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## **AFTER A DECADE, UN SECURITY COUNCIL TAKES STEPS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN CONFLICT**

Today, women from around the world watched as the United Nations Security Council took important action to further meet its commitments to women whose lives have been affected by war. These steps were taken at a meeting attended by high level ministers, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and new UN Women Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet. Ten years ago, the Security Council formally recognized that women are integral to all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security by adopting UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

“The international community is finally starting to give some substance to its ten years of rhetoric,” said Sarah Taylor, Executive Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG). “The real test is how long it will take for women to be able to fully participate in the peaceful rebuilding of their communities.”

The Council’s declaration today includes support for the Secretary-General’s global set of indicators on resolution 1325, and reinforces the importance of the ICC in international justice efforts. “That the work of implementation is difficult is not a sufficient reason for inaction,” said Taylor. “We are glad to see the Security Council setting out concrete steps to collect information and support real change on the ground.”

Recent research by the NGOWG, “*Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council*,” shows just how inconsistent the Council’s work on women, peace and security has been, and highlights the urgent need for the Council to establish an effective system of accountability. Information into the Council has been inadequate at reflecting the realities of women in conflict areas; policy options are not consistently acted upon; and Council outputs tend to be ad hoc. “This is not only a moral imperative, but a way to improve all work to create and maintain international peace and security, which is the Security Council’s mandate,” said Taylor.

Challenges for the future remain, however. Despite a number of positive measures initiated by governments, the Security Council, and the wider UN system on this anniversary, women’s rights defenders know that more talk is not enough. “When we see true justice for survivors of violence in war, when we see women’s rights as non-negotiable in peace talks, and when we see women’s involvement as universally central to post-conflict rebuilding, then we will know the true work of implementation is being done,” said Taylor.

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The NGOWG on Women, Peace and Security advocates for the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security. Formed in 2000 to call for a Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security, the NGOWG now focuses on implementation of all Security Council resolutions that address this issue. The NGOWG serves as a

bridge between women's human rights defenders working in conflict-affected situations and policy-makers at U.N. Headquarters.

The NGOWG coalition members are: Amnesty International; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Femmes Africa Solidarité; Global Action to Prevent War; Global Justice Center; Human Rights Watch; International Action Network on Small Arms; International Alert; International Rescue Committee; International Women's Program at the Open Society Institute; United Methodist Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries – United Methodist Church; Women's Refugee Commission; Women's Action for New Directions; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.