have led to sustainable peace and amicable relationships between entities in conflict. Peace agreements and reconstruction are more sustainable and effective when women are involved in the peace building process. Bringing women to the peace table improves the quality of agreements reached and enhances the

likelihood of implementation because of the unique skill sets and experiences that women possess. Increasing women's participation in politics and the public sphere is not only just, but also makes economic sense, and the plurality of women's perspectives strengthens national security. For example, Shepherd (2015) said that the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace demonstrated the power of women to influence change through the informal process. The First and Second Liberian Civil War cost more than 150,000 lives. Consequently, women began to unite in hopes of aiding the peace process in Liberia. This movement began as meetings for prayer and worship of both Christian and Muslim women of Monrovia, but grew to a political activist movement, pleading for peace. These resilient women collectively brought an end to the war and restored peace in the region (where men have failed), leading the country to the peaceful democratic elections of 2005 and the first elected woman president of an African State.

A side groups of women, individual women have also made a difference in peace building efforts by influencing positive changes. For example, according to UN Women, Rajaa Altalli from Syria was 12 years old when her father was arrested by the Syrian government for being part of a political party. Since the conflict erupted in March 2011, Syria has witnessed unprecedented devastation and displacement. More than 5 million Syrians have fled the country and 6 million are internally displaced. From food insecurity to loss of educational opportunities, lack of safe water or health services, and high rates of gender-based violence, women and girls are facing the brunt of the crisis. Sexual violence, particularly yearly and / or forced marriage, continues to affect women and girls in the Syrian Arab Republic. Presently, Rajaa Altalli is an advocate for women's inclusion in the formal peace process in Syria, her home country, and she is one of twelve members of the Women's Advisory Board appointed by the UN Special Envoy for Syria. According to Rajaa Altalli (2020): "We have had to push for women's participation at every step, from the start of peace process to the constitutional process".

Including women at the peace table has the potential to improve the quality of agreements reached

and enhance the likelihood of implementation because of their uniqueness. For example, according to UN Women, Susan Sebit, 32, is an accomplished lawyer and advocate for women's participation in governance and leadership. For decades, her home country of South Sudan has been overwhelmed by conflict. Because of the tireless advocacy of leaders like Sebit, South Sudan's peace process engaged a coalition of 40 women's organizations in peace talks, leading to the inclusion of gender-responsive provisions in the agreement. Young women head the coalition, challenged the traditional structures and norms of peace building processes. Because of the Coalition's engagement in the formal process, the final peace agreement included provisions such as a 35% quota for women's representation in the transitional government and funding to support rehabilitation of women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Indeed, like the story of Susan Sebit, when young women are included in peace building, it will ultimately contribute to sustainable peaceful coexistence. (Prugl and Bryson, 2016).

Women are more likely to succeed in brokering peace agreements and securing ceasefires in a difficult peace building process because of their sensitivity to interpersonal signals. For example, Lindborg (2017) said that Women's groups negotiated local ceasefires with armed groups and won the release of hostages in Colombia. They pressured insurgents to lift roadblocks and documented human rights violations. They protested budget priorities of local governments and sought solutions to drug trafficking and other illegal activity. Some of these women were invited to the negotiating table for the Colombia peace talks in Havana. One third of the table participants were in fact women. Among other roles they were instrumental in ensuring that the concerns of the war's victims were reflected in the reconciliation and accountability mechanisms in the final agreement.

There are ample testimonials that involvement of women in peace processes can lead to sustainable peace and amicable relationships between entities in conflict. In 2018, International Alert (IA) substantiated this when it reported how women and girls are contributing to and making positive impacts in peace building across the generations. For

example, in Ukraine, women have engaged children affected by conflict by creating spaces where they could play and be children again, butals oprocessed their feelings about violence, strengthened their natural coping mechanisms and imparted in them basic conflict resolution skills that could empower them to resist violence and even become future peace builders. Similarly, Myrna Masukat, an intern with IA lives in Baseco, one of the biggest slum areas in Manila, Philippines. She has been campaigning to bring autonomy, peace and development to her community. Myma's intervention aimed to address Muslim exclusion and discrimination, and strengthen political leadership of Moro women and youth. Along with other interns, Myrna was placed in the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives to deepen their understanding of political processes and developed concrete actions to strengthen youth participation in politics. She is also part of the advocacy and campaign team of United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD), a grassroots organisation that aims to nurture young leaders who give spiritual, political, and socio-economic services to society. Moreover, Fatima Alhaji Kolo supported the reintegration of survivors of sexual violence by Boko Haram, as well as those internally displaced by the conflict, and helped them move forward with their lives under IA funded project in Damboa, Nigeria. She was selected to join the project as a community leader and received training in peace building and non-violent conflict resolution. According to her "as a community leader, I try as much as I can to make women understand that peace starts from within us; especially those that are affected with crises, so they can be an example to others and help make a positive future for all women and girls growing up. Interestingly, as An and Krulisova (2021) put it, women mainstreaming in peace building is now a central component to the United Nations Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. WPS is "the most significant and wide-reaching global framework for advancing gender equality in military affairs, conflict resolution, security, governance and peace building. Therefore, the tempo in mainstreaming women in peace building need to be maintained and sustained.

Major Finding about UNSCR1325 and its Level of Implementation

The paper identified some of the major outcomes of the UNSCR 1325 as follows:

1. Many countries are witnessing higher rates of female voters and politicians, as well as increased legal provisions to support gender equality.
2. Academic researchers have shown that more women are significantly mentioned in peace processes
3. More UN peace keeping operations missions have gender advisors-as of 2014, nine of the sixteen missions have gender advisors.
4. Increasingly, States (Countries/Nations) are developing National Action Plan (NAP) towards effective implementation of the UNSCR 1325. For example, in Nigeria, aside the NAP, some State and Local Governments have domesticated the UNSCR to suit their contexts and enhance women participation in peace and decision-making processes (Henry and Parasher, 2011)

Challenges

Amidst the huge progress made thus far in mainstreaming women in peace building, the paper identified the following challenges:

1. Alarming reports of sexual abuses and exploitations by peacekeeping forces even as sexual and gender- based violence continues to be widespread with impunity despite increases in awareness creations, trainings and legislation.
2. There are evidences of low levels of women in peace negotiations, with women comprising less than 10% of those formally involved across all missions.
3. Security sector institutions have continued to witness limited gains in female uniformed personnel, despite increases in the number of uniformed women in peacekeeping missions.
4. Feminist understanding of gender as a social category differs with the argument for women's participation on the understanding of biologically-determined gender differences, this distinction needs to be embraced rather

than ignored (Henry and Parasher, 2011).

Role of Religious Leaders

Religious leaders have an influential role to play in gender mainstreaming and implementing Resolution 1325. By using their platforms to advocate for gender equality, challenge discriminatory beliefs, and promote women's empowerment. Religious leaders can contribute to creating a more inclusive and just society. It is through collective efforts, involving religious leaders, civil society organizations, policymakers, and individuals, that we can advance gender equality and build sustainable peace and security for all. Here are ways in which religious leaders can support the implementation of Resolution 1325:

1. **Education and Awareness:** Religious leaders can foster awareness and understanding of gender equality issues within their religious communities. By teaching and preaching about women's rights, equality, and the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in peace and security efforts, they can help challenge discriminatory beliefs and practices.
2. **Advocacy and Social Change:** Religious leaders can use their platforms to advocate for policies and initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This can include speaking out against violence against women, supporting legal reforms, and promoting women's participation in decision-making processes.
3. **Interfaith Dialogue and Collaboration:** Religious leaders from different faith traditions can engage in interfaith dialogue to promote a shared understanding of gender equality and build common strategies for its implementation. Collaboration between religious leaders can lead to more comprehensive and effective approaches to address gender-based violence and discrimination.
4. **Reinterpretation of Religious Scriptures:** Religious leaders can play a crucial role in interpreting religious texts in a way that upholds gender equality and challenges interpretations that

perpetuate discrimination. By providing alternative interpretations that promote equality and respect for women's rights, they can foster positive change within their religious communities.

5. **Support for Women's Leadership:** Religious leaders can actively encourage and support women's leadership within their religious hierarchies and institutions. This can involve promoting women's participation in decision-making bodies, providing opportunities for women's religious education and training, and challenging discriminatory practices that restrict women's roles.

It is important to note that the role of religious leaders in gender mainstreaming and implementing Resolution 1325 may vary across different religious traditions and contexts. While many religious leaders have embraced the principles of gender equality and have made significant contributions in promoting women's rights, there are also instances where religious interpretations and practices have been used to justify gender inequality and discrimination (Jean and Arar, 2019).

Conclusion

Despite concerted efforts by state and non-state actors, gender inequality has continued to be a major threat to mainstreaming women in peace building. Amidst this threat, the Resolution 1325 has remained a strategic international legislation that seeks to ensure that women's rights are protected during and after armed conflicts. The four pillars of Resolution 1325 remain instrumental in the prevention of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls; improving women and girls' safety, physical and mental health; promotion of women's participation in peace building; ensuring equal distribution of aid to women and girls during humanitarian interventions. Thus, it is important for the UN to ensure effective implementation of the components of the Resolution 1325 through strategic gender framework approach and involvement of religious leaders which would ultimately sustain a global response to mainstreaming women in peace building.

Recommendations

Correspondingly to the challenges highlighted above, the paper gave the following recommendations:

1. United Nations, regional and sub-regional organizations should develop stringent punitive measures against perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence which will serve as both preventive and deterrent to others.
2. International and local organizations should be deliberate in ameliorating representation imbalance when planning for peace building activities through gender-sensitive programming, legal activism and sustained lobbying / advocacies towards enhanced inclusion and active participation of women in peace processes.
3. Security sector institutions should adopt UN gender framework of peace keeping missions by ensuring that a designated quota is reserved for women during recruitment exercises in order to record increased female uniformed personnel across boards.
4. Feminist understanding of gender as a social category with the argument for women's participation on the basis of biologically-determined gender differences needs to be further studied by academics and embraced rather than ignored.
5. Religious leaders should be equipped with the understanding of the content and purpose of UNSCR 1325 to help in mainstreaming women in peace building.

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