

29th September 2009

OPEN LETTER TO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UN: RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON *IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 1325 ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY.*

Dear Ambassador,

The Security Council will this year hold its annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security on the 5th October, 2009, with the theme: “Responding to the needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations for sustainable peace and security.”

This year’s Open Debate marks the 9th anniversary of landmark resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As we stated at the time of the Open Debate last year, we welcome advancements made in some areas, such as the recognition that women in conflict situations are not only victims, but also powerful agents for peace and security in their communities; and the new efforts to combat the use of sexual violence in conflict situations, and to ensure justice for survivors of such violence.

However, we have yet to see much tangible implementation of the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and there remains a serious lack of accountability for the commitments in these resolutions. Persistent impediments include the lack of strong, high level leadership; the absence of a coherent and systematic approach; and the lack of concrete monitoring of progress and gaps in implementation.

The 10th Anniversary of resolution 1325 in October 2010 is an opportunity for your Government to focus its efforts on ways to ensure measurable results in the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Women Peace and Security.

Over the next 12 months, we therefore urge you to:

- Ensure that women are engaged in all levels of decision-making, including as mediators and negotiators, and that women’s groups are substantively consulted in any conflict you strive to end;
- Ensure that the interests and needs of women are addressed in these processes;
- Demonstrate marked improvement in the number of women in any peacebuilding and civilian peacekeeping support your Government provides; and
- Support the Secretary General’s appointment of the Special Representative on women, peace and security.

Without these actions, women will continue to be marginalized in security sector reform; in provision of services, particularly by being denied their right to mental and reproductive health services; in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; in efforts at judicial reform; in electoral processes; in efforts to address impunity; in truth and reconciliation processes; in dealing with issues concerning child soldiers; when addressing the return and resettlement of internally displaced people and refugees; in attempts to enact real reductions in the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and to bring suspected perpetrators, including facilitators, of such violence to justice.

The NGOWG on Women, Peace and Security was formed in 2000 to call for a Security Council resolution on women, peace and security. We now focus on implementation and monitoring progress on issues of women, peace and security, specifically in regards to the two Security Council resolutions on this topic: SCR 1325 (2000) and SCR 1820 (2008). The NGOWG serves as a bridge between local women’s groups working in conflict-affected regions and policy-makers at U.N. Headquarters.

At the Open Debate on the 5th October, we look forward to hearing what changes for women in conflict-affected situations your Government intends to achieve by October 2010, as an individual member state and through the UN. We also look forward to your expressed support for the accountability, leadership, and resourcing that is essential for meeting the demands of resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information or to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Taylor', with a stylized, cursive style.

Sarah Taylor

COORDINATOR
NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

CONSORTIUM ON GENDER, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

FÉMMES AFRICA SOLIDARITÉ

GLOBAL ACTION TO PREVENT WAR

GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS

INTERNATIONAL ALERT

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM AT THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S TRIBUNE CENTRE

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION