

Report on the Peace Commission

International Federal Seminar “Squaring the Circle for Women, Peace and Security” (October 2018)

This interesting seminar took place in Berlin, Germany on October 24-25 2018. It was organized by Deutscher Frauenring e.V. (German Women’s Ring) in cooperation with Frauennetzwerk fuer Frieden e.V. (Women’s Network for Peace, Germany), both are IAW member organizations . Marion Böker, Deutscher Frauenring e.V. together with Margret Otto and Heide Schütz, Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e.V., had outlined this two days seminar on UNSCR 1325, the Human Right to Peace and the Culture of Peace. The feedback of the participants was very positive. Heide Schütz served as a panelist on the Human Right to Peace and as a workshop facilitator on the Culture of Peace. Many IAW members including the president Joanna Manangara were able to participate since the IAW board meeting was scheduled right after this seminar and translation into English was provided. All three issues had been topics of discussion in Nikosia already. To my understanding these topics are very important and should be dealt with in further IAW discussions on peace and human security with a special focus on women’s needs and potential.

New Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security: 2467 (April 2019)

UN SCR 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security has already been followed by a number of resolutions focusing mainly on one of the three pillars which stress the aspect of women and girls as victims in conflict zones(e.g. [1820 \(2008\)](#), [1888 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#), [2106 \(2013\)](#)). The agenda has always been to urge member states to commit themselves to end women’s and girls’ suffering from sexual violence, torture and cruel, racist, inhuman or degrading treatment in conflict and war zones, furthermore in putting an end to the impunity of perpetrators and to give access to survivors to health services ,medical and psychological care. Each resolution has had a small specific added value for victimised women and girls.

There is a new resolution now on Women, Peace ,and Security after the German-led bid during its presidency of the UN Security Council in April 2019. It was passed on April 23rd as UNSCR 2467. It should have been a highlight and a break through for victimized girls and women in so far that female survivors of sexual violence in conflict zones should be given access to comprehensive and reproductive health care, in other words: abortion as a choice after rape. This has been demanded by NGOs and some government officials since long but the German move turned out to be a failure which- it has to be said - was to be foreseen in the present political situation. All “abortion language” had to be removed, otherwise the US would have vetoed against the resolution as such. Russia and China resisted the proposal of a new working group which was to develop measures to address sexual crimes . It also had to be taken out. After difficult negotiations on different wording Russia and China abstained, the US and the other 12 members of the SC voted in favor of the new resolution. The reaction of the UK was to say that they would continue to “support access to sexual and reproductive healthcare for survivors of sexual violence around the world. This is a priority. If we are to have a survivor-centered approach, we cannot ignore this important priority.”

France and Belgium also expressed disappointment at the watered down text.

The German NGO Alliance 1325 on the implementation of UNSCR (Bündnis 1325) got to know about the eager plans of the German Foreign Ministry to work on a new resolution on WPS to fight all forms of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and to fill the normative gaps. The reaction of the German NGO Alliance was not to welcome this project but to warn that this new resolution might weaken what has been gained in years before. It is

well known that women's right to self-determination is being denied by the US, China and Russia. The alliance demanded that energy should be focused instead on the implementation of the existing resolutions, first and far most.

Resolution 2467 also addresses sexual violence acted out against boys and men in conflict (3)

“sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations disproportionately affects woman and girls, *recognizes* also that men and boys are also targets of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, including in the context of detention settings and those associated with armed groups; *urges* Member States to protect victims who are men and boys through the strengthening of policies that offer appropriate responses to male survivors”

To my understanding it is positive that the taboo of sexual violence against males has been broken at last officially.

Sadly enough, the implementation of the full participation of women as peace agents “in all peace processes on all levels” (UNSCR 1325) was neglected again.

Good news from the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)

Link between CEDAW and UN WPS resolutions creates synergy

This network which defines itself as “Amplifying women's voices towards sustainable and inclusive peace” is very important and helpful. If you go to the website www.gnwp.org you'll find a lot of good information and practical toolkits (e.g. Voice of Women Canada) as well as on www.peacewomen.org

GNWP has been strongly advocating for the joint implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and CEDAW. The policy brief can be found here:

<http://gnwp.org/publications/strengthening-synergies-between-cedaw-and-women>

One example reads: * What is the importance of reporting on WPS through CEDAW reports? This question was explored through key informant interviews and literature review, which confirmed that CEDAW reporting not only provides a systematic platform for WPS reporting, which is lacking in the Security Council. Furthermore, reporting on the implementation of the WPS resolutions through CEDAW will also strengthen the links between peace and security, women's rights and gender equality.”

The monitoring of the implementation of the UNSCR on WPS through CEDAW also “revealed that women are still viewed primarily as victims, and not as agents of peace, and that the link between women's participation at all levels of decision-making and preventing conflict or sustaining peace is still tenuous in most State Party reports.” www.gnwp.org

<http://gnwp.org/publications/strengthening-synergies-between-cedaw-and-women>

Thus the message is: use CEDAW as a tool to push the agenda of any UN resolution on WPS. All of them fall short on implementation!

More good news:

“EU Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategic Approach to WPS”.

The process started in December 2018 when it was decided to develop this instrument. The draft Action Plan was discussed in spring at High level Round Tables as well as during informal consultations with civil society under the auspice of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Principal Advisor on Gender and on UNSCR 1325/WPS Ambassador Mara Marinaki. It was finalised and voted upon on 4 July 2019 (EEAS (2019) 747; Ref. Ares(2019)4271330 - 04/07/2019 . Heide Schütz attended as the president of the Women’s Network for Peace, as a representative of the German NGO Alliance and also as the convenor of the Peace Commission of the IAW.

Again civil society was invited to participate in a mainly governmental meeting of the Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security on July 24 in Brussels at EEA head quarters. All participants were to become familiar with and discuss the strategies of the implementation of this EU Action Plan on the Strategic Approach to WPS (Women, Peace and Security) in small working groups on a democratic and cooperative level. After almost 20 years since UN SCR 1325 was adopted in 2000 there is hope that its implementation is on its way on the European level as a European external strategy with relevant impact on member states..

The chapter “Objectives” clearly points out the link to UNSC resolution 1325 endorsing all its focal points:

“Based on the Strategic Approach, the Action Plan identifies objectives as already defined in UNSCR 1325, under the key priority areas of prevention, protection, relief and recovery, and the three overarching and cross-cutting principles of participation, gender mainstreaming and leading by example. All these objectives are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.”

Last but not least:

ICAN Cities Appeal

On 7 July 2017, an overwhelming majority of the world’s nations (122) voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – a landmark of international agreement that outlaws the ultimate weapons of mass destruction and establishes a pathway to their elimination.

Ban Ki-moon praised ICAN’s commitment and creativity when they were awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2017.

In October 2017 at the IAW meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus, a resolution was adopted which aimed to raise support to put pressure on governments to sign the treaty. Meanwhile 70 governments have signed, but the number of ratifications is not high enough yet that it would come into force (50 needed)). Sadly enough the NATO states have not voted positively on this resolution and have not signed it so far. Information on all UN member states can be found on the ICAN website.

In 1920 ICAN has started a new international campaign to raise awareness and put pressure on the abolition of nuclear weapons – which is even more important than ever since the US, NATO and other nations are about to “modernize” them to increase their destructive power or to make use of them in a “strategic” plan. It is the ICAN Cities Appeal which reads the following: (www.icanw.org)

“Our city/town is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world. We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment.

Therefore, we warmly welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017, and we call on our national government to join it without delay.”

Every city can participate – find out on the ICAN website if your city is among the supporters already. If not – please become active. The Vision 2020 of the global network of “Mayors for Peace” is also very helpful on the level of policy and action. www.mayorsforpeace.org

Heide Schütz, convenor