



IPI MEETING BRIEF

ACCELERATING PROGRESS FOR WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY: **Models of Civil Society Participation in Nepal and the Great Lakes Region of Africa**

Civil society organizations are making great strides in amplifying women's voices on peace and security at local, national, and regional levels. But they need more support to end sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV), empower women leaders, and ensure that women have access to justice. This was the message that civil society actors brought to the International Peace Institute on October 19th in advance of the Security Council's open debate on women, peace, and security on October 29th.

Organized with CARE International, this second event in IPI's Women, Peace & Security series featured testimonies and experiences from grassroots actors in Nepal and Africa's Great Lakes region. The roundtable participants emphasized five key themes:

1. As civil society organizations implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on the ground, they should also be included in decision making on women, peace, and security at national and international levels. Indicators for **measuring implementation of Resolution 1325** should capture local-level work, and national action plans for 1325 need to reach the community level.
2. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and its Kampala Declaration provide a useful model for combating SGBV and fighting impunity at the regional level. International and national actors should support the ICGLR's **Zero-Tolerance Now campaign**, due to launch in its 11 member states in November.
3. **Atrocities against women in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo** are increasingly being perpetrated by civilians. While civil society organizations need more support to address the violence and its consequences, this shift also demonstrates the need for long-term engagement to tackle the structural causes of SGBV.
4. Women's issues affect societies as a whole. Men cannot be indifferent—they should be engaged as partners and change agents. Governments need to create **policy environments that facilitate civil society organizations' work** on this societal concern, and national budgets should reflect the importance of empowering women across all sectors.
5. For victims of sexual and gender-based violence, **access to justice** can be costly, slow, and difficult. Reducing the burden of proof where it is too high and strengthening local governance and legislation can help. For example, despite progress in **Nepal**, there have been no prosecutions for SGBV crimes committed during the conflict there, and a truth and reconciliation commission has yet to be formed.

– Marie O'Reilly