

Tsunami Relief

Include Women in All Relief and Reconstruction Efforts
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security calls on the United Nations and all international relief organizations coordinating relief efforts following the tsunami disaster to recognize the special needs and contributions of women and girls. In particular we ask that local women participate in all relief and reconstruction decisions, including selection and distribution of goods and services to their communities.

We applaud the civil society groups, UN agencies and other relief and human rights agencies that are drawing attention to increased risks for women of violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, unequal distribution of food and inadequate health measures, including reproductive health services, in the tsunami affected regions.

The international community needs to ensure that in future conflicts and disasters the mechanisms are already in place for preventing these abuses. The challenges facing the regions hit by the tsunami provide an opportunity to give women more control of their lives and futures, laying the foundation for peace, human security and sustainable development. The world must begin to recognize the enormous power of women to protect their families and rebuild their communities.