

UN Security Council Adopts Eighth Resolution on Women, Peace & Security, Linking the Agenda to Countering Violent Extremism

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[New York, NY] – Yesterday, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted its eighth resolution on Women, Peace & Security, directly connecting the global agenda on combating violent extremism and terrorism to women’s experiences of conflict. The new Resolution 2242 emphasizes women’s role in preventing violent extremism and recognizes that sexual and gender-based violence can be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of terrorist groups. The Resolution comes at a time when unspeakable atrocities by groups such as [Boko Haram](#) and [ISIS](#) dominate headlines, including sexual slavery, forced marriage, rape and forced pregnancy, with some of these crimes possibly amounting to genocide.

The Resolution was passed on the heels of the release of a [Global Study](#) evaluating 15 years of implementation of Resolution 1325, as requested by the Security Council. The Study acknowledges that while progress has been made, significant challenges remain to implementing the Women, Peace & Security Agenda. One such challenge the study highlights specifically, is access to abortion for survivors of wartime sexual violence.

In line with a legal analysis first introduced by the [Global Justice Center in 2011](#), the Study finds that the denial of abortions to female rape victims violates not only their right to medical care but also the prohibition on adverse distinction found in common Article 3, the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions and customary international law.

The Study uses strong language to highlight that abortion services are a matter of lifesaving health care and part of the right to non-discriminatory medical care under international humanitarian law (IHL).

The Study also reaffirms the legal principle that IHL trumps local abortion laws in armed conflict, specifically identifying U.S. policy as a barrier to abortion access: “International human rights law and international humanitarian law apply universally, irrespective of national legislation. This includes the aid policy of the world’s largest donor, the United States, and the restrictive effect it has on the provision of abortion by humanitarian agencies worldwide.” Despite stark criticism from human rights and medical groups around the world, the United States continues to attach blanket abortion restrictions to its aid with no exceptions for rape, life endangerment or incest.

Though the Resolution and the Study acknowledge areas in which international law can address the needs of women, they do not go far enough. In response to the Global Study, the Global Justice Center [publishes](#), “15 Years after the Adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325: Enforcing International Law: Moving the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda from Paper to Practice,” illustrating how international law can be used as a tool to achieve the objectives of the Women, Peace & Security Agenda. This document also contains specific recommendations and concrete steps for the UN Security Council, UN Member States and Civil Society to take to improve the lived realities of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

It has been 15 years since the UN Security Council first linked women’s experiences of conflict to the international peace and security agenda. Today, as women find themselves more and more on the frontlines of international extremism, it is more urgent than ever that bold actions are taken to bring the UN Security Resolutions from paper to practice.

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