



serving overseas Americans
and the international community since 1931

Human Rights Task Force Women in Peace and Conflict

Increasingly women and children are becoming the victims of war. In modern times, war less often takes the form of competing armies of men fighting in unpopulated areas, and more often takes place within or near civilian communities, thus putting women at as much risk as male combatants. In addition, war leaves many women vulnerable due to the deaths of their providers, often in cultures where the women themselves have limited education and few job opportunities.

Furthermore, all types of violence against women tend to increase during times of war, including domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking. In fact, forms of sexual violence are now frequently used as deliberately planned weapons of war. These forms of sexual violence not only create severe and lasting damage, both physically and psychologically, for the women whose rights are so brutally violated, but also exacerbate the underlying conflicts.

On an encouraging note, while women are increasingly adversely affected by war, they are also increasingly becoming agents of change in their communities. An amazing and inspiring example of women taking matters into their own hands is illustrated in the film, [Pray the Devil Back to Hell](#). This movie tells the amazing story of Liberian women who forced the Liberian government and rebels to reach a peace agreement and then worked to elect the first woman president in Liberia.

The United Nations Security Council has recently recognized the importance of the issues women face in war by passing several resolutions addressing women, peace and security. One particularly significant development is the Council's recognition of the importance of women's participation in mediation, post-conflict recovery and peace building efforts and the necessity for addressing sexual violence in all peace negotiations.

Why should we care?

The theme of women and conflict resonates with the very origins of FAWCO. According to *The Red Book, FAWCO: A History 1931-2011*:

Caroline Curtis Brown founded FAWCO on the belief that "enlightened women, working cooperatively throughout the world, could do much to help achieve permanent international peace; and that this was especially true of American women living abroad who had acquired special experience in living in foreign lands among foreign people and foreign customs. Their American clubs not only provided a home away from home, she felt, but also served to promote sympathetic awareness of the needs and problems in countries other than the United States."

Following are resources related to women, conflict and peace:

The United Nations Women for Peace <http://unwomenforpeace.org/>

Women for Women International <http://www.womenforwomen.org/>

medica mondiale <http://www.medicamondiale.org/en.html>

Women's Power to Stop War <http://www.womenstopwar.org/>

Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security <http://giwps.georgetown.edu/>

Women, War and Peace documentary from PBS <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/>

No Women No Peace <http://www.nowomennopeace.org/>

For more information or to inquire about joining the Women Peace and Conflict Committee of the Human Rights Task Force, please contact Therese Hartwell at peaceandconflict@fawco.org