



## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

*United Nations Consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO and UNCTAD  
Special relations with the ILO, FAO, UNICEF, and other organisations and  
agencies*

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Hon Murray McCully  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Private Bag 18041  
WELLINGTON 6160

Dear Mr McCully

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa Section (WILPF Aotearoa) congratulates the government on its development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the realisation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions are critical to the peaceful resolution of conflict and conflict prevention, both of which WILPF actively promotes through our Reaching Critical Will and PeaceWomen initiatives.

While WILPF Aotearoa welcomes the NAP on 1325, we are concerned at the emphasis on women in the armed forces and in overseas deployments, and that the distinction between UN peacekeeping operations and combat deployments is blurred. There is extensive research demonstrating that disarmament and arms control are integral to enhancing women's human rights, preventing gender-based violence and violence towards women, and preventing and ending armed conflict and violence.

We draw your attention to the recently published global study, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*. The study reminds us that UNSCR 1325 had its roots in a human rights framework, not in a militarised security one, and states: 'Any policy or programme on women, peace and security must be conducted with this in mind. Attempts to "securitize" issues and to use women as instruments in military strategy must be consistently discouraged.'

WILPF Aotearoa believes that the role of civil society is pivotal to the success of the NAP, as civil society groups provide important contacts, support bases and local expertise that will ensure that the NAP remains relevant to those it is trying to protect and support.

Rather than the process outlined in the NAP of a 'gender-balanced interagency governmental working group' and civil society informing the process through a public submission process with one representative feeding 'a consolidated view' into the annual reporting process, WILPF would like to suggest that a formal joint civil society /government mechanism be established, such as regular dialogue and an Annual Report Card similar to

that launched by academics, UN Women, civil society and government in Australia. The process for review should be modelled on the CEDAW Shadow Report process and include evidence of monitoring and evaluation frameworks that use quantitative and qualitative (participatory) data collection methodologies. In this way, our NAP will be able to map its actions against stakeholders' responsibilities.

We look forward to your response and to engaging with you further on this very important issue. It is only when true and lasting gender equality is achieved that true and lasting peace can prevail.

Yours sincerely

Celine Kearney  
President, WILPF Aotearoa

cc David Shearer MP  
cc Kennedy Graham MP