

THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA IN CHAD: THE CASE OF THE LAKE AND OUADDAÏ PROVINCES

Summary

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFD	French Development Agency
AFJT	Association of Women Lawyers of Chad
APLFT	Association for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms in Chad
ATPDH	Chadian Association for the Promotion of Human Rights
CELIAF	Liaison Cell of Women's Associations
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration
FPS	Women Peace Security
MINURCAT	Mission of Nations in the Central African Republic and Chad
OIM	International Organization for Migration
ONG	Non-Governmental Organization
ONU	United Nations
OSC	Organization of Civil Society
PAN	National Action Plan
PASAS	Analysis, Monitoring and Learning Platform in the Sahel
PNG	National Gender Policy
PTF	Technical and Financial Partner
SENAFET	National Chadian Women's Week
SNLVBG	National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence
VBG	Gender-Based Violence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, numerous commitments have been made to politically recognize women in conflict resolution and peace processes. As of June 2022, the UN recorded 90 states that had developed their 1325 Action Plan. Following a long multi-stakeholder process, Chad adopted its own plan in January 2023. However, its implementation has been slow, despite the effective development of its budget and the ongoing creation of a cluster bringing together Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs).

The aim of this study is to identify and precisely describe the dynamics, resources, and constraints related to the operationalization of the National Action Plan (NAP), based on two case studies in the provinces of Lake and Ouaddaï.

Firstly, knowledge of Resolution 1325 is partial and unequally distributed among social groups and spaces. While administrative authorities and women's rights advocacy groups have undergone various training sessions, the transmission of this knowledge remains largely confined to urban centres and elites. Furthermore, only the protection pillar of Resolution 1325 seems to drive the activities of women engaged in local mediation processes, and connections between the micro, middle, and macro levels of conflicts struggle to take shape. **For instance**, at the national level, the Doha Peace Agreement and the DDR process that was launched have seen little if no, involvement from women. At the local level, women's mediation efforts are primarily focused on marital disputes.

Secondly, victims perceive mediation conducted by feminist associations as a beneficial alternative compared to traditional and judicial dispute resolution methods. Their approach is seen as more equitable in terms of gender power dynamics, financially advantageous since it is free, and socially less penalizing—unlike filing a complaint, which strongly exposes the victim to social disapproval.

Thirdly, these association-based mediators can collaborate with other "informal" mediators who derive their legitimacy from more traditional norms. These women, recognized as community leaders, may take on a conciliatory role without necessarily ensuring fairness or considering the victim's interests. Proximity to gender equality does not necessarily mean addressing the needs of victims, and there is no consensus among women involved in mediation regarding the understanding and handling of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Lastly, while women's presence and engagement in public spaces are now socially acknowledged, their emancipation within private spaces remains heavily constrained. Women who dare to report the violence they experience find themselves caught in a web of contradictions between progressive aspirations, reflected in their desire to break free from dominant gender norms, and social conservatism, expressed through the fear of social disapproval.

1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introductory elements on the Study

The role of women in conflict resolution and peace promotion is essential but often underestimated. Through their experiences and responsibilities, they play key roles as mediators and negotiators, contributing to reconciliation and social reconstruction. Their participation in peace processes fosters more inclusive and lasting agreements, addressing issues such as civilian protection and sexual violence, which are often overlooked by traditional actors. The UN Resolution 1325 (2000) highlights the impact of conflicts on women and their role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It emphasizes four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and rehabilitation. Strengthening women's involvement in these areas ensures a more equitable peace and more stable societies.

In Chad, where women and young people make up more than half of the population (RGPH, 2009), their inclusion is a development priority. They are key actors in implementing projects and programs.

Women play an essential role in both rural and urban areas. With social changes and the frequent absence of men due to seasonal migration (PASAS, 2023), they take on increased responsibilities within families and communities.

To address these challenges, the National Action Plan (NAP), adopted under the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, along with the National Gender Policy (NGP) and the National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence (NSCGBV), represents an institutional response to the needs of Chadian women. The strategic vision of the NAP foresees that by 2030, Chadian women will be agents of peace and drivers of socioeconomic development, reflecting the country's international commitments—particularly in gender equality and sustainable peace. The NAP's goal is to strengthen their role in consolidating peace, as well as preventing and resolving conflicts, in line with the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. However, this approach raises questions about the portrayal of women: they are often depicted as inherently peaceful and victimized, which results in a homogenized and stereotypical role, mirroring equally fixed images of men.

1.2. Study's goals

This study aims to identify and precisely describe the dynamics, resources, and challenges related to the implementation of the NAP through two case studies in the Lac and Ouaddaï provinces. By examining the institutionalization dynamics of the NAP from N'Djamena and comparing them with the practical approaches of local mediation structures — while taking into account the gender norms that influence the reproduction and regulation of violence — the study seeks to identify change-driven approaches. The goal is to strengthen women's mediating potential and ensure the effective and efficient operationalization of the NAP in Chad.

1.3. The Construction of the Women, Peace, and Security Problem in the Literature

The normative framework on women, peace, and security originates from various historical events, notably the shift from state security to human security (Ladislav, 2023). The resolution includes measures for integrating gender into humanitarian operations as well as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). It also emphasizes the importance of inclusion and collaboration with UN bodies, civil society, and the Commission on the Status of Women (African Union, 2008: 3).

Twenty years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, it is clear that much of the energy in the Women, Peace, and Security agenda has been—and continues to be—devoted to developing frameworks and policies, rather than to changing behaviours and educating about norms and values that reshape the way men and women interact (Hendricks, 2020). At first glance, the case of Chad appears no different. Since January 2023, Chad has had a National Action Plan for Resolution 1325; however, this document seems to be part of a nebulous collection of legal texts favourable to women that nonetheless lacks socio-institutional anchoring.

1.4. Methodology

The study began with a literature review to provide an overview of the available literature on the links between gender and violence and the development of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Three teams, each composed of two interviewers, conducted interviews and focus groups in N'Djamena, as well as in the Ouaddaï and Lac provinces. In Ouaddaï, 26 interviews were conducted, including two focus groups with women's groups. In Lac, 32 interviews and four focus groups were carried out – in Bol, with the association of female paralegals and a women's group, and in Baga Sola, with the Baga Sola women's platform and a women's group. Finally, in N'Djamena, 12 interviews were conducted, including an online session with the EDIFIS team mandated by Expertise France to support the Ministry of Women and the Technical and Financial Partners in implementing the NAP.

1.5. The Lac and Ouaddaï Provinces: Social Spaces Undergoing Re-configuration

Both study areas are significantly affected by the presence of displaced persons and refugees, linked to the Sudanese conflicts and the presence of Boko Haram and other non-state armed groups. The coexistence among host populations, refugees, and returnees from Sudan—all with limited resources—can sometimes prove complex, as noted by the deputy mayor of Abéché:

"The province is overrun by Sudanese refugees and tensions are frequent. This places a heavy workload on administrative authorities and mediation associations. This phenomenon also exacerbates insecurity in the province and prevents refugees from fully engaging in their activities."

These conflicts have led to a massive influx of NGOs and the establishment of psychological support and refugee assistance programs that include a gender component.

Although not supported by figures, it can be assumed that the militarization of the areas has led to an increase in GBV: the interviewees reported cases of rape and sexual violence committed by military personnel, and allegations of sexual abuse by humanitarian NGO staff were also made by Sudanese refugee women in eastern Chad. This clearly illustrates the importance of engaging women in all stages of peacebuilding processes, both to protect them from violence and to ensure they have access to effective mechanisms of justice and accountability—key objectives of UN Resolution 1325.

2 - GENDER DYNAMICS: RECONFIGURATIONS ON THE MARGINS ?

This first part aims to present the perceptions regarding gender roles and constraints among the populations, as well as the self-perception of women concerning their status and empowerment.

2.1 - Traditional Gender Roles and Representations

Regardless of social class, age, or ethnicity, expectations regarding women's behaviour in both private and public spheres are nearly identical. Modesty, therefore, serves as a strong marker affirming one's status as a married and respectable woman, and it is closely linked to the social honour of her group. As the cornerstone of the family institution, marriage is less a site of self-development than a means of achieving social elevation and economic security. The division of marital roles remains partially gendered, with women tasked with managing the household and men seen as the providers of the financial means necessary for the family's survival. Yet, many women work in addition to their familial responsibilities, although in most cases, all the income they earn is handed over to the husband or head of household, who then decides how the money will be spent.

2.2 - Multi-Form and Multi-Class Violence

Transgressing the various norms associated with traditional gender construction amounts to a form of symbolic violence conveyed through derogatory images. For example, defying the social code of modesty by revealing one's intimacy and emotions casts a woman as deviant, exposing her to shame and social exclusion. Since domestic violence is considered a private issue, any woman daring to speak about it openly will be perceived—as noted by a business-woman and member of a women's group in Abéché—as:

"A scandalous woman who loves problems too much. A good woman must know how to remain silent and protect her husband's image, even if she endures some violence. These ideas are so deeply ingrained in their minds that it is difficult for some to approach our associations when problems arise."

Sexual violence is also shrouded in taboo, with women being blamed for the assault they suffer and their value on the marriage market diminished. It remains a silent subject that is neither discussed nor taken into account. Although we did not encounter any rape victims, members of women's associations frequently report these types of assaults. The silence surrounding this violence remains significant.

These various norms and representations inherent in conjugal relationships serve as constraints that prevent women from achieving autonomy and individuality, with feminine identity being defined less by personal intimacy and more by one's position, role, and status.

Beyond these symbolic violences associated with transgressing gender norms—more or less acknowledged by women—all the interviewees primarily described domestic and conjugal violence as the foremost form of abuse. While a few interviewees mentioned female genital mutilation as a source of violence, forced marriages were cited by all and appear to be characteristic of rural areas. In urban settings, a greater proportion of well-educated women with “an open mind” seems to make them more likely to access legal aid resources. However, simply living in an urban environment does not, in itself, provide an opportunity; it must be coupled with educational capital and the support networks or allies available to the victim.

2.3 - Female violence ?

The few cases of female violence mentioned are more related to unequal power dynamics stemming from gender norms. Violence can be a tactic for women who could not avoid marriage but are doing everything they can to escape the realities of married life. For instance, one interviewee recounted the following anecdote:

"Last July, a girl forced into marriage killed her husband by poisoning his meal. Since her entire family wanted her to marry him, she chose to kill him with poison."

2.4 - Visibility in the Public Sphere Does Not Mean More Power in the Private Sphere

With the gradual emergence of associations, urbanization, and the education of young girls, new gender norms and strategies are emerging, driven less by community determinism than by individual initiative supported by a network of allies. The influence of awareness campaigns, coupled with increased mobility toward urban centres, promotes the mixing of groups that can meet more easily. From these encounters, emancipation initiatives gradually arise that conflict with traditional gender norms.

Even though women hold power and visibility in the public sphere, decision-making in the private and intimate sphere remains largely constrained. Some members of women's groups still ask their husbands for permission to attend meetings. Public power and private power do not go hand in hand—a woman considered a leader in the community or within associations can be “docile” at home. Moreover, women are not supposed to exceed certain “limits” imposed by their gender. Condemning inappropriate behaviour becomes problematic if the victim does not express it in the expected manner, as illustrated by these excerpts, all voiced by women in a reproachful tone:

"We always talk about the violence inflicted by men, but women go too far. There are stubborn women who are at the root of what they suffer. Some men don't just get up to beat their wives without reason; there is a reason, and a woman must be gentle and respectful in order to be right."

Although many women now dare to assert their rights, they must express them within traditional frameworks in order to appear legitimate. In other words, claiming rights is one thing, but doing so while respecting their expected role and status as women is quite another. Women are thus caught in a web of ambivalence and contradictions, torn between progressive aspirations—manifested in their desire to break free from the dominant gender model—and social conservatism, reflected in their fear of disapproval. This cognitive dissonance emerges in many interviews, with women expressing both the wish to protect their husbands' reputations by keeping household secrets and the need for a wife's fulfilment "because she suffers in her home, and that's not right."

3 - TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE MODES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THE KEY ROLE OF COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Women's associations play a key role in the process of seeking recourse when their rights are violated. However, the actions of these organizations form part of a range of alternative conflict resolution methods with divergent approaches and objectives. The perceptions and actions of those involved in mediation processes are not homogeneous but are influenced by tensions arising from competing claims to legitimacy. Far from being passive, victims who have access to diverse social capital can choose the conflict resolution option that is most advantageous for them.

3.1 - Denunciation and Relational Context

Denouncing the violence suffered is a complex psychological journey that first requires the victim to become aware of her situation. Once the turning point is reached—meaning that the victim accepts that something is falling apart and recognizes the violence she has endured—she must then decide to seek help. Although the decision to disclose is a personal choice, several factors influence the likelihood of revealing the violence to someone in her circle. For example, the minimization of the event or events experienced, feelings of shame and guilt, fear of negative consequences for oneself or others (including the family exclusion that denunciation entails), and finally the fear of the judicial process are all factors that can affect disclosure (Easton, S. D., L. Y. Saltzman, and D. G. Willis, 2014). The reactions of those around the victim also play a significant role in her decision-making: a positive response increases the victim's confidence and empowerment, while a negative one tends to keep her in a state of control. In all the cases encountered, the victim's network serves as a lever for action, helping to fill in the gaps when she lacks the necessary information, as illustrated by the testimony of this young girl, a victim of domestic violence:

"It was my older sister, through a friend of hers, who advised me to come here to the Chadian League for Human Rights in order to obtain a permanent separation from that man. That friend went through the same phase, having suffered violence from her husband, and she was able to get justice here, so she told me to do the same."

3.2 - The Search for the Most Advantageous options in a context of normative pluralism

Victims are presented with several modes of conflict resolution, ranging from mediation conducted by associations, to traditional popular justice mechanisms (such as neighbourhood chiefs, councils of elders, etc.), and even formal courts. Regarding the latter, it is important to highlight the external, cumulative factors that limit access to formal justice. On one hand, in rural areas, judicial infrastructure is underdeveloped, often forcing women to travel long distances to reach the courts. This becomes a significant logistical obstacle, particularly for those living far from urban centres. On the other hand, the Chadian judicial system suffers from administrative delays, as well as corruption and nepotism, which make it difficult for vulnerable individuals—especially women—to access justice. Corruption within judicial institutions leads many women to abandon their legal efforts out of fear of not obtaining fair justice.

3.3 - Varied Profiles of Female Mediators Marked by a Strong Intergenerational Divide

Some women, considered influential within their family circles and neighbourhoods, can serve as guardians of traditional gender norms in the face of younger generations' attempts to transgress them. This intergenerational divide, based on differentiated educational and social capital—with older women having grown up in a context marked by low levels of female education and a nascent mobilization for women's rights—was particularly evident during a focus group with a women's group from Abéché, a member of the CELIAF network. Out of the eight women present, only one, aged 27 and fluent in French, denounced the numerous gender stereotypes and rejected any justification for male violence, in contrast to the older women who remained either silent or responded more consensually.

Women involved in reconciliation and peace processes have diverse social trajectories that shape their approaches to conflict resolution. However, far from being antagonistic, these positions can complement each other, and female actors collaborate when local negotiations do not meet the expected objectives. A certain complementarity can emerge when these influential women are able to grasp the stakes of the violence they have endured and are aware of the associations.

4 - RESOLUTION 1325: A RESOLUTION LACKING SOCIO-INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORING

The institutionalization of gender policies in Chad is strongly influenced by the agendas of international organizations and donors. However, reducing the adoption of Resolution 1325 to a mere form of institutional mimicry would be inaccurate, as the involvement of women in peace processes is embedded in local dynamics historically driven by the most structured Chadian women's CSOs. Constantly negotiated in light of the country's politico-administrative context and established gender relations, the operationalization of Resolution 1325 can be seen as a remarkable laboratory for observing transformations in gender relations.

4.1 - A priority for the political Agenda?

In 2024, Chad also adopted its action plan for combating gender-based violence. An emergency hotline, 1390, was established, and a roadmap was adopted to accelerate the elimination of child marriage and female genital mutilation.

However, the report highlights that significant needs remain in terms of women's participation in decision-making bodies, access to entrepreneurship, and the care and protection of women and girls who are victims of violence. Little progress has been observed in these specific areas. It also underscores the necessity for adequate budgets and resources to implement the new action plans and roadmaps, which currently stands as the major obstacle to the implementation of all these measures.

4.2 - Popularization Lacking Coordination and Social Anchoring

Nationally recognized women's rights organizations, such as CELIAF, AFJT, APLFT, and the Coalition of Women Media for Peace, have received various funding and training to carry out awareness-raising activities on Resolution 1325 and to protect women victims of GBV. In the Lac province, in particular, COOPI's project, "Gender and Peace: Let's Mobilize for an Inclusive Peace Consolidation Process," funded by the British government, aims to support various organizations—including those affiliated with CELIAF—by training social change agents. Similarly, UNFPA and the Association of Women Jurists of Chad (AFJT) have established "safe spaces for women and girls" as part of the project "Strengthening the Resilience and Transformation of the Lives of Women and Youth in Humanitarian Provinces at High Risk of Conflict in Chad," funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Numerous examples could be cited, but the major issue remains the lack of coordination and monitoring of these actions. As mentioned earlier, the operational and financial coordination of the TFPs is a recent development, and activities have so far been implemented in a fragmented manner, as highlighted by one technical partner:

"A lot of things are being done with the NGP, but there is no accountability. There is no mechanism at the national and territorial levels."

4.3 - A very limited understanding and implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 content

The participation pillar of the WPS agenda aims to ensure that women are involved at all levels of decision-making processes regarding peace and security. However, women are largely excluded from political talks and negotiations, with their role being confined to handling marital conflicts. Consequently, security issues in the strict sense are not perceived as matters that can be addressed by women, as noted by the president of CELIAF:

"When women are called upon, it's generally when there's a problem in a household. But when, for example, it's said that one village attacked another, it's considered a men's affair and women are not involved."

At the Doha peace conference in 2022 between Chadian authorities and 43 politico-military groups, no woman was included in the discussions. This example reflects how obstacles and progress still struggle to emerge—especially in national-level peace negotiations—contrary to what Resolution 1325 advocates. Moreover, the Doha peace agreement, signed by 44 Chadian politico-military groups, makes no mention of Resolution 1325 or the impact of conflicts on the lives and roles of women. By highlighting the gap between political will and concrete implementation, the Doha process reveals the limited adoption of Resolution 1325 in both practices and collective imaginaries.

The women interviewed during this study do not seem to envision themselves beyond conflicts confined to the private sphere. Although some women have been given responsibilities in the mixed conflict management committees in the cities of Bol and Abéché—set up by the administrative authorities and, in Abéché's case, supported by donors—their numbers do not reach parity, and their actions remain limited. According to a member of the Provincial Action Committee:

"Today, despite the efforts, women are not sufficiently present in decision-making bodies. They are to blame, and let me explain: few of them continue their education, and they settle for what little they have."

Yet, beyond the argument of the limited availability of female human resources, one must question the male willingness to implement true parity, which would challenge their power. Barely affected by awareness campaigns, the men interviewed have only a minimal understanding of what gender equality entails—reducing it to a technical issue of representation rather than a political one. Adopting an approach that directly addresses men is therefore essential for achieving transformational change and promoting women's rights. Educating men, so that they can shed the image of the warrior/head of the household, would encourage the emergence of alternative norms of conjugal relations and modes of communication—not based on power dynamics, but on genuine listening and consideration.

5 - CONCLUSION

The changes observed as a result of the combined efforts of humanitarian and civil society actors—as well as improved access to and retention of girls in the educational system—demonstrate that the promotion of gender equality has a positive impact on the Lac and Ouaddaï provinces. Contributions from humanitarian and development actors have helped challenge gender stereotypes regarding women's ability to speak up and their decision-making power in the public sphere. These gains are perceptible in the study regions, though still fragile. While at home, women no longer tolerate what they once considered normal, such as beatings or forced marriages, these changes remain very individual and are mostly confined to urban centres. In this sense, we cannot speak of a transformation of norms but rather of constrained empowerment processes, with victims making marginal choices based on a cost/benefit calculation relative to transgression.

Women's rights organizations play a key role in mediation processes, enabling victims to choose from several options—from informal negotiation to judicial action. However, seizing these opportunities heavily depends on the victim's social circle and their own understanding of gender-based violence. It is therefore essential to continue raising awareness among both men and women, across all social groups, while fostering collaboration among various conflict resolution bodies to achieve common perceptions and approaches. Although the NAP still requires significant financial and technical coordination to become operational, it nevertheless represents a positive horizon for the future. All these global challenges have been highlighted in the report summarized in the box below.

Box 1: Little progress made regarding the WPS agenda.

The report on "Women, Peace and Security" produced by the United Nations Secretary-General provides an assessment of the challenges related to including women in peace promotion bodies and protecting their rights during conflict. To evaluate progress in implementing the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda, this work draws on Resolutions 1325, 2122, and 2493. The document describes a concerning decline in women's rights, due to the high levels of violence against women and restrictions that limit their education, freedom of movement, and access to resources.

The stagnation of the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda is partly explained by insufficient funding. Although funding is recognized as essential, it remains problematic. Very few resources are allocated to local women's organizations, especially in crisis areas. Even though some donor countries have initiated funding for this program, overall support remains limited—particularly in the fields of gender equality and the protection of women's rights in humanitarian and security crises.

Women remain largely underrepresented in peace processes, even though they play a crucial role in restoring and consolidating peace in various regions of the world. For example, in Africa and the Middle East, women are often excluded from negotiation bodies, which limits their influence on peace treaties and reconstruction processes.

The document emphasizes the urgent need to improve monitoring systems and policies to ensure sustainable funding for women's rights and their participation in crisis management. Consequently, it is imperative to initiate enhanced actions so that women become indispensable actors in peace-related discussions amid global crises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthening and scaling up existing initiatives

While justice and the fight against impunity remain transformative mechanisms when convictions occur, prosecutions are still extremely limited for numerous reasons (non-functional, slow, corrupt, and urban-centric institutional justice systems, unidentified perpetrators, lengthy and costly complaint procedures, stigmatization, and traditional cultures that do not incorporate institutional justice mechanisms, etc.). It is therefore necessary to:

- Continue, as part of victim support, to back associations of lawyers and paralegals by providing them with sufficient resources to assist these victims in their judicial processes, including legal advice and information on their rights;
- Develop support for parallel mechanisms—namely, mediation tools that are not necessarily managed by families, "mothers," or traditional leaders but by professional mediation organizations that are adequately equipped and trained, along with the establishment of accountability mechanisms;
- In this regard, training and support for trainers must continue in order to strengthen these mechanisms and expand support opportunities for women and girls. However, these initiatives must be truly adapted to the context, and it is equally necessary to implement, alongside these training programs, impact monitoring to assess their relevance, their capacity to absorb, and their ability to produce the desired change.
 - This requires considering more specific (micro) geographical coverage by developing support for organizations or individuals established within communities—not only in urban areas such as Bol and Abéché. Refugee camps are also important locations where such mechanisms and presence, well trained and equipped in both skills and resources, should be implemented.
 - It is necessary to identify, through thorough mapping work, potential individuals capable of being equipped and trained to perform the work. At the local level, numerous entry points exist, sometimes even through individuals who hold ethical and moral influence and recognition within the community. These individual or collective levers in very remote areas can be highly impactful and effective, provided they are identified and analysed based on criteria that ensure the right approach and choices while constantly keeping in mind the principle of "do no harm."
 - The more these mechanisms are developed and implemented at the local level, with significant territorial coverage, the better prevention and anticipation of incidents that could escalate over time will be achieved

2. Adapting and Securing Spaces for Expression

Enabling free expression in secure spaces that are adapted to the familial, cultural, and traditional contexts of women and girls:

- By using venues where women and girls already gather or visit when they wish to speak freely and seek support, thereby preserving the discretion necessary for their protection;
- By developing and facilitating discussion groups based on engaging, playful approaches that enable women and girls not only to express themselves but also to be informed of their rights;
- By creating and managing discussion groups and spaces for the male community through the development of "positive masculinity" tools that allow them to express their needs and frustrations, and/or provide them with the means to better understand their relationship with violence and women.

3. Better Addressing the Root Causes of Violence

Support long-term work on the causes of violence, the deconstruction, and evolution of belief systems—not by opposing these efforts to traditional norms but by developing tools to:

- Continue to develop educational tools and awareness initiatives, drawing on role models and targeting community leaders to better impact the process of deconstruction and identify the causes of violence;
- Conduct precise studies to understand and identify economic models that enable the generation of sustainable income for women or women's groups within an existing market framework, thereby ensuring long-term income sustainability;
- Develop micro-level socio-economic support initiatives to overcome the economic and social barriers that prevent women and girls from asserting their rights or expressing themselves;
- Utilize storytelling and/or communication systems adapted to community practices—such as participatory dialogues or debates on local radio stations, formats accessible via mobile phones, and fictional narratives (e.g., engaging visuals like comic strips or cartoons). For example, experiences in Nigeria have achieved significant impacts by producing fictional series to deconstruct traditional mechanisms and highlight alternative approaches;
- Inform women—and especially girls—about violence, as many do not necessarily recognize themselves as victims. It is crucial to clarify these concepts through role-playing exercises, such as theatre, which has yielded significant results in Burkina Faso, or via other accessible, simplified media. Similarly, in Guinea Conakry, comic strip series have been implemented to support awareness efforts based on real-life situations, while in Burkina Faso, street theatre has been used within a project to create spaces for discussions on conflict resolution, terrorism, and violence against women through interactive plays that actively involve the audience. These initiatives have produced notably positive impacts.

4. Building a Pool of Female Mentors in Chad

Support the formation of networks of female mentors—or networks of women and girls—to strengthen sisterhood and mutual support among women:

- **Strengthen the capacity of young girls, who are now agents of change**, to integrate the issues of women's empowerment into their behaviour.
- **Support professional women's networks**, whether within the FSI or in political spaces—for example, the network of Chadian women parliamentarians or the women's network established within the FSI—which has already enabled women in the internal security sector to become inspirational role models for young girls. They visit schools to discuss their professions, providing a tangible image of possibility for young girls. Similarly, the first divisional commissioner in Chad has decided to recruit female bodyguards, generating a strong public impact by challenging the norm of having only men in charge of security.
- **Support the creation of female mentor networks** at the departmental and provincial levels, as well as very locally in neighbourhoods and communities, while strengthening them to become reference points for women and girls who are victims of violence. This is the case in Burkina Faso, in Boromo and Dedougou, where a women's network, supported by a European Union-funded project, has become a reference for families and communities on par with community leaders. They manage conflicts within communities and have become effective agents because women and girls in particular find it easier to approach them with their problems. At the same time, this change has had a broader impact on the entire community by demonstrating that women can play the role of community leaders—traditionally monopolized by men—because they have proven effective in managing conflicts and are recognized for their skills.
- **Facilitate and strengthen the participation of women in community decision-making**, as seen with the CLSPD in Bol and Abéché, so that the specific needs of women and girls—especially those related to security, a traditionally male-dominated sector—are better considered. In Bol and Moundou in Chad, women play an important role within the CLSPD and managed to assert their voice and influence both in decision-making and in the issues they raise during meetings. This required time and significant awareness work to ensure they are accepted and valued for the effectiveness of their proposals and the benefit they bring to the internal security sector.
- **Develop training programs for women and girls** on public speaking and political engagement. Programs like “Les Investies” provide tools that better prepare and equip women to engage in politics or assume positions of responsibility in municipalities, local councils, etc. The establishment of leadership academies, as seen in Burkina Faso, is also an interesting example—especially considering that Burkina Faso organized its first regional feminist festival in 2022.
- **In particular, support young girls in developing feminist networks** by creating links with existing networks in other regions or countries to share best practices. In some countries, such as Burkina Faso, established networks have strengthened the capacities of young girls, making them better equipped to defend their rights and pass on this knowledge to their peers. Notably, Burkina Faso held its first feminist festival in 2023, an event that was renewed the following year with significantly increased participation.

5. Facilitating Access to Information

This aims at creating and supporting information spaces so that women develop a better understanding of their rights:

- Almost all interviews reveal that women and girls generally have little knowledge of their rights, and particularly of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The awareness-raising efforts by NGOs and associations appear insufficient and may not always be well adapted to their needs. Thus, it is necessary to develop additional mechanisms for disseminating information about women's rights that are tailored to the Chadian context. In fact, other tools must be created to ensure that women and girls have clear access to information and their rights. Good practices already exist, notably with the mobile website BackUp, which, through its informative functionality, allows girls and women to learn about their rights and understand how to implement them in accordance with their environment. The joint project by the NGOs Bibliothèques Sans Frontières and We are NOT Weapons of War, which established IDEAS Cube—an information space available as a digital library without an internet connection, providing access to the BackUp tool and contextually adapted content—has been operating in various countries and remote areas with significant positive effects.
- The use of technological tools also enables women and girls to report sexual violence without having to speak to someone directly. They can do so via secure technological means managed independently by NGOs. This aspect often builds trust and facilitates the free expression of their experiences, knowing that what they say will not be disseminated within their communities. Many victims of sexual violence are very reluctant to come forward or publicly denounce their attackers, often feeling insecure about speaking to anyone in their territory or community, fearing stigmatization by their community, or feeling suppressed by those responsible for addressing these issues. In the two surveys conducted in Ouaddaï and Lac, evidence shows that no woman directly or explicitly mentioned sexual violence or rapes—even in the context of conflict. Such silences are found in many regions of the world.

6. Advocating for the Integration of Women into Security and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

In order to better develop the security sector and conflict resolution mechanisms, the needs of women and girls must be addressed through:

- **Creating mediation bodies and dialogue spaces** that allow women and girls to express freely themselves. For example, CLSPD are essential mediators. However, the CLSPD in Abéché still lacks sufficient support to include women and girls. These local councils should also work on developing networks of women in security at more grass-roots levels.
- **Supporting predominantly patriarchal institutions** to facilitate the integration and recruitment of women into professions related to security and conflict resolution. This involves engaging in dialogue with traditional authorities and with husbands/fathers to change entrenched perceptions and allow women to be integrated into these sectors. In Niger, a program that established discussion groups with traditional authorities and community men has shown significant results both in educational terms and in gaining authority when traditional or religious leaders deliver messages. A similar pilot initiative was implemented in the Mouhoun Loop region in Burkina Faso, which also yielded positive outcomes, such as a reduction in domestic violence and increased acceptance of integrating female mentors to work with religious and community leaders in conflict resolution.

7. Revitalize the Operationalization of the National Action Plan for Resolution 1325

- **Explore Institutional Support Needs:** Assess the supervising ministry's requirements regarding resources, expertise, training, etc.
- **Create a Coordinated Working Network:** Establish an inter-ministerial network coordinated by the Ministry of Women, involving supervising ministries such as FSI, Defence, Public Health, Education, Justice, and Decentralization, along with other relevant ministries, traditional leadership, and religious representatives. This inter-ministerial effort should also include civil society and women's networks. Creating such a body—potentially under the high patronage of the Prime Minister or Head of State—would energize the involved actors, promote interdisciplinarity and inclusivity, and facilitate the formation of local groups in cooperation with local authorities (municipalities and prefectures) to identify the needs, obstacles, and resources required for implementing Resolution 1325.
- **Analyse the Impact of the Women's HQ:** Evaluate the effect of the UNDP-established women's headquarters to build on this initiative and drive actions for better integration of women's voices and positions in institutions, particularly in decision-making roles. It is evident that the only impactful initiatives currently are those led by TFPs, highlighting a significant lack of institutional ownership of WPS issues.
- **Establish a Cluster of Influential Women:** Create a network of influential women focused on the role of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and security matters. Work with female role models at both national and local levels, especially those who have succeeded in sectors such as internal security.
- **Recognize and Support Key Local Actors:** Value and back local actors who have historically contributed to the adoption process of Resolution 1325, serving as institutional memory and as driving forces for coordination and dialogue.
- **Build a Political Dialogue:** Develop messaging, led by civil society and particularly women's networks, to address current shortcomings in women's representation during consultations that are critical for the country's political future. The Doha Peace Agreement between Chadian authorities and the 44 politico-military groups is a striking example of these challenges.

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PASAS

PLATEFORME D'ANALYSE,
DE SUIVI ET D'APPRENTISSAGE
AU SAHEL



PORTÉ PAR



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Le Fonds Minka, mis en œuvre par le groupe AFD, est la réponse opérationnelle de la France à l'enjeu de lutte contre la fragilisation des États et des sociétés. Lancé en 2017, Minka finance des projets dans des zones affectées par un conflit violent, avec un objectif : la consolidation de la paix. Il appuie ainsi quatre bassins de crise via quatre initiatives : l'Initiative Minka Sahel, l'Initiative Minka Lac Tchad, l'Initiative Minka RCA et l'Initiative Minka Moyen-Orient.

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conférences d'échange autour des résultats des études. La plateforme soutient ainsi la production et le partage de connaissances, en rassemblant des analyses robustes sur les contextes sahéliens et du pourtour du Lac Tchad.

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