

WIDE+ positioning towards the Spanish government's concept note for the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security to be held on October 13th 2015.

WIDE+ is concerned about the current popular discourses on counter terrorism that are being voiced by governments in the review of the UNSCR1325. These new discourses run the risk of instrumentalizing the UN Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and the broader women's rights agenda into counter terrorism measures through a concept of gender mainstreaming. WIDE+ calls on governments and women's rights defenders to take a critical stance towards these discourses.

The concepts of the violent extremism (VE)-complex opens the door to legitimizing an agenda of security through gender equality and women's empowerment

In these discourses new concepts are introduced, in particular "Violent Extremism" and an explicit link is established between women and terrorism prevention, which imply a paradigm shift from human and women's rights to what WIDE+ describes as counter-terrorist (CT) measures that instrumentalizes gender equality and women's empowerment:

- CT measures are problematic as they curtail freedoms and human rights in various contexts. This is especially the case as there is not even an internationally accepted definition of what terrorism or violent extremism refers to, leaving counter terrorist measures broad levy. Some examples are the US PATRIOT act, the notorious Guantanamo Bay prison, the Chinese crackdown on Uighur calls for independence, Russia's actions in Chechnya, and arbitrary detention in various countries in the name of counter terrorism.
- The renewed focus on CT effectively leads to securitization of peace building and development cooperation and that impacts on women's rights. Gender equality and women's empowerment are just consider for the benefit of political security. The important role of women as peace makers is emphasized as soft resources for military interventions without mentioning that militarization and securitization further endangers women's security by increasing social tensions (for example, increased domestic violence in the context of crisis).
- CT often relies upon essentialist assumptions of women and reify or justify gender traditional roles. This vision leads to the 'securitization' of women's lives, in which under the label of protection legitimizes and normalizes women's exclusion.

A new discourse that leaves Pandora's box of how to foster gender justice closed.

These discourses also do not offer any deeper analysis of how to foster gender equality and women's empowerment, thus do not address the root causes. There is no reflection that goes beyond the "add women and stir". The proposed discourses and measures have a legitimizing effect without contributing to the furthering of women's rights', their safety, or to the feminist efforts to explain oppressive societal mechanisms and the interrelation of women's lack of security with deep rooted patriarchal structures.

The root causes and drivers of conflict and cycles of violence do not stem from deviating individuals. It is the combination of oppressive societal and economic structures, patriarchal ideology and its impact on state driven control mechanisms. An accepted militarized approach to (In)security, such as CT, allows for these unequal power structures and dominant ideologies to remain unquestioned. Social justice and the protection of human rights will be much more difficult to realize and not made easier.

Feminist critique focuses on militarization and masculinist societal structures as the drivers of both terrorism and counter-terrorism and it asks for the (hidden) economic intentions and consequences, namely the further commodification of human security which also means the strengthening of security related markets. Such processes put in danger human care provisions and therefore also the quality of

life shifting funds to improve armed security. Current feminist considerations of safety and security focus instead on the conditions under which people generate livelihoods as individuals, but also as social beings using networks, relations, public spaces and other forms of social capital as well. These considerations refer to gender sensitive human security approaches and focus on for instance issues such as poverty, domestic violence, provision of care work, etc.

Regarding the Effects on UNSCR1325 agenda:

These discourses are effecting at this very moment the agenda setting that is taking place around the review of the UNSCR1325 by states at UN level.

- The UNSCR1325 focuses on the implementation of human rights, especially the rights of women and gender equality. UNSCR1325 has served as a mobilizing and organizing force for women's movements. Embracing these new discourses will change its scope and in effect undermine its role as a resolution in the field of human rights and peace building.

-While the UNSCR1325 has been used by states and Civil Society actors to foster peace through dialogue, the militaristic and security approaches that are promoted in these new discourses will establish an exclusionary and effectively patriarchal/misogynist framework instead of strengthening women's rights. It would effectively reify masculinist power structures legitimizing the exclusion of women in the name of their "security", and discourage inclusive dialogue.

-Another effect is at the economic level; by redirecting funding to incorporate women into CT measures effectively. This would remove resources from the 1325 agenda while it is not clear what the added value for women's rights would be.

Therefore, we demand of states:

- The full application and implementation of UNSCR1325 and related resolutions and commitments to Gender, Women, Peace and Security, and the corresponding National Action Plans with adequate resources and funds.

-Approaches to *Women, Peace and Security* should be rooted in a strong defense and protection of women's and men's human rights and gender equality commitments, not by promoting Counter-Terrorist measures in the framework of a *crusade* against the Violent Extremism.

- A comprehensive approach should be adopted to address conflicts, for understanding the causes and dynamics of conflicts and violence, and reject consequently any fragmented and partial approach to them. There are many forms of gender violence that affect the safety of women and a life free of violence, e.g. exclusion from assets, permanent poverty, and everyday forms of violence. Its resolution requires the deepening of human and women's rights, building spaces for democracy and promoting enabling environments for inclusive and equitable development processes.

- We believe that the 3P (Participation, Protection and Prevention) must be understood as indivisible and comprehensive, as well as mutually reinforcing. A fragmented approach to each pillar undermines efforts to build peace, security and gender equality.

- The new discourse reduces the space for women to take part in peace building and conflict resolution. We call on states to encourage open spaces to encourage participation and inclusion of women, especially active feminist movements and organizations in the defense of women's rights and peace building.