

# ‘Add women and stir’: the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands and Australia’s implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

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*With the changing nature of warfare and the increasing awareness of the specific gender dimensions of war and peace, the international legal framework has been expanded to address the particular challenges faced by women in conflict and post-conflict contexts. This process culminated in 2000 with the first United Nations document to explicitly address the role and needs of women in peace processes: United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security. Thirteen years on, this article assesses the extent to which Australia’s stated commitment to women, peace and security principles at the level of the international norm has translated into meaningful action on the ground in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The analysis shows that despite it being an ideal context for a mission informed by UNSCR 1325, and Australia being strongly committed to the resolution’s principles and implementation, the mission did not unfold in a manner that fulfilled Australia’s obligations under UNSCR 1325. The RAMSI case highlights the difficulty in getting new security issues afforded adequate attention in the traditional security sphere, suggesting that while an overarching policy framework would be beneficial, it may not address all the challenges inherent in implementing resolutions such as UNSCR 1325.*

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As the nature of war has changed with the advent of irregular and asymmetrical warfare, so too has the effect of armed conflict on women. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a defining characteristic of modern warfare, and women, often seen as the vessels of cultural identity, are increasingly considered to be legitimate strategic targets by armed forces. In response to this and the growing number of civilian casualties in conflicts, international legal frameworks have been developed to protect civilians from the excesses of violent

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