



Violence against women – a threat to peace and security. What is GTZ doing to prevent it?



Sexual violence during conflicts

The year 2010 is the tenth anniversary of the signing of UN Resolution 1325. The international community must now submit reports about how the resolution has been implemented. Amongst other requirements, the resolution calls for:

- the integration of gender issues in all aspects of peace missions, including reintegration and reconstruction work
- training programmes to sensitise security forces involved in peace missions, in order to prevent sexual violence against women by the peace-keeping personnel in crisis areas
- all members of the international community of states to provide special protection to women in (post-)conflict situations
- the planned inclusion of women in peace negotiation.

In 2008, building on Resolution 1325, the UN passed Resolution 1820 condemning sexual violence as a war crime and a threat to peace and security. With Resolution 1888, passed in 2009, the demands made previously were stated in even greater detail and were given extra force through the appointment of a special rapporteur and the option of imposing sanctions. Passed just shortly after this, Resolution 1889 stressed the role which women are able to play in post-conflict situations and activities to consolidate peace.

These resolutions take account of the fact that women and men experience war and armed conflict in different ways. Women are particularly at risk of oppression and exploitation through militarised sexual violence, such as mass and multiple rape (often leading to pregnancy), forced prostitution and sexual slavery. Targeted infection with HIV/AIDS, genital mutilation and forced abortions are also used as means of depriving women of the ability to bear children.

Sexual violence against women during armed conflicts: Facts and figures

- Sexual violence against women has been documented in 51 countries
- Approximately 70 percent of raped women have been infected with HIV/AIDS
- About 90 percent of all rape cases involve mass rapes or multiple rapes
- The age of sexually abused girls is usually between 10 and 17 years
- Worldwide, the proportion of women involved in peace negotiations is 4 percent
- Approximately 1,794 women and 78,407 men are involved in UN peace-keeping missions



The aim of militarised sexual violence is to humiliate or even destroy the enemy by devastating their family and community structures. It is not only aimed at the women themselves, but is also intended to demonstrate the powerlessness of men to protect their families and communities.

As a defence against that kind of humiliation and apparent weakness, families and communities often castigate abused individuals as collaborators and cast them out. A similar process also affects a growing number of male victims of sexual violence in conflicts. Armed conflicts frequently underline stereotypical behavioural models, with manhood being militarised and equated with violence while women are stylised as 'protectors'. Such behavioural models persist even in post-conflict phases. Post-conflict societies are therefore characterised by high levels of violence, which finds expression in domestic and public violence against women. Among other harmful effects, this kind of violence

hinders a balanced relationship between the sexes and can become a structural cause for the renewed outbreak of a violent conflict.



However, conflicts may also provide an opportunity to dismantle traditional gender roles. When the men are absent, women have to perform the tasks that were formerly reserved for men. In these situations, women secure an income for their families and organise public life, taking on the typically male areas of agricultural work and trade, as well as political responsibilities in their local communities. However, returning husbands usually find it hard to accept the presence of women in these roles. After the conflict is over, men often try to reassert the old gender regime using the violent methods they have learned during the conflict.

In terms of UN Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions, recognizing that women's experience are integral parts of conflicts and that they play a significant role in post-conflict societies is a basic prerequisite for ending the cycle of violence and opening the way for peace and security. The following two examples illustrate the contributions made by GTZ, and demonstrate the different results of gender-conscious intervention.

Burundi: Support for reintegration

The history of Burundi has been punctuated by hostile clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. The massacres of 1972 and 1993 were especially bloody, with several hundred thousand people losing their lives. These

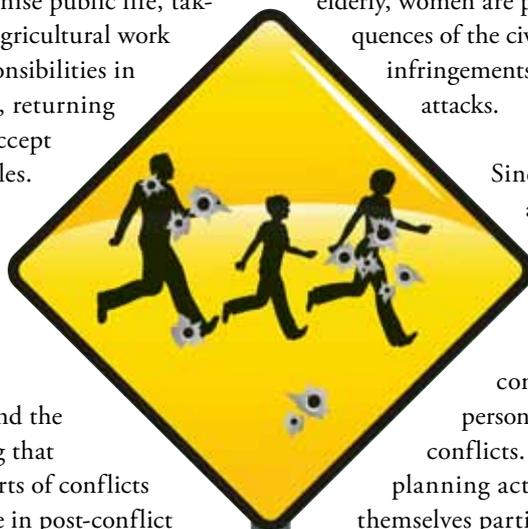
Project: Support for the reintegration of refugees

Objective: To improve the socioeconomic conditions for sustainable economic development and reconciliation in the province of Gitega.

Local partners: Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender; Ministry for Reintegration and Resettlement of Displaced and Repatriated Persons; Ministry for Communal Development; Ministry for Development Planning and Reconstruction; state agricultural services at provincial level

Overall term: March 2004 to December 2010 (extension for an additional project phase until December 2013)

events caused a wave of refugees, with half a million people fleeing to neighbouring countries and countless others being internally displaced. Since the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000, the situation in Burundi has progressively stabilised and those who left the country have begun to return. However, sustained mistrust and localised conflicts continue to hamper the process of reconciliation and reintegration. As well as children and the elderly, women are particularly affected by the consequences of the civil war; they continue to suffer from infringements of their rights and from violent attacks.



Since 2004, GTZ has been involved in a cooperation project to support the reconstruction of Burundi. The project assists the efforts of local institutions to reintegrate returning refugees, militias, ex-combatants and internally displaced persons to rebuild houses and to transform conflicts. GTZ focuses on local government planning activities in which the local people themselves participate, on promoting the reconciliation process and on strengthening local capacities for conflict resolution. Women have so far been under-represented in the local authorities. Now, sensitisation and information campaigns are being used in the relevant institutions to ensure that women become more actively involved in planning and decision making by the local administrations.

In 2007, three years after the project started, the returnees, who make up six percent of the overall population, had attained a disproportionately high level of representation, holding 14 percent of the membership of all local



authority institutions. Furthermore, although the goal was to have women in 25 percent of leadership positions, by 2007, 35 percent of the returnees' representatives were women (compare this to 2004, when less than 5 percent of such position were held by women). Thus the goals set by the project have been exceeded. The extensive participation of women is an indication that they want to be actively involved in public life and reconstruction. It also shows that their trust in members of the other ethnic group is growing, and that they wish to help build this trust themselves.

So far, training has been given to almost 18,000 representatives of local institutions (42.8 percent of them women). This includes courses in gender-sensitive development, countering violence against women, family and inheritance law, promoting social cohesion and managing conflicts, as well as leadership skills and participatory planning methods. The aim is to reduce women's initial dissatisfaction with the conflict resolution structures. Today, 83 percent of women claim they are satisfied with the local mechanisms (estimated initial value: 40 percent).

There are two major successes of this project. The first one is the high demand for its reconciliation work while the second is the material support given to 2,561 internally displaced households. More than half of these households are headed by women. In this way, the project has helped reduce mistrust that has persisted for decades, which has enabled the internally displaced to return from the camps to live again in their original areas.

Cambodia: Promoting women's rights

In Cambodia, there is a high level of violence in families and in society at large. In 2005, the majority of respondents to a survey on violence against women believed that it is justifiable for a man to use violence against his wife in certain circumstances. Domestic violence is therefore an urgent problem in Cambodian society. This high potential for violence towards women derives, in part, from the long years of war and the traumatic events experienced during the tyrannous rule of the Khmer Rouge. At the same time, the Ch'bab Srey code of behaviour for women dictates that they should be reserved and modest, and that they should serve their husbands. Society views domestic violence primarily as a private, family affair. Since 2002, GTZ has been supporting a project whose objective is to assist the Ministry of Women's Affairs and

Project: Promoting Women's Rights.

Objective: The Ministry of Women's Affairs, other relevant government agencies and civil society agencies implement the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims effectively and efficiently.

Local partners: Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA).

Overall term: July 2002 to December 2010.

other relevant governmental bodies and organisations with the implementation of a law to prevent violence. In 2005, the law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims was passed. This first success considerably improved the legal position of women in Cambodia. The law covers the prevention of sexual and physical violence and provides a legal basis upon which local councillors, village leaders and the police can intervene in cases of domestic violence. As a result, since 2005 there has been a considerable rise in the number of police officers who view domestic violence as unacceptable and criminal.

Additionally, the results of a recent 2009 study on violence against women show that the majority of the population have experienced a profound change of attitude concerning domestic violence.



GTZ supports the Ministry of Women's Affairs as it implements the law and oversees its enforcement. This includes countrywide information campaigns using radio, television



and advertising billboards as well as brochures and books. In addition, training for personnel from the Ministry, the health sector, the police, the judiciary and NGOs was provided. These experts should publicise the issue of domestic violence and help reduce the stigmatisation of it.

With awareness on the rise, it becomes increasingly possible to establish a dialogue with the perpetrators of violence, and to discuss non-violent strategies for resolving conflicts and family tensions. This helps create a situation in which domestic violence is tolerated less and less.

Meanwhile, almost 100% of female and male citizens of Cambodia know the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims.

As well as the sensitisation work, the project also carries out targeted measures to support the victims. This includes advisory services for the training of social workers through the NGO Social Services of Cambodia. Using the services of the more than 260 social workers, victims are increasingly able to assert their rights: they now know where to go and whom to turn to. Another NGO supported by GTZ is Transcultural Psycho-Social Organisation (TPO), which has so far provided psychosocial advice, self-help groups and therapy for more than 1,600 people. According to the respondents (local authorities, police, women councillors, graduates of advanced training), the number of cases of violence within families has fallen since 2006. The surveyed local councillors and women councillors claimed that they had succeeded in talking to the perpetrators about approaches to non-violent conflict resolution in the family.

In July 2009, the Cambodian Government passed the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence on Women. While the information campaigns and victim support



services will continue, the need to collect statistical data is understood to be increasingly important. State institutions must work together at different levels to gather data about domestic violence systematically. To conduct accurate surveys, training and networking activities will be carried out with the relevant actors (for example, the police and judiciary). Advice will also be given to relevant state bodies to create guidelines and design training courses. This will allow the regulations contained in the prevention of violence law to be implemented and applied at district and local levels. Reliable statistics will enable appropriate adaptations to be made to the new law in the future.

Imprint: November 2009

Published by:
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