

# How to Wage Peace

Building bridges between Women and Peace movements from Israel, Palestine and Sweden

REPORT FROM A CONFERENCE IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY MARCH 2007



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Lead author: Nina Olsson  
Editorial advisors: Anne Casparsson and Anna Sundén  
Foreword written by: Maj Britt Theorin

Operation 1325 was the leading agent for the conference and is responsible for the content of this report.  
The conference was held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul located at the Swedish General Consulate with support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy.

Photos: Operation 1325  
Layout: Oscar Vesterlund, Stockholm  
Print: Norra Skånes Offset AB, Hässleholm 2007

# Abstract

Security Council Resolution 1325:2000 reaffirms women's preventative role and important, yet often unrecognized, contribution to the maintenance and promotion of peace and stresses the vitality of women's full participation and inclusion in the whole peace process.

The concept of women as active agents for peace is the red thread running through the activities of the Swedish NGO Operation 1325. With the overall objective to contribute to the implementation of SCR 1325:2000 both nationally and internationally the organization arranged a seminar in Istanbul for women and peace activists from Israel, Palestine and Sweden. One of the underlying ideas of the seminar was to elaborate on and discern how and what parts, if any, of the resolution that would be possible to collaborate and act jointly on.

Submitting information, reports and statement about the disastrous situation in the Middle East and the deteriorating conditions for Palestinians especially to power forums, both regionally and internationally, was one of the greatest needs expressed during the seminar.

Simultaneously, one of the biggest challenges facing the different women organization's work appeared to be the making heard of women's voices in these forums. Therefore, the summing up of suggestions on what actions to take forward in relation to Security Council Resolution 1325 included concrete suggestions on how to submit and disseminate the information and reports on women's situation; coupled with strategies that would make these methods and efforts, women's voices and actions heard, considered and taken into account in these forums.

## Summary of over-arching goals, needs and outcome of the seminar

- (1) to develop an international index gathering and collecting information on women with skills in negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution,
- (2) to make Operation 1325 an international organization with national sections working for women, peace and security in the local settings,
- (3) to engage grassroots women by training, education and information on the issues raised in the resolution as well as on the skills needed at negotiation tables, in decision-making positions and alike,
- (4) to advocate for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325:2000 in all different forums available, or rather that the resolution's content is being considered and consciously integrated in the field, and
- (5) the need of further arrangements like the seminar in Istanbul to review the work done and gather and exchange experiences of the different activities carried out, inspired by and departing from resolution 1325.

# Foreword

Throughout history women have been told that they should not interfere in men's violent way of dealing with conflicts. Ever since Aristophane's play *Lysistrata* from 411 BC to conflicts of our time in Sierra Leone, Arusha, Rwanda, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Israel, women have been excluded from the peace process. Their experiences have neither been listened to nor taken into consideration in conflict resolution, peace negotiations or mediation even though women, without exception, are strategic targets and victims of war and violence in armed conflicts. How is it possible to build peace if half of the world's population is excluded from the peace process?

All participating states at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 agreed upon an agenda for the empowerment of women. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action set out a number of actions with commitments of member states to the advancement of women. One part dealt with women's participation in conflict resolution, protection of women in armed conflict and women's right to full and equal participation in peace-building. It was not until 2000 however that, first, the European parliament enacted a report on the matter and, then, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the resolution 1325 (2000) containing 18 paragraphs with demands on women's participation through the whole peace process. The council thereby recognized and affirmed that only by ensuring increased representation of women in conflict prevention and resolution can the foundation and prospects for international peace, security, development and human rights be laid.

Six Swedish women and peace organizations have been collaborating since 2003 to ensure that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) do not end up as a piper tiger, but put into practice. Being a member of the board in this cooperative network that recently became an organization called Operation 1325, I feel that we have an

important mandate and a window of opportunity to make known, inform about and contribute to a change in the historically excluded role of women in conflict resolution and peace processes.

By arranging a conference in Istanbul between women active in the peace movement in Israel, Palestine and Sweden we took an important step in building bridges between women living in one of the world's most conflict struck regions. We wanted to enable women from different parts of this region to share and exchange, listen and learn from each others experiences as well as acquaint them with our experiences in order to jointly discern and produce proposals on how UN Security Council Resolution 1325 can be used and applied in their contexts; corresponding to the needs of their societies. So we did.

The fact that the conference for many of the women was the first opportunity to meet since the second Intifada gave rise to strong and emotional meetings. For some of them, the seminar was an insightful eye-opener to what the other side thinks and has to say. The week was very successful and we have hopes that this initial step is to be followed by further meetings and future collaboration for the full recognition and realization of women's role, contribution and inclusion in the whole peace process.



*Maj Britt Theorin, May 2007.  
Vice president of Operation 1325.  
Former ambassador for Disarmament  
and Member of the European Parliament.*



# Building Bridges between Peacemakers

The culture of peace is borderless. Yet it is often confined within and to specific conflicts or contexts. In order to find out how peace agents from different contexts with differing experiences of conflicts pursue their work, tackle challenges and promote peace the Swedish organization Operation 1325 gathered women from Israel and Palestine who are working for peace in the region to share experiences, encourage joint action and listen to and learn from women active in the field. Women who are affected by a conflict at the same time actively working to bring it to an end.

This chapter illuminates these women and the concept of “women as peace agents” in general. Therefore, this section is followed by an introduction to Security Council Resolution 1325:2000. Thereafter, the Swedish organization Operation 1325 is presented. The last part, the organization gallery, provides a brief introduction to the different organizations that participated in the conference in Istanbul.

## What about Women as Peacemakers

“...rather than portray all women as helpless victims of war and violence, it is essential to take into account the active roles that they play as combatants, peace builders, politicians and activists”.

SECURING EQUALITY, ENGENDERING PEACE, UN-INSTRAW  
2006:1

Security Council Resolution 1325:2000<sup>1</sup> is among one of the most important tool available for the mainstreaming of gender issues in fields relating to conflict, peace and security. It was passed in October 2000 after advocacy and calls from women organizations on the United Nations Security Council to adopt a resolution on women, peace and security. The resolution recognizes and reaffirms women’s preventative role and important

contribution to the maintenance and promotion of peace and stresses the vitality of women’s full participation in the peace process. All in all it makes gender considerations relevant to every single action taken from the Security Council with the resolution’s call for an increased role, participation and influence of women through the whole peace process; thus before conflict in preventing, during conflict in management and after conflict in the restructuring of society. The resolution is unique in the sense that it is the first document to affirm, acknowledge and highlight this work that women have pursued much longer then the resolution has existed. It is also historic in the sense that it does not focus exclusively on women as victims of war, but also on women as active agents for peace.

The strength of the resolution lies in its provision of a common platform for action for women engaged in the peace movement; the possibility to act jointly in the struggle for international peace and security. The status of a Security Council Resolution, an internationally binding agreement on all UN member states, makes the resolution valuable in another sense. It constitutes an obligation on all UN member states to arrange for and take actions to render possible the full inclusion, incorporation and participation of women and gender perspectives in peace negotiations as well as in constitutional, electoral and judicial systems. Since the rebuilding of a conflict struck society involves the establishment of basic institutional arrangements, the equal role and participation of women in that process is a step in the right direction for a more equal society on the whole, which in turn is a central component in a democracy.

Thus, the role of women as peacemakers is not new. It is new that their work is recognized in a United Nation’s resolution, which therefore provides a window of opportunity to make gender sensitive considerations and undertakings visible on the international arena and an integral part of international work. However, whether the resolution will be historic depends on the legitimacy it will gain; the recognition and

<sup>1</sup> References made to the resolution throughout the report vary the terms SCR 1325:2000, resolution 1325 and 1325. They aim at the same document no matter what term used.

importance ascribed to it. That in turn, will depend on the actions taken and work pursued in the areas addressed by the resolution. It is a space for action that organizations within the women's peace movement have to fill and make use of. The next section will present how some organizations have played out this role.

## Operation 1325 – working on Women, Peace and Security

In 2003 several Swedish organizations working with peace and gender issues gathered for a seminar to discuss possible way to implement the three year earlier on adopted SCR 1325: 2000. The misgivings for the future were that the resolution and the issues it addressed would not become more than beautifully formulated letters on a paper. To prevent a development in that direction, the discussions of the seminar concluded with the formation of a group whose aim would be to contribute to the national

implementation and recognition of the resolution. This group was initially formed as a network with representatives from six different organizations within the women's peace movement. Out of technical reasons the network reorganized into an umbrella organization in the fall of 2006.

Today, the Swedish umbrella organization Operation 1325 gathers representatives from five different Swedish women organizations<sup>2</sup>. It also collaborates closely with the Swedish Women's Lobby. All in all, the organization has a possible outreach to about one million women. The aim is to contribute to the implementation of resolution 1325 both nationally and internationally. The methods used to achieve this goal involve *advocacy* and *information* about and in relation to the resolution aimed at the parliament and relevant policy institutions; information campaigns to raise awareness about the issues addressed in the resolution as well as about the very existence of the resolution; and *training and capacity-building* of women. The training and capacity-building is directed at women with interest of gender



<sup>2</sup> These are the Swedish section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women for Peace, UNIFEM Sweden, the Swedish Ecumenical Women's Council and the Federation of International Associations for Immigrant Women.

in peace and security related areas. So far the organization has trained about 150 women who, in turn, arrange study circles for other women.

When it comes to advocacy the work has so far been focusing on the Swedish context with petitions to relevant actors so as to safeguard that the resolution do not end up as a piper tiger, i.e. beautiful words on a paper, never turned into action. One of the results of this work has been the adoption of a Swedish National Action plan in 2006 on how to implement SCR 1325:2000. Operation 1325 contributed to and took part in the work leading up to this action plan. Sweden is one out of only five nations that has adopted such plan. The other nations are Denmark, Norway, Great Britain and Switzerland.

In addition to the advocacy pillar the organization are developing and preparing different information and awareness-raising projects to make the resolution and the issues it covers known among the public. Here, the concept of women as active agents in peace work is the red thread running through the activities departing from a Swedish perspective on how Swedish women have been struggling for peace throughout history.

The training- and capacity building targets women and women's group. The organization has developed a training manual with facts and exercises on mediation, negotiation and conflict analysis and arranges trainings and courses for women of different backgrounds. Since the focus is *women as peace makers*, the trainings are carried out to equip women with relevant tools and knowledge so as to be sufficiently equipped to participate in decision-making and negotiation processes before, during and after conflict. The next step is to extend and broaden the training by involving organizations, inspirations, methods and experiences from abroad. A first move in this direction was the arrangement of a consultative dialogue with women in Sudan in 2006 to share views and discern channels for possible collaboration; building a bridge from two sides.

The bridge-building seminar in Istanbul between women from Sweden, Israel and Palestine had similar objectives; to listen and learn from each other; to encourage networking and collaboration and get inspiration and advice from each other's experiences. Providing women with the skills needed to be able to contribute, become involved

and participate in peace-building processes is one crucial part.

The underlying idea is that collaboration on and gathering of this competence, partly by joint training and capacity-building, but also by registering this competence in some kind of competence index will make it easier to influence the political arena, making it impossible for decision-makers and people in powerful positions to claim that there are no competent women available. Hence, the production of a competence index would serve dual purposes. It would counteract the argument that women lack the required competence and skills. It also provides an asset for people or organizations working for women and peace with the pooling of women who possess knowledge and experience from a variety of fields relating to this – a resource base with names of women who can take active roles in prevention of conflict, mediation under conflict and reconstruction of the society after conflict.

The foundation for such index is already available with the many competent women working with these issues. The conference in Istanbul gathered some of them. The next section introduces the organization's they work for.

## Organization Gallery

All tools to enhance the equal participation of men and women in decision-making and incorporate or mainstream gender perspectives are welcomed and needed. Ultimately it is what organizations, governments, NGO's and other civil society actors make out of the tools available that determine the impact and legitimacy of them. In order to map out possible ways of collaboration between women and peace movements in Israel, Palestine and Sweden for one of these tools, SCR 1325: 2000, the organizations represented at the bridge-building conference in Istanbul introduced and shared experiences from the work pursued in each organization. Organizations in which women more or less explicit are agents for peace<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The information about the organizations is based on the presentations given by the participants at the seminar mixed with information collected from the organizations homepages or information brochures. The website addresses are collected at the end of this chapter.

## New Profile

*“The promotion of the militaristic society is everywhere. People are born and raised under the influence of militarization and hence do not question that since it is part of their daily lives and therefore hard to think beyond”.*

New profile is a voluntary grassroots organization comprised of feminist women, men and youth. The name reflects the long-range aim of the organization to change the profile of the Israeli society from a militarized society of war to an actively peacemaking community.

The representative in Istanbul elaborated further on how the organization works against the constantly increasing militarization of the Israeli society. A militarization that according to her, passes unnoticed among most people.

In this regard, New Profile is trying to raise awareness about the effects of militarization and the fact that it is but one view or way of constructing a society. The organization has de-militarization as a top priority and focus on de-militarizing education and advocacy through lectures, media, conferences and other events. They constitute a supporting network for army refusers and conscience objectors by moral support, information and talks, hence going with and within the law but help those who voluntarily reject it. They also work with women whose lives have been damaged by militarization, such as victims of sexual harassment in the military.

**“Most people know how to do war, but not how to wage peace”**

The work of New Profile is implicitly related to SCR 1325:2000 in their focus on demilitarizing the society. Women have a crucial role to play in this work and can be active agents instead of consenting mothers when for example it comes to their own son's and daughter's participation in the war. Minding that their own sons are forced into war the ways of demonstrating this could involve active stands against the powers of the society that is reinforcing and perpetuating the idea that joining the army is both natural and necessary.

## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WILPF, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, was represented by their Israeli and Palestinian section. The general ambition of WILPF is to bring together women of different political beliefs and philosophies united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and the legitimization of war. The work towards world peace means that they support continuous development and implementation of international and humanitarian law, the promotion of total and universal disarmament, replacement of violence and coercion in conflict settlement by negotiation and conciliation and finally political, social and economic equity and co-operation among all people. They believe that these aims cannot be attained, that a real and lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist, under current systems of exploitation. Therefore, one of WILPF's missions is, by non-violent means, to advocate for the social and economic transformation of the international community into an economic and social system in which political equality and social justice is attainable for all regardless of sex, race, religion, or gender.

### The Palestinian section

*“Being a WILPF member, my main goal is to highlight the question of women and gender based on the understanding of the uniqueness of the Palestinian Issue that stem from the conditions of the Palestinian People who are subjected daily to continuous aggression by the Israeli occupation forces which affects mainly women and children”.*

The Palestinian representatives were critical to what they perceived as a lack of commitment from the international arena to respond to their continuous reports on the deteriorating conditions for Palestinians and unwillingness to listen to and react in favour of the forces working for change in the region. Their reports on the deteriorating conditions stemming from Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the internationally imposed sanctions on Palestine as a consequence of the election of Hamas was described in terms of a unjust setback and treatment. The report from the group gave the





impression that they are running out of patience and feel hopelessly abandoned. Yet, apart from this negative development and expressed feelings of disappointment the WILPF Palestine section emphasized the forces for change that still exists, which could grow both power- and useful by cooperation with other WILPF sections, international NGO's, agencies and governments.

The many efforts required to end the occupation, they argued, involved women taking an active and vital role in the peace work. One part of their peace work is to highlight how women become victims in the conflict. The other part of the peace work relates to women's active participation and role to play in the resistance movement as they are not only victims but also representative of strength and resistance. The presentation of the Palestinian section was a good example of this strength and force for change in the society and they emphasized the importance of cooperation with sister sections, such as WILPF in Israel, but also the need of the international community to turn an eye to and respond to their call for peace and reports on the many injustices they experience.

## The Israeli section

*"In the long run, the opportunity to peace is to change minds; to talk to people; to get people hear the truth; to get it out there so that maybe we can make a little bit of difference".*

Many women within the Israeli WILPF section are members of other organizations working for peace in the region. Hence, facing some identity problem on what the niche where to be and what specifically was right for WILPF to do in the bigger picture of Israel, the members of the section felt that their strength lay in showing the international community what is going on in the region. Therefore, they have become active in producing reports which they now do every second month on different themes. Since they participate in WILPF meetings in various parts of the world and represent the peace activist strand within the Israeli society they seized the opportunity to make known what is going on in Israel in relation to peace and justice.

The first report they produced was on the situation in the Gaza strip. Upcoming reports will address the separation wall, making it clear where and what it is and who it is separating from whom.

The work related to SCR 1325:2000 has yet been confined to the knowledge about the existence of a resolution on peace, security and gender, however, the intention of attending the conference was to get inspiration and ideas on how to integrate work with support from SCR 1325:2000 in the rest of the work they pursue.

## Meretz-Yachad Party

*"I am here because I think that the conflict has been going on too long. It needs to end."*

Meretz was founded in 1992 by the union of the *Citizens Rights Movement* (CRM), the socialist-Zionist party *Mapam*; with a basic philosophy that the solution of Diaspora Jewry was the emigration of Jews to and their concentration in a territorial base; and Shinui, originally a protest movement formed in 1974 after the Yom Kippur (October) War.

One of the goals of the Meretz Yachad Party is to work out a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours.

“Comprehensive peace with the Arab world is a diplomatic and security objective of the highest priority; and can only be achieved by reaching a permanent settlement with the Palestinian people. The choice is obvious: compromise and partition of the land between the two peoples, or eternal conflict between them, and signing peace treaties with Syria and Lebanon”

The representative from the party emphasized that her presence transcended party limits and represented a personal interest in peace questions.

### Isha L'Isha

*“We want to make a change in the minds of people. Therefore we have discussed whether collaboration on SCR 1325:2000, seeking to enable women’s participation in negotiations, means cooptation and*

*engagement with a structure we are refusing and rejecting. The government is based on an idea which we consider problematic to engage with since our work is directed against the thought regime from where the idea originates ”.*

Isha L'Isha, “woman to woman”, a Jewish-Arab Feminist Centre in Israel, started a project on SCR 1325:2000 in 2003. Between 2002 and 2005 this project, among other things, involved awareness-raising events on SCR 1325:2000, the translation of the resolution into Hebrew, a research on the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the lives of Jewish and Arab women and lobbying on behalf of a bill regarding women’s representation in negotiations. They have also published a book with gender perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and assisted with data and research to a parliamentary research project on the issue.

One crucial initiative of Isha L'Isha is the initial production of an index with names of women who are interested in becoming involved in peace talks. Together with the creation of a directory



of women and a course for female leaders to train them in conflict resolution it is a move and initial step in the development of a resource base, which coincide with the long term ambition of the Swedish Operation 1325.

The manoeuvre space for Isha L'Isha is not limitless. The fact that the organization is a common Arab-Jewish organization is among parts of the Arab society met with scepticism since cooperation between Jewish and Arab people is not commonplace, hence a sensitive issue. Concerns have also been raised toward efforts that exclusively focus on Palestinian women, since many feel that the effects of the occupation strike Palestinians as a group, regardless of sex. However, the focus of SCR 1325: 2000, to take into consideration women's specific needs, concerns and experiences of conflicts and its aftermath, should not need to be problematic since the overall aim does not contradict or seek to diminish the conditions under which all Palestinians live. Rather, getting the conflict to an end is the over-arching goal, but the focus and method of getting there is what differs: Isha L'Isha's work departs from and starts with the woman. As one participant puts it:

"Even in times of peace you do not see enough women. Women have to find out why and become visible".

### Sabeel

*"If nothing happens, no one will improve their livelihoods. A peace in the Middle East is a solution for the whole world".*

As the opportunity to build peace can occur in a variety of settings, Sabeel, an ecumenical grassroots movement among Palestinian Christians, came to the bridge-building seminar in Istanbul to listen, learn and get inspiration on how women organizations work for peace.

The organization itself encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive and enduring peace and sponsors a variety of local and international programs with that emphasis. The aim of these programs is to:

"encourage people of faith to develop a spirituality of nonviolent liberation which will empower them

to work for justice, peace and reconciliation in Palestine Israel".

One of these programs focus on women and it seeks to encourage networks of women and educate them on their powerful role and own capacity to take on leadership roles as women. The work of Sabeel has not yet explicitly used SCR 1325:2000 as a tool or platform. By participating in the conference in Istanbul, however, the representatives hoped they would gain new insights, contacts and ideas on how to evolve and take their work on support to the Palestinians further.

### International Women's Coalition

*"As women, we have a key role to play in meeting challenges and starting the longer-term process of rebuilding communities, reviving dialogue among all parts of society, and showing that there are other ways to live<sup>4</sup>"*

Naomi Chazan, member of IWC



The International Women's Coalition for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace (IWC) is an international body of Palestinian, Israeli, and International women leaders and activists. It was established in 2005 under the auspices of UNIFEM to advance peace and justice in Israel

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db9005ID/HMYT-6PFSHC?OpenDocument>

and Palestine. Part of the work emphasizes and aims at ensuring that the obligations under SCR 1325:2000 are fulfilled. If peace negotiations become a reality the inclusion of women in these talks and dialogues are strongly advocated for since decisions taken under negotiation processes affect and impact the future structure of both Palestinian and Israeli societies and all the people living there.

The members of the coalition work together to support each others' peace initiatives. The objective is to contribute to an end of the Israeli occupation and a just and sustainable resolution to the conflict. They work to make that resolution

characterized by women's full participation as well as incorporation of women's perspectives, voices and experiences of the conflict into the peace process. Apart from supporting each other's work for peace, the coalition works within communities to support movement's, individual's and women's peace initiatives on the local level.

To realize these ambitions, they hold hearings on peace in all kind of places; locally, regionally and internationally on high UN levels. All hearings are recorded with the purpose of collecting women's stories, perspectives and narratives on what peace is for them.

"Despite the fact that Israel, Palestine and members of the Quartet have all pledged to implement Security Council resolution 1325, which calls for increased engagement of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict resolution, this intention has still to be translated into practice."<sup>5</sup>

NAOMI CHAZAN, MEMBER OF IWC

## Contact information to the organizations:

International Women's Coalition  
Isha L'Isha  
Meretz Yachad Party  
Sabeel  
WILPF Israel  
WILPF Palestine

<http://iwc-peace.org/>  
<http://www.isha.org.il/default.php?lng=3>  
<http://www.meretz.org.il/main-branch/en/>  
<http://www.sabeel.org/>  
<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/world/israel.htm>  
<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/world/palestine.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db9005ID/HMYT-6PFSHC?OpenDocument>



# Women's Experiences of the Middle East Conflict

## A Separation Wall Gloomings the Horizon

### The Israeli and Palestinian Conflict – a brief background<sup>6</sup>

In the end of the 1800's, prosecution of Jews and anti-Semitism led to the creation of a political movement, Zionsim, to overcome and address this unjust treatment. It called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Biblical Promised Land, Palestine.

When, after World War I, the British Empire got a mandate over the region, the Empire's geopolitical interest made it enter an agreement with Arab states that ultimately was not delivered on. Arab leaders were promised British support in establishing an Arab state if they sided with them in a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Instead, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 declared British support for a Jewish National Home in Palestine. British presence further laid ground for a complicated future with an agreement with France on the division of Arab nations between the two imperial powers leading to artificially created borders and divisions.

After World War II, in 1947, UN recommended a partition of Palestine into two separate states, one Jewish and one Arab. An Israeli state was proclaimed in 1948 leading to about 750 000 displaced Palestinians. A Palestinian state was never proclaimed, neither was the UN proposed internationalization of Jerusalem. Neighbouring Arab states never recognized the Israeli state nor accepted the partition, leading to a joint mobilization directed at the new Israeli state. In the 1948 joint attack on Israel, the Arab states were defeated by

the Israeli army. The Arab states rejections of the partition and the existence of Israel have thereafter been an underlying factor in several devastating wars throughout the decades together with Israeli expansionist tendencies coupled with a military aggressive protection of their homeland. These wars include the Israeli initiated War of 1967 where Israel attacked Arab troops at the borders in a six-day-lasting war ending with an Israeli seizure of land from Egypt, Syria and Jordan and the failed attempt by Egypt and Syria to re-conquer the lost territories of the 1967 war, known as the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

After these two wars UN enacted two resolutions, 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), calling on Israel to withdraw from the territories occupied in the war of 1967 as well as calling on both parties in the conflict on mutual recognition. Apart from military wars, two uprisings stemming from the Palestinian society have further spurred the conflict. They erupted in 1987 with the signing of the Oslo Accords and in 2000 after the visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount, a holy site for both Jews and Arabs. These uprisings are referred to as the first and second Intifada.

Attempts from the International community to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the territorial disputes to an end involve the Oslo Accords of 1993 and the Quartet's Roadmap for peace in 2003<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> During the conference, the consul of the Swedish Consulate General in Istanbul, Ingmar Karlsson, held a very insightful lecture on how the future development of the region is conflated with its history. The brief background in this report, however, is informed by the sources in the footnotes below. <http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/MiddleEast/Palestine/Background.asp,070425>

<sup>7</sup> Constituent of the EU, the US, the UN and Russia

Today then, Israel is occupying territories beyond what was initially mandated; territory that in the original partition was intended to become an Arab state namely the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. This and other several key issues have stalled all attempts to peace set in motion and appear to impede a peaceful development in a foreseeable future. Apart from the Israeli occupation, other impediments involve the settlements and settlement-building, the separation wall, the question of the stateless Palestinian refugees and security issues for both Israeli and Palestinian citizens as well as more pressing political issues such as different processes set in motion on both sides with the election of Hamas in January 2006<sup>8</sup>.

The conflict in Israel-Palestine imbues all levels of the society. Apart from the regional and global political interests in the conflict, the present situation with Israel's occupation, the world community denying the democratically elected Palestinian government and the Israeli construction of the massive border-wall has created a humanitarian situation where the livelihoods for Palestinians is severely damaged and threatened. The occupation limits the ability for Palestinians to move freely. It is also damaging for the economy, education and medical services as the borders are controlled by Israel, hence limiting the export, import and flow of technologies and communication to and from the region. Coupled with the since 2002 Israeli construction of a border wall, Palestinian's live in poverty, enduring daily humiliation and violence under conditions constraining their freedom of mobility to and from their territory.

The wall annexes large parts of the Palestinian territory as it is built on occupied territory as apart from the allowed, yet morally questionable, state's own territory. The wall also deteriorates and hinders the daily life for Palestinians as farmers face difficulties to access their farms, children do not get to their schools, family and relatives cannot gather as they please and people in general endure hardships in accessing health services and other necessities for a tolerable existence. The official argument for the construction of the wall is to secure Israeli citizens from suicide bomb attacks. Attacks that are argued to be expressions of frustration over the situation channelled into extremism. Adding to that, reports about the

wall rather give the impression that the principal effect of the wall is to separate Palestinian people from each other as well as putting important economical resources on the Israeli side of the occupied territories<sup>9</sup>. A fact that, if it cares seeds of truth, only serves and adds to the discontent, the frustration, the perpetuation of hatred and the glooming of a peaceful horizon.

That scenario was to an extent augmented by the presentations given by the invited guest speakers at the seminar. Their illuminating and thought-provoking narratives on their experiences and views about the situation in the region painted a pessimistic and disastrous picture, yet not lacking suggestions how to bring about changes for a brighter future. The two following sections are reviews and summaries of their speeches.

## A Growing Voice of Descent

"The real issue here is the discrimination within a state of another group; the occupation of another ethnic group. That we do to others what others have done to us".

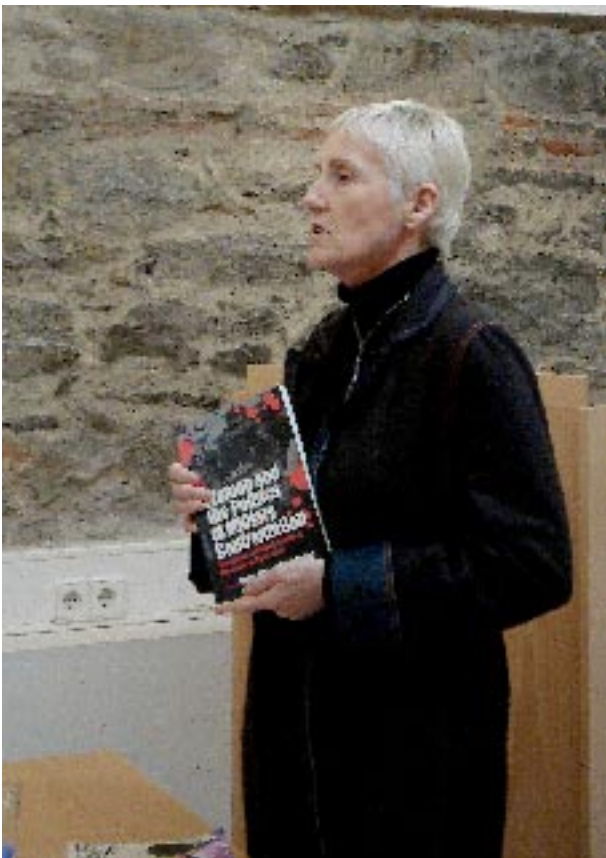
Susan Nathan, an Israeli author that by many is perceived as a challenging voice in debates on the Middle East conflict, had been invited to the seminar to give an introductory speech sharing her views and experiences on the possibilities and obstacles to peace in Israel and Palestine. Having lived in South Africa she realized, when she in 1999 decided to move to Israel, that the treatment of Palestinians living within the Israeli state were very much the same as the internal discrimination of black people in South Africa during the Apartheid regime. Her mission, sympathy and dedication therefore have come to rest with Palestinian people living within the Israeli state. Published in about 25 different languages she aims at calling attention to, especially in Washington hosting many influential policy institutions, the Israeli internal discrimination of Palestinians. She argues that it is necessary to seek channels making it possible to influence the foreign policies pursued on Israel and Palestine. Her idea is that action, not attitudes alone, can make a difference. She is currently giving

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/isrlindx.htm>, 070413; <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/israel-palestine/occupindex.htm>, 070413

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.diakonia.se/sa/node.asp?node=295>, 070413

lectures under the status as a visiting professor at the University of California in Riverside and has also been offered to collaborate with the Baker institute at Rice University.

In discussing the possibilities and obstacles to peace the impression given by Nathan was that the deeply rooted obstacles might in an already started but slow and gradual process on the societal level turn into future possibilities to



peace. The process might have begun but it is far from resulting in a conflict settlement. It will depend upon future developments and actions taken within policy institutions, among NGO's and by the Israeli society itself.

Starting with the obstacles, she discussed it from a point of view that Israeli governmental policies are being based on fabrications and manipulations of the truth. This is a truth she was educated to believe in herself. She was educated in the Zionist string to believe that Israel was constructed for her as the homeland she could move to if ever she would feel threatened or mistreated elsewhere in the world.

**"Jews do not live with nostalgia. They look back at their history with painful memories. Palestinians, in turn, they look back at their places of origin with a sense of nostalgia. It is an essential difference of which it is not enough discussion"**

When she eventually decided to move to Israel she got the impression that she had been brought up on a lie. That the essence of her belief, the Jewish history with painful memories and her religious identity, was used as a tool and conflated into a governmental policy of the country she thought was her homeland, concealing the real issue namely the occupation of another ethnic group; the discrimination of Palestinians within the state of Israel. The treatment of another group in the same manner as Jews throughout history have been treated, even though that challenges the essence of Judaism, which is that "what is hateful to you do not do to your fellow men". She means that governmental policies have equated "being a Jew" with "being Israeli" which in turn has created a country where Jews enjoy privileges that they are afraid to give up since the fear of "the other" is tremendously deeply rooted and needs to be exploited and addressed from the international community according to her. In her description this fear appears to be the factor perpetuating the conflict.

By taking concrete action, as Susan Nathan has done i.e. by moving into an Arab town in Israel, which resembles the characteristics of a refugee camp, she seeks to speak out and exploit prejudices and fears. She means that more actions that address the issue could eventually generate possibilities to peace. What is needed is that more people engage in and dare to speak out. In this regard



Nathan is discerning a growing voice of descent from within the Israeli society. The fabrication and conflation of religious and national identities into a clever political policy is defunct and not only contradicts the essence of Judaism, but more importantly has no function in the modern world. More and more people appear to realize that it is a global phenomena that populations are shifting and there is no longer a single place in the world where people are living only among their own kind. Therefore, she argues, Israel will eventually cease to be the type of Jewish state that it is today. She is already discerning a growing voice of descent in the American society in terms of changes in attitude and mindsets.

*"The next Intifada will come from within Israel, following the discrimination and exclusion."*

When it comes to women's roles in conflicted areas Nathan believes that women have a great deal to offer. Her own experiences from women at the negotiation tables give at hand that women start from a different position than their male counterparts. They seek dialogue which enables an understanding of each others needs and positions whereas men tend to go into negotiations with a win or lose attitude that reinforces and emphasize differences between the negotiating parties. So in actions required to bring about a change in the Israeli governmental policies, that according to Nathan are based on fabrications she considers women to have a crucial role to play.

## Calling Attention to the Situation for Palestinians

Tahani Abu Daqqa, representative of and active within the International Women's Coalition was invited to portray the Middle East conflict from a Palestinian viewpoint. She started off describing the history from 1948 up until present and the events that according to her have heightened the conflict:

Starting off in 1948 the Palestinian people were transported from their cities of origins since it now was to be the land of Israel. They

were transported into Gaza, the West Bank and neighbouring countries. The resettlement and removal of Palestinians involved atrocities and massacres toward the Palestinian people to a degree comparable to the Holocaust. However, it was not until 1987, with the eruption of the first Intifada, that the patience and frustration against the continuous transportation, restrictions and limitations on Palestinians, which also had been intensified during and after the 1967 occupation and war, ran out. The Palestinians, among whom many lived as refugees lacking both school and housing opportunities, rose up against the occupational power asking for a better life and an end to the occupation.

The conditions worsened during the following decades as the response from Israel to the Intifada increasingly isolated Palestinians with restrictions imposed on both travelling and visiting possibilities to and from the region. After the Gulf War the international community, including the Arab world, began to put pressure on Palestine to go into peace negotiations with Israel, eventually leading to the signing of the Oslo accords and the establishment of the Palestinian national authority.

*"The Palestinians had been awaiting a final solution and agreement for more than 5 years after the signing of the Oslo accords, but the development had only further restricted their freedom, rights as human beings and possibilities over all."*

Another uprising erupted in 2000 rejecting the Israeli violence policy, the dishonouring partnership, the non-compliance to the agreed upon commitments and different blockades confining the social and economic life within Palestine. The uprising turned to both Israel and the Palestinian national authority. The internal frustration within Palestine, due to high unemployment and poverty rates together with unsatisfying deliveries on the agreements in the peace accords, forced Mr Mahmoud Abbas into an election he knew he would lose. The election, transparent and correct, put Hamas to power. A few days passed before another war was



initiated as a consequence of the international community's discontent with the outcome of the democratic election. International sanctions were imposed and Mr Abbas was obliged not to support the establishment of Hamas. The current development in Palestine is expressions of the anger against Israel, but also at Fatah and the US that many Palestinians feel due to the unfulfilled promise on peace, but also the international community's refusal to deal with a democratically elected government.

The Palestinians live in big prisons and can neither establish their own state, nor control borders or resources. They have nothing. They are locked in on a small land without possibilities



to move, leave or enter as they want. The closure and incarcerated reality leads to problems of malnutrition, lack of medicine, psychological burdens and social problems like mounting poverty rates and internal rallies. The Palestinians live without borders and space, inside a prison which is being opened and closed according to the desire of Israel. The Israeli air force destroys infrastructure whenever they want, kill whoever stands in the way. The continuous humiliation have generated an anger that for many of the Palestinian youths, who feel that all horizons on a tolerable existence and life are closed, have pushed them to engage with extreme Islamic

fractions operating through suicide attacks. There is no hope, no salaries, no human treatment, no nothing".

Abu Daqqa's speech spurred a discussion about Hamas and the party's legitimacy problems. Concerns were raised regarding the lack of trust between Hamas and Israel leading to a situation in which both parties awaits the other to act first. Another problem was the perceived lack of vision in Hamas. The argument was that Hamas lacks visions on how to solve problems and that they are dependent on someone else giving them propositions and suggestions.

In both cases, who is to act first and what actions to carry out, a participant meant that Palestinian civil society actors, women organizations and alike, could push and exert influence on Hamas to act in either direction. That method had proven efficient in the history since Hamas from 1996 to 2006 evolved and changed strategies from being a resistance movement to involve and engage with a political arena they earlier had rejected and worked against.

Abu Daqqa emphasized this possibility and meant that the leaders of Hamas are not against peace. They are from and represent the community and believe what people in general believe.

The lack of vision sprung from the fact that it is a movement fed by Iran and other Islamic countries which makes them afraid to have a solution. Support from without and from within would create a window of opportunity to change that pattern. Therefore, she underlined the need to come to an agreement with a guarantee and support from the European Union, the international community, Israel and the peace movement. In this process she means that Palestinian women have to work hard in the field. They need to engage the grass root level and change the female attitude and vision about their political position and situation so that references to the will of people are anchored and sprung from the civil society.



## Obstacles and Possibilities of the Work Pursued for Peace

Inspired by the obstacles and possibilities to peace in Israel-Palestine raised by Nathan and Abu-Daqqa, the women were divided into three smaller groups. In these groupings the process toward discerning a possible collaboration platform began.

In the so called SWOT analysis the delegates discussed the internal Strength for the promotion of and the internal Weakness impeding the work for peace in the respective organization they represented. Thereafter they were requested to reflect upon the external Opportunities and Threats facing the organizations in this work. The discussion was to incorporate a gender perspective to encourage reflection upon what difficulties and possibilities that women face as active agents for peace.

In the reporting back to plenary one discernable pattern was that most of the organizations welcomed and found a strength in, for the majority of the organizations, an international connection, often with UN agencies or international NGO's. Besides stressing the importance and necessity of this link, many expressed a disappointment with what was felt as a defective cooperation and insufficient response from this channel. Many appeared to have good possibilities to reach out with their message and voice internationally. At the same time, however, many of them felt that the

message communicated in different forums on this level passed unnoticed.

The dependence on and consideration that the support from the international community is vital and fundamental for the future development in the region, a fact that both Abu Daqqa and Nathan returned to in their speeches, were coupled with a frustration that the international community gave insufficient attention and unsatisfying response to the voices raised. This frustration stemming from a depicted dependency on the international community, an external actor, was a constantly recurring subject. Hence, many of the organizations gave the impression that they relied on actions taken by other external actors to bring about peace. They use international channels to report and give statements about the situation, and await someone to make something out of these reports and bring about a change.

In sum, the SWOT analysis touched upon two different problems that could be referred to as a core problem and an immediate problem.

“The threat to peace is the militaristic society where men dominate by defining and setting the agenda within a culture of impunity where justifications for the occupation are made in the name of security”





When women organizations try to address the different immediate problems with refugees, imprisoned innocent people, the discrimination of another group etcetera they feel that the reception of and action taken after these reports are insufficient and unsatisfying. That, in turn, could point at a core problem affecting women's experiences and voices. A core problem complex that resolution 1325:2000 highlights in the attention given to and call not to set aside women's voices and experiences in favour of the priorities set out of an agenda holder focusing on geopolitical interests from a militaristic culture; producing a military masculinity holding women exclusively as victims of war.

A discussion on the weaknesses of the different organizations touched upon issues relating to this, namely that women are not included and lack influence in decision-making and negotiation processes. The general weakness and threat facing the organizations appeared to be the feeling that negotiations were made and controlled by men, hence conducted in a

language forming a narrative in which women's agency, role and views traditionally have been excluded and exceptional. Possible explanations to this underrepresentativeness were discussed and ranged from being an effect of the lack of women in prominent or politically powerful positions, the weak position of women on the grass roots level to the lack of coordination and cooperation between women's organizations on both elite and grass root levels.

Opportunities were expressed in terms of the existence of women's and peace movements in both regions working for change. Enabling cooperation on both sides would be empowering at the same time as such coordinating efforts on a regional level should be combined with an international cooperation with organizations such as Operation 1325 in Sweden since civil society movements in another context and country could exert influence and push their own government for certain actions or policies. In that way, efforts toward peace could be realized piece by piece, nation by nation and woman by woman.

# Women Acting for Peace and Security

After the framing of the Middle East conflict from a women's perspective the focal point switched to how SCR 1325:2000 could be a possible tool in that specific context, thus on the needs expressed by women in the Israeli- Palestinian region; but also how the resolution could be an opportunity for joint action and support among women's organizations from Israel, Palestine and Sweden.

## Establishing a Breeding Ground

The initiative taker to the conference, the Swedish umbrella organization Operation 1325, drew on earlier experiences in formulating the objectives of the seminar in Istanbul. The organization's agenda has evolved around the idea of women as active agents for peace.

To provide for the fulfilment of this active agency, the focus of the organizations activities is to

train and capacity-build women; simultaneously awareness-raise and advocate for women's capability in this regard. The underlying idea is that this also contributes to integration and mainstreaming of gender perspectives, empowering of women at all decision-making levels and participation at the negotiation tables.

The earlier experiences from similar conferences was that the need of participating organizations can not be assumed to correspond to the priorities and focal point set out from and within a Swedish perspective and context. It is important to enable organizations, in this case coming from regions marked by conflicts, to express their needs and desires. Thus, the Istanbul conference was arranged to encourage a dialogue with the ambition to investigate, through consultations and experience exchange, whether there were any common ground to stand on that enabled some kind of cooperation based upon the SCR 1325: 2000. To build a bridge, based on dialogue, from





two sides discerning how and if geographically and contextually disparate women organisations could collaborate.

The seminar's objectives were set as follows:

- To listen and learn from each other's experiences, strategies and obstacles in the work for peace.
- To introduce and get feed-back on the strategies used by Operation 1325 through discussions on the possibilities, obstacles, usefulness or problems that these strategies would imply in the Israeli/Palestinian context.
- To discuss and map out possible ways of collaboration in relation to SCR 1325: 2000 between women active in women and peace organizations in Israel, Palestine and Sweden.
- To encourage and build networks for communication and collaboration between participants.

## Operation 1325s plan for Future Action

As an inspirational source for a group discussion on what parts of the resolution that were the most interesting to work with, the seminar began with a presentation by representatives from Operation 1325 in Sweden on their planned activities for the two coming years.

The paragraphs of the resolution and methods that Operation 1325 are to concentrate on and work with for 2007 and 2008 will be articulated and channelled into political advocacy, information and training of women. The overall goal is to contribute to the implementation of SCR 1325: 2000, both nationally and internationally.

The political work is based on the idea that every member of parliament need to be aware of and integrate a gender perspective in the work pursued. In order to inform and press the parliament, both to awareness-raise on gender issues and push for the full implementation of the resolution, the organization arranges seminars in the Parliament about SCR 1325:2000, write proposals for the Parliament and contribute

with questions to parliamentarians to raise in governmental interpellations.

The aim with the information pillar is to raise awareness about the issues that the resolution addresses. This is to be done by different information-campaigns on websites and in newsletters where the red thread is "women as active actors in peace work".

The training approach target women and women's group with the aim of building capacity among women with different backgrounds in mediation, negotiation and conflict analysis. This work is based upon a training manual containing facts and exercises on human rights, democracy, conflict analysis, equality and peace.

*"By training women we seek to make it impossible for men to claim that there are no competent women"*

By training women on these issues the intention is to counteract the common argument that women are not represented or participants at the negotiation table simply because there are not any competent women available.

In the long run, the trainings will have gathered and built capacity among women so that the integration and participation of women through the whole peace process can not be denied by reasons of incapability. The second step of this pillar is has been the intention to go beyond the national context and look at the international level.

## Resolution 1325 – A Platform for Joint Action

In order to elaborate and discern possible areas for collaboration, the groups discussed a set of questions. These served as a cumulative pathway to concrete suggestions and ideas for actions anchored in the resolution. The usefulness of action sprung up from the resolution is that the legal binding of the resolution on UN member states makes it an invaluable tool for women in peace work. Activities carried out and planned in the spirit of resolution 1325:2000 enables collaborated peace work that not only address gender issues in conflicts per se but also seek to realize equality between men and women by making gender sensitiveness integral in post-conflict restoration and natural in the societies that this restoration is the foundation for.

The summing up and presentation of the results from the in-group discussions on the most interesting parts of the resolution to try to incorporate in the organization's agenda and work involved suggestions on activities and methods inspired by the three different parts of the resolution, namely work related to awareness-raising about and *integration of gender perspectives* in general; the *special attention* that women's situation in conflict requires; and the *overall representativeness* of women in decision-making. The suggestions involved methods to affect and act on all societal levels from government to grassroots and they are described more in depth in the following section.

## Aspects Interesting for Women in the Middle East

The parts of the resolution that all representatives from the different Middle East women organizations were interested to integrate in their work were awareness-raising about the resolution through hearings, education, the media, governmental channels and lectures to different groups of the society. Some argued that this could not be realized without talking about feminism first. One of the participants described the problem like this:



"I introduced Hanna Ashrawi (Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council) as a speaker at a women and peace convention with the words:

Let me introduce to you a woman working in the halls of power.

Ashrawi then started off by saying:

Yes, you are right, we are in the halls, but we would like to be in the rooms of power".

Another participant filled in and added that:

Men can claim that they are feminists, while in their minds they are not.

One group therefore suggested that women also need training in mediation, communication and media handling in general, to be able to successfully disseminate the knowledge and experience they have.

One recurring idea was the development of an international/regional index or list, collecting and gathering information on women with skills and knowledge about negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution who can contribute in peace negotiations. However, a problem facing such index was the misgiving that women will experience difficulties reaching positions of power and influence anyway. They are not guaranteed to be part of the power halls just because they have sufficient knowledge. Therefore, even though competent and trained women with negotiations skills are needed and would earn much of being gathered in a knowledge and resource base, strategies and actions to open up negotiations and decision-making processes are vital too.



Another group addressed the special attention needed to the effect of conflicts on women and formulated strategies on how to successfully disseminate information about this. They referred to the ways in which women are effected by the conflict in both the West Bank and the Gaza strip as crimes against humanity, therefore formulating methods for information dissemination to raise awareness about how women become victims of war if their situation is not carefully examined, taken into consideration or addressed. Methods for this varied depending on whether one referred to the Palestinian or Israeli society. In the Palestinian case the methods for disseminating information came down to use the strong channel that the networks of NGO constituted and for example organize a mass meeting on SCR 1325: 2000 for both men and women. In the Israeli context the suggested methods involved to influence representatives in the Knesset, work with the Ministry of Women Affairs and use the information flow and power of the media to inform the public opinion about the situation for women.

More on the ground methods were also discussed and put forth. One was to enable an exchange of experiences between Israeli mothers, in the position of either having sons or having lost sons who joined the army followed by discussions aimed at illuminating the effects of women taking a role as a consenting mother, as apart from a active agents for change i.e. mothers questioning the draft, the war and army. Another example was to create a brochure with information on how SCR 1325:2000 specifically can be applied and hand out to the many young women that pass the check-points as they come and go to the university. Yet other suggestions for concrete action involved a demonstration by women on both sides of the

separation wall and co-produced reports on how women suffer at the separation wall's check-points specifically.

One group raised a concern related to different awareness-raising efforts on all parties in conflict, which then would include the army. The need of letting the world know about the situation for women and girls in the conflict involve dealing with, what was referred to as, the main power and force, namely the Israeli army. The Israeli forces in the field are very powerful and can not be ignored if women's vulnerable and special situation in the Middle Eastern conflict is to come to terms with. Since some of the organizational work on peace involves an active stand against violent means in conflict, a problem was how and if it was possible then to collaborate with the army if the organization has a nonviolent approach. Another critical point regarded efforts to increase female representation in power and decision-making positions as female representativeness does not automatically involve gender sensitive policies. The point of views brought into discussions and negotiations by women does not necessarily challenge a gender-blind view, attitude or way of doing politics.

The opportunity to meet and exchange experiences during the conference in Istanbul gave valuable insights for many of the participants. The misgivings and expectations that the organizations had on the future development in the Middle East and the role of women in it, found common ground with other organizations. A ground contributing to and opening up for possible joint action and support to realize the expectations and evade the misgivings.



All of them agreed that the successful implementation of SCR 1325:2000, putting words into action, required international backing and support from the UN coupled with networking and meeting with representatives from women's organizations in both Israel and Palestine. The individual reflections and elaborations on this are presented in the next section.

## Hopes for the Future

Before the seminar, the participants were asked to write down and communicate their expectations on the seminar. These related to either getting inspiration on new methods to influence or establishing concrete ways of reaching each other. The former involved finding and internalizing new ways of dealing with the situation in the Middle East; how to make people think outside the box and how to make voices that are speaking outside the box heard. The latter involved expectations on the creation of ways to connect, support, meet and reach each other beyond the conference.

After the SWOT analysis and group discussion on possible arenas for collaboration the participants were asked to reflect upon the pre-seminar stated expectations and answer a set of evaluating questions. The answers and reflections from this evaluation sheet gave a clear picture of the insights gained, expectations fulfilled and hopes for the future generated by the seminar. These hopes for the future can be summarized under three

categories, namely further *meeting and exchange of experiences*, getting more *sources of inspiration* and the *need of further dialogue*.

## Meeting and exchange of experiences

One of the recurring views among the participants were how interesting and useful the meeting and exchange of experiences with women from “the other side” of the conflict had been. Most of them gave positive reflections on the dynamics of the group and the discussions pursued, even though discussions such as possibilities and obstacles to peace in the region involved and evoked a gushing of emotions since it touched upon sensitive and pressing issues. Many described the seminar as a unique forum and platform since the possibilities for Israeli and Palestinian women to meet in the Middle Eastern region are virtually non-existent.

Considerations to take into account for future arrangement of the same kind involved, among other things, the group composition. Whereas some held it as a strength that women from different positions in the conflict understood each other, others meant that this could be an effect of a narrow spectra of women invited and organizations represented. People with conflicting views, discussions on disputed issues and a broader mix of organizations would be fruitful and a way to reach out further with the message. Especially inquired were right wing representatives from the Israeli side. Some argued that the representation,





opinions and discussions among the groups at the conference did not mirror sufficiently and correspond to a satisfying extent what they perceive and believe is representative of the main sentiments and arguments of the different parties to the conflict. Other considerations regarded the time frame. Some mentioned that there were not enough time to highlight and discuss the violations and the deteriorating situation that the occupation implies, an issue that is tremendously disregarded, yet needs to be addressed.

### Sources of inspiration

Many participants mentioned the inspiration they had got from listening to Maj Britt Theorin, the moderator of the conference. With far-reaching experiences from working with women's issues, mainly within the European parliament, her stories encouraged action.

One participant says:

“It was good to listen to Maj Britt's experiences and wise input. It gave practical implications on what one can do; that one person's commitment to change can make a difference and that the work I do have leverage”.

Another source of inspiration appears to have been the realization that women from different parts of the world and from different sides of the conflict aims at and strive against the same goal,

peace. In one way their own problems resembled the other women's experiences and feelings. In another way representatives from each side faced particular and different problems in working toward peace and implementing the resolution, but all in all, the women could understand each other. Some pointed at the edifying and pleasant, before the seminar unknown, insight in the inspiring and active work pursued of women on the other side. For many of them, the idea that women could bring about changes in the work for peace with help from SCR 1325:2000 was new, but gained influence and worked inspiring. At the same time it was a general agreement that the usefulness of the resolution was dependent on action, involving themselves.

### The need of further dialogue

Since not all of the organizations represented had been working in relation to SCR 1325:2000, the need of more in-depth discussions on what course of actions one could take in order to contribute to an implementation of the resolution in the Middle Eastern countries were expressed and, relating to that, the importance of continued connection and collaboration with the Swedish umbrella organization to assist and offer guidance in that work.

One participant felt that SCR 1325:2000 provided a tool that by collaboration could unite feminist movements worldwide to demand an end to wars and armed conflict, promoting a international feminist discourse and influence men's concept of women, but that the conference alone had too limited time frames to cover more then the important exchange of experiences between women in conflict. This exchange in turn enabled an understanding of “the other side” which during the Istanbul conference turned out to be more than an understanding, rather the women agreed with each other. Further engagements or arrangements to elaborate on the possibilities provided by the resolution, if actively worked at, was asked for together with review sessions on the results of past efforts. Methods for future collaboration were not discussed thoroughly and therefore need to be elaborated further to guarantee that cooperation is encouraged and continued. Another reason why further engagement and meetings were promoted and demanded was that the *efficiency* of the loose network established during seminar would



hopefully be higher with continuous cooperation and collaboration.

One of the participants said that she after the introduction to the SCR 1325:2000 has realized that there is an urgent need to build a policy on how to involve women in every step in what is else a men's world and that this process requires the bringing in of men from all levels and that sharing the insights with them is a requirement for a successful outcome of this work. Another participant touched upon that too, writing that the part of the seminar about women as peacemakers felt very useful and idea generating.

## Moving Forward – Concluding Remarks

Submitting information, reports and statement about the disastrous situation in the Middle East and the deteriorating conditions for Palestinians especially to power forums, both regionally and internationally, was one of the greatest needs expressed during the seminar. Simultaneously, one of the biggest challenges facing the different organization's work appeared to be making women's voices heard in these forums. Therefore, the summing up of suggestions on what actions to take forward in relation to SCR 1325:2000 included ways to submit the information on women's situation and the need of actions to make such women's voices heard, considered and taken into account.

To submit and disseminate information the participants pinpointed advocacy aimed at policy makers, media training and contact, communication training and contact, information spreading on grass roots level and policy papers in different languages as important channels to exploit and work with.

In order to ensure that this information did not pass unnoticed someone mentioned the importance of not only submitting policy papers that focus on women as victims, but papers also addressing and putting forth the strength, actions and possibilities of women as active agents for change themselves. These aspects could have deserved a more thoroughly discussion and attention during the seminar. It sometimes appeared problematic or hard for the participants to reflect upon and think about themselves as active agents. Instead, the focus often lay in bringing information to the powerful institutions, as if they did not have any power or possibilities to bring about change themselves.

If the organizations only developed strategies that made these reports more visible among the powerful institutions or segments, the empowerment of women would be secured. The mediated impression was that they often expected, waited and were dependent on reactions, actions and the will of others to empower women. The idea that women could be both victims in a conflict and agents for change in that conflict was somewhat difficult to plant. Thus, that women do not need agents acting for them they could

### Four things to take forward making women's initiative visible:

- Develop an international index gathering and coordinating information about women with skills in negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution
- Make Operation 1325 an international organization with national sections working for women, peace and security in the local settings
- Engage grassroots women by education and information
- Advocate for the implementation of SCR 1325:2000 in all different forums available, or rather that the resolution's content is being considered and consciously integrated in the field.

be agents themselves and for themselves. The role that the organizations could take to render such development possible was not discussed to the same extent as were different methods to disseminate information about the situation for women in their role as victims, exclusively.

“Further consultative seminars, bridge-building conferences and arenas for interaction is of paramount importance and an imperative for a future development and society characterized by peaceful and equal coexistence, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or religion”

With that in mind, one way to collaborate and coordinate the work and agenda of the Swedish Operation 1325 with the women organizations in the Middle East is in a mutual supplementary role, completing each others views, ways and strategies like this:

One the one hand the overall goal of changing societal attitudes and the general view of women demands that women's vulnerable situation in

conflicts is thoroughly taken into consideration. That this was not fully the case appeared to be the biggest fear among the Middle Eastern women's organizations.

On the other hand, changing attitudes, also involves work to move away from a view where women are exclusively treated as victims of war. That work is the focal point of the Swedish organization Operation 1325 whose work aims at encouraging women's active role and effort to become part of and participate in decision-making and negotiations on all levels.

Therefore, further consultative seminars, bridge-building conferences and arenas for interaction is of paramount importance and an imperative for a future development and society characterized by peaceful and equal coexistence, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

As the participants prepared for their return trip, which for some of the Palestinians involved a probable stop-over in Egypt that could last for weeks because of the arbitrary opening-up for passage of the separation wall's check-points, the hope of a follow up and future cooperation made all women leave with their minds inspired to confront the reality awaiting them at home.

# Agenda for the Istanbul Seminar

## Monday 12 March

"Welcome, introductions, explanations, agreements"

Welcome speech by the moderator, Maj Britt Theorin

Speech by General Consul Ingmar Karlsson on the situation and future prospects for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Presentation of all participants

Introducing Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security

Presentation of the organizer Operation 1325; the history, future work and activities

Presentation of the organizations represented; emphasizing work and activities related to 1325

Hopes and Fears on the seminar based on discussions and input from participants

Evening reception hosted by the Swedish Consulate General

## Tuesday 13 March

"Possibilities and Obstacles to Peace in Israel and Palestine"

Guest speaker Susan Nathan addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an Israeli citizen

Guest speaker Tahani Abu-Daqqa speaking about on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a Palestinian view point

Discussions in smaller groups on the Strength, Weaknesses, Possibilities and Obstacles for the organizations to contribute to peace in the region (SWOT-analysis)

Reporting back in plenary on what and how problems are tackled and dealt with

Review of the day

## Wednesday 14 March

"Back to Resolution 1325 – women as peacemakers in Palestine, Israel and Sweden"

Introduction to Operation 1325's action plan and priorities for the coming 2 years

Work in smaller groups on opportunities for joint action and support: who can do what together with whom? Possible funding?

Preparation of a presentation in plenary on joint a action plan with resolution 1325 as a platform

## Thursday 15 March

"What to take forward? Future plans"

Report and presentation of the work pursued in the smaller group work

Discussions and Conclusions about future plans

Review of the seminar

Closing session







# Security Council

Distr.: General  
31 October 2000

United Nations

S/RES/1325 (2000)

## Resolution 1325 (2000)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on  
31 October 2000

*The Security Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

*Recalling also* the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

*Bearing in mind* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

*Reaffirming also* the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

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*Emphasizing* the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

*Recognizing also* the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

*Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

*Noting* the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;

3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;

4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;

5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;

13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;

16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to

submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

# What is Operation 1325?

Operation 1325 is an umbrella organization with the following member organizations:

- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; the Swedish section
- Women for Peace
- UNIFEM Sweden
- Swedish Ecumenical Women's Council
- The Federation of International Associations for Immigrant Women

We also collaborate closely with the Swedish Women's Lobby.

The aim is to contribute to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) by information, advocacy and training- and capacity-building both in Sweden and internationally.

Do you want to know more about Operation 1325?

Please, visit our website at [www.operation1325.se](http://www.operation1325.se) or send an email to the administrative director at [info@operation1325.se](mailto:info@operation1325.se)



Operation 1325  
Gamla Brogatan 27  
SE-111 20 Stockholm  
Sweden

Webpage: [www.operation1325.se](http://www.operation1325.se)  
Email: [info@operation1325.se](mailto:info@operation1325.se)  
Telephone: +46-8-676 05 09