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Gender Mainstreaming of the Security Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina: From the Policy Papers to Reality

Ankica Tomić*

It is not enough to have knowledge, one must also apply it.

It is not enough to have wishes, one must also act.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Introduction

Gender mainstreaming¹ of the security sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) twenty years ago was perceived as a “foreign” syntagma and proved very difficult to translate into the three official languages (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian). The challenge was not only translation but also the transposition of that concept into reality. The link between the concept of gender mainstreaming and security sector tasks and responsibilities was a new topic for BiH society as well as globally. As a post-conflict country, in the last twenty years Bosnia and Herzegovina has gone through reforms in different areas such as police, intelligence, justice, etc. Those reforms were intensified in the period from 2003 until 2008 in the framework of the BiH integration process into the European Union and NATO. At that time, neither the BiH political elite nor representatives of the international community were aware of the benefits of the integration of the gender con-

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¹ Gender mainstreaming is defined as a strategy for achieving gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programs in all areas at all levels, in order to assure that concerns and experiences of women and men are taken into consideration in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres. This leads to equal benefits for women and men without supporting inequality. This definition is used in the “Action Plan for Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2014-2017,” 26, available at <http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/BiH-NAP-ENG.pdf>.

cept in those nor in other reforms in the country. It was women's organizations that started familiarizing the BiH public with the importance of including and applying the concept of gender in security sector reforms, namely to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325).² They first gained financial support from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and other UN organizations in order to implement different programs and projects. Those efforts, commitments, and the influence of these women's organizations led to the government at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina establishing in 2003 official gender mechanisms such as the Gender Center of Government of Federation, the Gender Center of Government of Republic Srpska and, in 2004, the Gender Equality Agency at the national level. Their establishment came at a crucial moment for the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in all areas of public and private life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only a few years after those gender mechanisms were established they were applied in the drafting of two strategic documents, the Gender Action Plan (GAP)³ for the period 2006-2013 and an Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AP 1325)⁴ for a period of three years (2010-2013). Those two documents were not imposed or drafted externally, which was the case with many other documents in Bosnia and Herzegovina from that period. They were produced by the representatives of BiH institutions together with the representatives of NGOs according to local priorities and needs, an important precondition for local ownership and sustainability of the whole process. Because of this, many were hopeful that enacting these documents would have a real and positive effect on the lives of men, women, and children throughout the country.

² UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) "Women, Peace and Security," adopted on 31 October 2000, is the first Security Council Resolution that underlines the importance of the role and equal participation of women when it comes to prevention and resolution of conflicts and building sustainable peace. It calls upon Member States to ensure greater participation of women in decision-making at all levels as a prerequisite for greater inclusion of a gender perspective in the sectors of defense and security, and greater protection and respect of the human rights of women and girls, in armed conflicts, and in the process of achieving peace and security." Cf. BiH Action Plan 1325 (2014–2017).

³ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013-2017," *Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina* 98/13 (2013). "The Gender Action Plan (GAP) is a strategic document that includes goals, programs, and measures for the achievement of gender equality in all spheres of social life, both public and private. It provides guidelines for making annual operative plans at entity, cantonal and local levels. GAP follows priorities at all levels of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina, building on the previous GAP of 2006-2011 and other relevant strategic documents, as well as documents of the Council of Europe, European Union, and United Nations"; cf. BiH Action Plan 1325 (2014–2017). The official version of GAP is available at http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GAP_BIH_ENGLISH.pdf.

⁴ "Action plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina" [sic]: this is the official title of the document in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in contrast with other countries that use the title, "National Action Plan."

In this article I first give a brief overview of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina before those national policy documents were adopted and of the post-adoption period. Second, my intention is to analyze the reasons why the adoption of AP 1325 was perceived as a big success in the country as well as the region and at a global level. Third, because I was personally involved in the implementation of the first AP 1325 on behalf of the Ministry of Security and in the drafting of the second AP 1325, my focus will be on the achievements of the Ministry of Security in the implementation process of AP 1325 as well as my personal experience with gender mainstreaming of the security sector in BiH. Finally, in my conclusion I examine the main lessons learned, current challenges, and present my personal view of how the envisaged goals from the documents can bring meaningful and real change to the daily lives of all people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Period Before AP 1325: The Role of Civil Society and International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Between 2005 and 2007, or almost five years before the implementation of UNSCR 1325, women's advocacy groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina relied on raising awareness through public and media presentations to demonstrate the importance of their implementation in the country. The parallel approach of women's organizations and other CSOs brought the topics of UNSCR resolutions to the attention of both the media and the public. They were active in advocating for greater participation of women in decision-making, especially encouraging women to participate in the development of policies and programs in different areas. Supported by international organizations, women's groups conducted several trainings and workshops with the aim of integrating human rights topics and gender equality into everyday life, both public and private. Bosnia and Herzegovina's civil society, especially women's organizations, were crucial to putting women's rights and gender issues on the political and institutional agenda of BiH authorities and media, as well as the international community.

Together with civil society, different UN agencies such as UNIFEM-UN Women and UNDP Sarajevo have supported the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through a variety of projects aiming to increase sensibility for a gender perspective in the security and defense sectors in order to respond to women's needs and develop appropriate mechanisms and tools for gender equality. For example, since 2005 UNIFEM has supported the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Western Balkans at both national and regional levels through the project "Women Building Peace and Human Security." In cooperation with various partners, such as state mechanisms for gender equality, army and police forces, civil society, and international organizations in the region, the project supported gender mainstreaming strategies in the security and public sector, advocacy for monitoring, and evaluation of the implementation of UNSCR 1325. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNIFEM established partnership with Žene Ženama (a local NGO, "Women for Women") to support the implementation of UNSHR 1325. The importance of the findings of the project demonstrated a further need for joint efforts of both governmental and non-governmental institutions with international organizations in or-

der to raise awareness about gender equality principles in the security and defense sectors nationally and internationally.

For the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, gender was also a new topic pushed into the public debate by women's organizations. Their aim was to find allies to support their efforts to make the implementation of UNSCR 1325 a priority agenda item for BiH institutions.

International organizations and missions, such as the European Union Police Mission (EUPM), had two tasks with the UNSCR 1325: to incorporate its contents into their mandates in Bosnia and Herzegovina while also following the internal guidelines on gender dimensions. In monitoring, mentoring, and advising law-enforcement agencies (LEAs), the EUPM was tasked with establishing a sustainable, multi-ethnic, and professional police service in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was in compliance with international standards of democratic policing. For this purpose, EUPM assisted BiH LEAs in developing efficient and effective police services that reflect the society by taking into account the gender, ethnicity, administrative, and economic situation. EUPM also promoted police practices sensitive to gender-equality and gender-balance issues. EUPM also introduced within its internal structure the position of Gender Advisor to deal with gender equality and human rights issues. EUPM also established a special body for gender issues (Gender Coordination Board).

The role of the international community in BiH needs to be further clarified when it comes to addressing gender inequality within the framework of their mandates to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to NATO and EU integration. The international community has generally not prioritized rectifying violations of women's rights or the lack of women at negotiating tables on different reform initiatives such as defense, police, judiciary, or constitutional reform. These negotiations remain closed to women and to general public opinion. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is the most glaring example of this lack of accountability for including gender in both their initiatives in the security sector as well as other reforms in BiH. Nowadays, the international community has become more institutionalized and interested in integrating gender issues into internal governance structures and decision-making processes. They also react more frequently to human rights violations and discrimination. This shift from a perception that gender issues are "less important" to being seen as "extremely important" when it comes to the activities of international organizations and missions has ensured that governmental institutions started paying attention to UNSCR 1325.⁵

Like many other countries in the region, NGOs were the primary force in advocating for UNSCR 1325 in BiH prior to the adoption of AP 1325 in 2010. Women's organizations throughout the Balkans initiated discussions about gender-based violence as a weapon during the war. They worked across ethnic lines and took an active role in leading efforts for reconciliation, peace, and stability and used different methods to convince

⁵ Gorana Radovanovic and Sonja Stojanovic Gajic, *Women, Peace and Security in the Western Balkans* (Belgrade: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 2013), 67–68, available at [http://www.bezbednost.org/upload/document/assessment_report_\[web\].pdf](http://www.bezbednost.org/upload/document/assessment_report_[web].pdf).

the government bodies and international community in BiH to talk about the main commitments made in UNSCR 1325. They refused to accept the dismissal of the female perspective in negotiations on the security sector and other reforms, and would not accept that the security and defense sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina were seen as “male business.” Until 2008, most women in the police and military worked in administrative positions.⁶ Meanwhile, the international community failed to raise the gender perspective as an important topic that should be integral to any legislation, policy, program, project, or activity from which both men and women benefit equally.

The First AP Adopted in 2010

Goals

The first Bosnia and Herzegovina Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was adopted on July 27, 2010, on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325. The AP was drafted by an inter-agency group comprised of representatives from the Gender Equality Agency, entity gender centers and Ministries of Interior, the BiH Demining Centre, NGOs, and the BiH ministries of security, defense, foreign affairs, and finance and treasury. The AP represents a comprehensive strategy document for the integration of gender mainstreaming in the security and defense sectors. It is perceived as a “home-made product” because it was created by BiH institutions supported by local NGOs. BiH’s Agency for Gender Equality⁷ developed the AP 1325 in 2009 through a year-long series of consultations with relevant government and civil society actors. The Action Plan has eight goals:

- Increase the number of women in decision-making positions
- Increase the number of women in the BiH police and armed forces
- Increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations and integrate the gender perspective in pre-deployment trainings
- Demining
- Curb human trafficking
- Provide assistance to female war victims
- Provide training on gender issues to public servants, police, military, prosecutors, judges, etc.
- Promote co-operation of governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations within the country as well as in the region and on a wider international level.

⁶ Almost all decision-making positions were occupied by men. Only the Deputy Minister of Defense was a woman.

⁷ The Agency’s mandate includes developing national policies to promote gender equality, preparing annual reports on the status of gender issues in BiH, and evaluating laws and by-laws adopted by the government with a gender lens. It was established in 2004.

The AP 1325 drafters developed a very comprehensive and ambitious document encompassing all important messages and commitments from UNSCR 1325, with two particularities specific to Bosnia and Herzegovina as the consequences of the conflict. These gender perspectives are, namely, demanding action⁸ and assistance to female war victims. This is one of the first action plans to encompass indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress. In order to adequately monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, on June 26, 2011 the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina established the Coordination Board for Monitoring the Implementation of the Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 for the duration of the Action Plan. This model of monitoring of AP implementation was recognized in the country and the region as an example of best practice, of shared commitment to implementation, and how many stakeholders under effective leadership can have remarkable achievements in a short period.

The First AP Adopted in 2010: Implementation

The Implementation of AP 1325 began on the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. By 2010, more attention was paid to women as well as peace and security agendas nationally and globally. During 2010, UNSCR 1325 and its implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina became a very important task for BiH institutions, the international community, and civil society. In that year the issues of women's rights and integration of the gender perspective were again the focus of BiH institutions at all levels.

Amendments to the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina (adopted in 2003) initiated by the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in provisions, definitions, and terms used in the Law on Gender Equality being redefined and further harmonized with the international standards. Article 20, paragraph 2 of the law explains that equal representation on the basis of gender means at least 40% of both men and women. The Action Plan stipulates gender equality across all sectors in BiH and is being embedded into the different parliaments, laws, and bylaws at all levels by the Committee on Gender Equality. Along with the Gender Equality Agency, Coordination Board, and NGOs they have organized different events for the parliamentarians in order to familiarize them with the obligations regarding gender mainstreaming in all areas of public and private life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The AP 1325 is described "as a platform for realizing meaningful impact on issues of women, peace and security."⁹

The First AP Adopted in 2010: Implementation within the Security Sector

The Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina was an important stakeholder in the drafting and implementation of the first and second AP 1325. After the adoption of the first AP in 2010, the Ministry of Security started to organize different events promoting

⁸ The objective is to reduce the risks of mines in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the focus on the particular impact on women.

⁹ Assessment report on Inclusive Security, 9. The independent assessment of the Implementation of the first AP 1325 was made by the Institute for Inclusive Security from Washington in response to the request of the Gender Equality Agency of BIH. The report is an internal document of the Agency of Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

AP 1325 in BiH at various levels of government. Its focus was on the necessity of closer cooperation and coordination of all responsible institutions in its implementation. The Minister of Security of BiH supported all actions and measures aimed to streamline the gender perspective within the framework of responsibilities of the Ministry.

The Ministry of Security also initiated inter-sector cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina in developing a gender awareness course, “Utility of Gender in Peace Support Operations.” The course aims to increase awareness and provide conceptual understanding of gender issues in the security and defense sector. It places a particular focus on PSO and how in order to be successful, missions must communicate with the women they are tasked to protect. Thus, it is essential that female police officers, soldiers, and civilian staff be involved in operations planning, conducting, and evaluation. The course covers the following topics:

- Gender National Action Plans
- Gender and Security Sector Reform in BiH
- NATO/UN Perspective on Gender
- Identity, Stereotypes, and Prejudices
- Contemporary Armed Conflict: Human Terrain and the Role of Women in Peacekeeping
- Value of Women in Military and Police Units in Peacekeeping
- Role of Gender Advisors
- Civil Defense/NGO Coordination
- Protection of Civilians
- Gender Response to Change Management
- A Personal Perspective from the Mission.

The second course, which includes gender dimensions, is a peacekeeping pre-deployment course for BiH police officers entitled “CIV POL Course.” It is accredited by the UN and prepared and conducted fully in line with UN standards. Both courses are offered to representatives from the region.

The Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the first institution in BiH to undertake affirmative action to encourage women participation in all trainings, educational programs, and peacekeeping. It implemented positive measures to encourage women to apply for and participate in peacekeeping missions, which led to an increase in the percentage of women in peacekeeping missions to twenty percent. This percentage was a desirable percentage of the United Nations until 2014.¹⁰ According to UN statistics, in 2010 10% of UN police were female. As of January 2015, the overall number of peacekeepers under the umbrella of the UN was 4,016, out of which 707 were female, or

¹⁰ <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/gender.shtml>; accessed on March 3, 2015.

17.6%. The top priority for the UN police is to increase the number of female police in peacekeeping as well as to encourage the recruitment of women in domestic police services. Bosnia and Herzegovina stands at the top of the list of female police contributors to UN peacekeeping operations. In all current missions in South Sudan, Cyprus, and Liberia women are in decision-making positions. The Minister of Security appointed female police officers as commanders and deputy commanders of the BiH contingent.

Table 1: Participation of female police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in peacekeeping missions from 2000–2013.

UN Peacekeeping missions	Total number of police officers	Number of female members (%)
Cyprus (UNFICYP)	28	4 (14.28 %)
Liberia (UNMIL)	74	10 (13.51 %)
South Sudan (UNMISS)	54	9 (16.66 %)
Sudan (UNMIS) ¹¹	19	4 (21.05 %)
East Timor (UNMISET) ¹²	21	1 (4.76 %)
Haiti (MINUSTAH)	12	3 (25 %)

Table 2: Current representation of female police officers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in UN peacekeeping operations.

UN Peacekeeping missions	Total number of police officers	Number of female members (%)
Cyprus (UNFICYP)	8	1 (13.75 %)
Liberia (UNMIL)	10	3 (30.30 %)
South Sudan (UNMISS)	29	7 (17.24 %)

The Prestigious UN Award for the Ministry of Security

The willingness and commitment of the Ministry of Security to translate the policy papers’ goals and activities into concrete actions and measures were recognized and acknowledged by various local and international organizations. These efforts contributed to the visibility and presence of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the world stage as a

¹¹ Equipment and personnel from this mission have meanwhile been transferred to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

¹² There are no longer any BiH police officers in the peacekeeping missions in East Timor and Haiti.

country whose Ministry received the UN Award for Excellency in Promoting and Implementing UN Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

The Ministry of Security of BiH won the 2012 United Nations Public Service Award in the category of “Promoting Gender Responsive Delivery of Public Services” for the initiative, “Public Participation in Peace Processes – the UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Women, Peace and Security.”

Žene Ženama nominated the Ministry of Security for the UN Award as the institution that had made the most significant effort to include more women in the security sector. According to the NGO, “the Ministry has undertaken concrete measures to incorporate the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in its legal and institutional framework.”¹³ Those activities were aligned with UNSCR 1325 and the AP for UNSCR 1325 implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry of Security gained recognition for the promotion and inclusion of women in UN peacekeeping operations, as well as for its contributions to peace-building in different post-conflict areas where BiH female and male police officers have been deployed under the umbrella of the United Nations. The UN letter sent to the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina states, “The outstanding success of your institution has demonstrated excellence in serving the public interest. We are confident that you have contributed significantly to public administration in your country.”¹⁴ The 2012 award ceremony was particularly significant as it marked the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the UN Public Service Day and Ceremony.¹⁵

As stated in the video prepared by the Ministry of Security for the Awards Ceremony in the UN General Assembly:

The Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fully committed to all its obligations pursuant to the Action Plan of the Council of Ministers for the implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security. This award was a great honor and recognition for both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ministry of Security of their work and efforts, but also an obligation to continue and persist on this way in the future.¹⁶

In recent years, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s institutions have worked very hard to integrate the gender perspective into their legal and institutional frameworks, making Bosnia and Herzegovina the very first country in the region to recognize the importance of

¹³ Statement from letter of the NGO, “Žene Ženama,” which nominated the Ministry of Security for the UN award.

¹⁴ Citation from the official letter send to the Ministry of Security from United Nations on the occasion of the receiving the Award in the “Promoting Gender Responsible Delivery of Public Service Category.”

¹⁵ June 23 was proclaimed a Public Service Day by UN General Assembly Resolution 57/277 for the purpose of celebrating the value and virtue of the service to the community at the local, national, and global level and presenting public sector institutions with awards for contributions made to enhancing the role, prestige, and visibility of the public service.

¹⁶ Quote from the video prepared by the Ministry of Security for the Awards Ceremony in the UN General Assembly.

implementing UNSCR 1325. Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of nine European countries and twenty-six UN members, as well as the first post-conflict country, to adopt an Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325.¹⁷ Considering that UNSCR 1325 requires that women participate equally in conflict resolution, post-conflict processes, peace negotiations, and peace missions, its adoption is of historic importance at the international level as well as nationally and locally.¹⁸ The adoption of the AP 1325 by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (state-level government) in 2010 was perceived as a remarkable step forward in the context of achieving a consensus on women, peace, and security-related issues at all levels of authority. Furthermore, it is remarkable for the support from different NGOs and international organizations within Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting in a more collaborative and coordinated system. UNSCR 1325 and other related resolutions motivated all domestic and international stakeholders to work together to reach the ultimate goal – full implementation of AP 1325. This inclusive model of collaboration and cooperation of all societal actors with the support of the international community could be applied to other areas in which a major challenge is to find the common voice and approach in translating policy visions, goals, and objectives into reality. This is especially complex in an administrative structure such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the different and often opposing perceptions of political leaders must be taken into account. According to the former Chairman of the BiH Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality, Niko Lozančić, “AP 1325 implementation is an exceptional example of what is possible when ministries and agencies want to work together. You show us all what is indeed possible in this impossible country.”¹⁹

The Second Action Plan (2014–2107)

The commitment of BiH institutions to integrate the gender perspective into all aspects of public and private life will continue in the future thanks to the adoption of the second generation of GAP (2013–2017) and of AP 1325 (2014–2017). This is again a positive and encouraging signal of their readiness to take seriously the inclusion of gender mainstreaming concepts in all public sectors and for all segments of society.

The second AP was adopted on July 8, 2014 by the Council of Ministers of BiH. Before the second AP1325 was drafted, the Institute for Inclusive Security from Washington conducted an independent evaluation. The Agency for Gender Equality requested an assessment from “Resolution to Act,” a new initiative of the Institute for Inclusive Security.

¹⁷ Since 2000, forty-three countries have developed National Action Plans (NAPs).

¹⁸ The complex, multi-layered political and administrative structure of the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina includes two entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which consists of ten cantons, the Republic Srpska and the Brčko District).

¹⁹ Citation from the independent assessment of the Implementation of the first AP 1325, which was made by the Institute for Inclusive Security from Washington according to the request of the Gender Equality Agency of BIH. The report is an internal document of the Agency of Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

rity that supports countries creating or implementing National Action Plans and similar strategies.

The assessment confirms that the BiH AP 1325 is, in many ways, a global model. This is because the Action Plan's "goals fit within existing government mandates on peace and security, maximizing the skills of experienced personnel and promoting cooperation across government sectors. Second, thanks to Agency for Gender Equality leadership, the AP1325 is widely seen as an organic national strategy rather than an international obligation."²⁰

In accordance with recommendations from the assessment of implementation of the first Action Plan, the new Action Plan was drafted for the period 2014-2017. In order to make implementation of the new AP more effective, eight goals from the former AP 1325 were grouped into three basic categories in compliance with UN Resolution 1325: *equal participation*, *prevention*, and *protection*. In the new AP 135 there are three strategic objectives:

1. Increased participation of women in decision-making, in the army, police, and peacekeeping missions
2. Increased level of human security
3. Improved conditions and access to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 AP.

This ensured clearer definition of strategic and midterm objectives and, expected results, while also formulating concrete, result-oriented activities. In this way, the system of establishing indicators for monitoring the Action Plan were simplified, as was the system of collecting data necessary for making annual reports about the implementation of the plan. In the second AP 1325, a new concept was introduced: the concept of *human security*. That concept is based on the fact that security does not just mean protection of the state or institution, but also individuals or groups from the threats they face daily. The human security approach opened the door to introducing gender equality principles and gender perspectives into the security sector from the national to the local level. This concept enabled the *localization* of the 1325 agenda, another particularity of the second BiH AP 1325. Thus, the priorities and responsibilities for the implementation of AP 1325 are transferred to the local level, where people can feel and witness the benefits of a holistic approach to the security needs of every person taking the gender perspective into account. The AP 1325 is used as a platform for realizing meaningful change, because the local plans of municipalities focus on addressing women's most pressing daily security concerns. The local plans gather all relevant governmental and non-governmental actors who can contribute to the improvement of all aspects of human security, as well as prioritize the career development of female police officers in relation to their recruitment, advancement, and retention within local police administrations.

²⁰ Quote from the assessment report of the Institute for Inclusive Security, 7.

One very important goal of the second AP 1325 is to promote further cooperation with CSOs²¹ within the country, while also enhancing regional and international cooperation by exchanging know-how and best practices, as well as establishing regional professional networks.

The second AP 1325 is a promising document, too. Its full implementation will depend on many factors, such as strong commitment and support from political leaders and management in all institutions responsible for prioritizing and creating preconditions for meaningful change. The full implementation will be directly linked with the budget they allocate for AP 1325. Civil society is involved in monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan in the future as well. If civil society continues to advocate for the focus to be on human security as well for a greater role for women in all aspects of security, foreign policy governance, and conflict resolution, the second AP 1325 has a greater chance of becoming part of a deeper and broader transformation of BiH society.

Lessons Learned, Challenges

Lessons Learned

The most important lesson learned is the fundamental importance of including women and their organizations in the process of security sector reform. Its aim should be to create a security sector that is more accountable to addressing women's security needs. Women and their civic organizations, as well as organizations dealing with gender rights, are important participants in the establishment of safe and secure environments at the local level. This is because of their assistance to victims of gender-based violence, connections with security institutions, and contribution to work aimed at eliminating insecurity through peaceful resolution and prevention of conflict. These organizations often collect or have access to information about the security situation at the local level, as well as the needs of local women and accountability gaps in terms of security, and can serve as a liaison between local communities and the key actors in the field of security.

Particularly noticeable is the increase in the number of female police officers in BiH peacekeeping missions and a growing interest among both the leadership within the military and the police to appoint gender focal points to serve the aim of strengthening accountability, efficiency, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as ensuring the greater inclusion of women in defense and security. Gender focal points within security and defense establishments serve as excellent tools for gender awareness and demonstrate the transformative changes of police and military culture into one in which women feel welcomed. This is a lesson from the security and defense sectors that can be applied to other institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina that are obliged to integrate the gender perspective into their legal and institutional framework.

²¹ In the summer of 2014 the Coordination Board for the implementation of the AP1325 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with thirteen civil society organizations for collaboration on the AP, the only partnership of its kind in the country.

Progress has also been made in the protection of women and girls from violence and discrimination. According to the assessment presented in the publication *Women, Peace and Security in the Western Balkans*, “social attention has been increasingly focusing on social reaction to these challenges, which does not mean that they have been resolved, have ‘disappeared’ or do not exist at all. Incoherent social responses to violence and discrimination are understood as ‘protection,’ including laws, policies and measures aimed at achieving ‘security,’ but failing to benefit the welfare and well-being of various groups of vulnerable people, especially women. Adoption of this concept of ‘protection’ is not sufficient for a complete social reaction and state intervention which could lead to a practical reaction to solve the problem of violence and discrimination.”²² All those “unsolved issues” are to be properly addressed in the second GAP and the second AP 1325 for the period of the next few years.

Another lesson learned is linked to the monitoring and support mechanisms for the implementation of the obligations from the AP. This is headed by the Coordination Board, and considered “one of the most successful examples of an AP coordinating body to-date.”²³ The Coordination Board is a cross-dimensional governmental body that consists of twenty members, including civil society representatives from thirteen different institutions. Coordination Board members, through their work on women, peace, and security agendas, contributed to the enhancement of inter-sectorial cooperation and coordination. However, it is very important to point out that it is not easy to coordinate a large group of people who have different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and formal positions within their institutions. What became obvious was that the formal positions of the members in government bodies were crucial for putting the 1325 topics on the priority list in their institutions.

Another significant lesson learned is related to the active and synchronized role of the international community in guiding, directing, and supporting the positive examples and practices of BiH institutions. Whenever the international community in BiH spoke with one voice and was consistent in its approach to an issue in the country, it was much easier to achieve common goals. In this regard, the implementation of AP 1325 could be seen as the best practice of that principle.

Challenges

BiH institutions, as opposed to others in the region, did not face financial challenges to implement the AP, given that most activities in the first phases of AP 1325 implementation were financed by international organizations such as UN Women, UNDP, NATO, OSCE, EUPM, DCAF, etc. The crucial financial instrument for the sustainability and implementation of AP 1325 was FIGAP, the multi-stakeholder fund²⁴ that supported the

²² Radovanovic and Gajic, *Women, Peace and Security*, 73.

²³ Quote from the assessment report of Institute for Inclusive Security, 13.

²⁴ Funds in amount of EUR 3.5 million provided by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) were allocated directly by the Agency for Gender Equality and supervised

Gender Action Plan from 2009-2013. It was a good model of initial donor support for the AP implementation, but should not be a model for the future implementation of the second AP 1325.

In order to achieve local ownership, at least a certain percentage of funding for the Action Plan's implementation should be provided by national budgets. In order to effectively mainstream gender, government bodies should develop the capacity for gender-sensitive budgeting by analyzing the impact of budget allocation on women, men, girls, and boys. If governments do not include the goals of AP 1325 in their regular, mid-term, and long-term plans and fail to allocate at least some resources for their realization, the sustainability of the whole process could be seriously threatened in the near future.

The obligation of all institutions at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina was to undertake the necessary actions in order to harmonize legislation in accordance with the law on gender equality in BiH. That law is legally binding for both the public and private sector. There are some good examples of successful harmonization, but overall the process of harmonizing regulations, rules, and procedures within the security and defense sectors has been inconsistent and uneven. Other challenges to ensuring that women's human rights, taken into consideration in the design of services offered by police and military, are the strong patriarchal culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, traditional prejudices, gender-based violence and domestic violence, and a lack of women in the political life of the country.

Gender and security are no longer unknown topics in BiH institutions and public debates. However, women make up the majority in institutions that deal mostly with gender mainstreaming, and this topic is still seen as a purely "female issue." Men who work professionally on gender topics like gender focal points often face stereotypical and patriarchal judgement. To reduce and eliminate every kind of stereotypic behavior takes a long time. It is a long-lasting process because stereotypes are so embedded in the "cultural brain" that people often perpetuate them unwittingly.

BiH has made significant progress in promoting the inclusion of women in the security sector (army and police), but political participation of women at all levels has been declining since 1998, which is very worrying. This is happening at a time when policymakers and government institutions are relatively open to the systemic and sustainable integration of gender perspective into all sectors of society.

Conclusion

The significant problems we face can not be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.

Albert Einstein

In the past several years, BiH has devoted special attention to achieving gender equality in all areas of public life, especially in the security and defense sectors. A comprehensive, participatory, and coordinated approach of governmental and non-governmental

by a joint management body consisting of representatives of donors and BiH government institutions.

institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with support from various international organizations, have made remarkable progress with regard to the implementation of the GAP and AP 1325. There is hope that the second generation of the two documents will again encourage and unite all relevant actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work together on making gender visible, tangible, and applicable in our daily personal and professional life: “*Gender equality must become lived reality.*”²⁵

Should the government wish to fully implement the UNSCR 1325 (and all related resolutions) and reach the ultimate goal of peaceful and bias-free societies, it should explicitly accept only zero-tolerance policies on discrimination in all areas. Interpreting the meaning and value of UNSCR 1325 should be done permanently in all segments of private and professional life and should be aimed at all citizens. Education and training on gender equality should be integrated into the education system onwards from the pre-education level, as well as in the curricula of academies and centers for training judges, police officers, military, parliamentarians, public servants, etc. The goals of UNSCR 1325 (and subsequent Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security) are certainly feasible, but only an inclusive approach by the society as a whole will make a difference. More women must be included in decision-making and security institutions if BiH is to be successful in meeting the security challenges of this century. The inclusion of a greater number of women in decision-making positions within the management structure of the security sector should be a priority of top decision-makers.

In addition, the human security concept should be a focal point, rather than traditional understandings of security as militant, repressive, and tied solely to the ultimate protection of the state and its integrity, territory and sovereignty. One must recall the 1994 Report on Human Development, which defines human security as “safety from constant threats of hunger, crime, corruption, repression, etc. It also means protection from sudden and hurtful disruption in the patterns of our daily lives – whether in our homes, our jobs, in our communities or in our environment.” Security forces in a country should be capable of ensuring safety for all people. They should also ensure equal access to services for both men and women.

It is true that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made important progress in recent years in streamlining the gender dimension in its legal and institutional frameworks with regard to the security, justice, and defense sectors. This should continue further while keeping in mind equal benefits for men, women, boys, and girls from all policies, programs, plans, actions, etc. Bosnia and Herzegovina should also continue serving as an example in Southeastern Europe, inspiring others to ensure that existing documents and structures reflect the needs, concerns, and experiences of both sexes. The second AP 1325 should contribute to lasting security, peace, and prosperity for all and eliminate any kind of discrimination and violation of human rights.

Political will is a precondition for the implementation of any reforms, as reforms are primarily contingent upon the readiness and consensus of political leaders. The political elite in BiH should stop putting “vital ethnicity interest” as a priority above all others.

²⁵ Michelle Bachele, President of Chile since March 11, 2014.

They should instead create equal opportunities for all citizens in the overall development of the country.

Regional cooperation and coordination of all relevant actors, including the institutional cooperation of the respective parliaments, governments, ministries, and agencies is one of the top priorities of the second Action Plan for implementing the UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, one must always be aware of the fact that the family is the starting point for achieving the long-lasting goal of reaching gender equality in all spheres of private and public life. There is an expression in the local languages: “Na mladima svijet ostaje,” or in English, “The world belongs to the youth.” What I would add is that we should teach the youth to think outside of limitations and gender boxes and to respect every human being. Only then can there be hope for a better future for everyone, regardless of race, sex, religion, ethnicity, language, etc. These are preconditions for the efficient translation of the policy papers’ goals into reality. According to research published by the Clingendael Institute, “Gender equality is a public good. It is not a loss for men, neither a victory for women. Societies where men and women, boys and girls have equal rights and opportunities are more stable societies.”²⁶ It is hugely beneficial for both genders, as well as for our families, our communities, and the country.

²⁶ Rosan Smits, “A gender perspective in peacekeeping missions: discussing guidelines” (Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2010), available at http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20101124_CRU_workingpaper_rsmits.pdf, a shorter version is available here: http://www.wo-men.nl/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Gender_sensitive_peacekeeping.pdf (accessed on 23 February 2015).

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