

Executive Summary

With the changing nature of warfare over the past half century, and the increasing awareness of the specific impact of warfare on women, 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 adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security, which was the first UN document to explicitly address the role and needs of women in peace processes. Ten years on, this paper assesses the current state of UNSCR 1325 implementation globally, and explores the opportunities and challenges involved in using National Action Plans (NAPs) to systematise the resolution's implementation at national level. It finds a significant gap between the rhetoric of support for the principles enshrined in UNSCR 1325 and its comprehensive implementation, which highlights the broader difficulties in getting firm state commitment to meaningful action on 'soft' security issues such as human security, as opposed to more traditional 'hard' security concerns. The case of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is used to explore the extent to which Australian commitment to women, peace and security principles at the level of international norm development actually translates into meaningful action on the ground, in peace operations. The RAMSI intervention demonstrates a significant gap between Australia's rhetorical commitment to the norms enshrined in UNSCR 1325 and the reality of their non-implementation in peace operations, suggesting that an NAP would offer significant benefits in terms of mainstreaming the implementation of the resolution within the Australian context, thereby facilitating Australia's adherence to its international obligations.