October 2010 marked the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN Resolution 1325). The unanimous passage of UN Resolution 1325 recognized, for the first time in the history of the Security Council, the link between gender equality, peace, and security. The 10th anniversary of this landmark resolution heralds a move toward implementing UN Resolution 1325 in peace and security operations to improve operational effectiveness. Today, gender equality is recognized as a force multiplier in operational planning and execution strategies.

Yet when military planners and policy makers credit what has increased effectiveness in peacekeeping and security operations, they rarely, if ever, mention gender equality. Nevertheless, recent efforts made by UN peacekeeping missions and NATO to implement UN Resolution 1325, show that security actors are more successful when they take into account the different needs, status, and experience of men and women in the local population, and when peace and security missions include women in executing operations and decisionmaking.

A growing body of evidence from the field reveals that the inclusion of women enhances operational effectiveness in three key ways: improved information gathering, enhanced credibility, and better force protection. Empirical evidence underscores the fact that attention to the different needs, interests, and experiences of men and women can enhance the success of a variety of security tasks, to the benefit of both civilians and soldiers.

**United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325**

UN Resolution 1325 is an internationally recognized legal framework for promoting gender equality and addressing issues affecting women’s peace and security at the local, regional, and international levels. UN Resolution 1325 is groundbreaking for several reasons. In the words of former UN Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury:¹

> The Security Council expressed for the first time in its history of 55 years its conceptual acceptance that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and affirmed the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for peace and security . . . .²

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