

Youth, Peace and Security

Report 14





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Youth is the most important weapon for peace



In December 2015, the Security Council of the United Nations (UN) passed the resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. This is the first ever resolution by the UN on peace keeping and security policy where young people are placed at the centre. It challenges the way we think about youth in conflict, from being a problem, to being the main solution in creating a more peaceful world.

"The greatest strength is that it [the resolution] comes from young people themselves" says Libyan Hajer Sharief in an interview in this report. In 2017 Sharief won the Student Peace Prize, and has been one of the young people central to the efforts that created resolution 2250. The fact that the resolution was prepared and pushed forward by a young civil society is in itself a clear sign of how significant the potential of youth are as peace actors. Real and meaningful youth participation in peace work is the running theme of the resolution and it will lose its power without having this factor as

an overarching principle. The fact that the Security Council passed this resolution is a victory for young peace activists worldwide. It gives clear measures to decision makers on how youth should be included in peace and security work. Now the politicians need to follow up the work.

More than one year has passed since the resolution was approved, and implementation efforts have slowly started, but not as fast as they should. With this report, LNU wishes to put the resolution further up on the agenda in Norway and contribute to 2250 being followed up by decision makers nationally, regionally and internationally. Norway has the chance to take a leading role in promoting the resolution. The formalities are adopted, and now the most important part of the work remains: the implementation. We have the tools to get it right, now is the time to use them.

Stian Seland, Chair, the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU)



PHOTO: UN PHOTO / PIXABAY.COM / SAIH

"Peace is central to Norwegian foreign policy and it is therefore natural that Norway takes a leading role in promoting the resolution"



Summary

Youth are among those most affected in war and conflicts around the world – both as civilians and as combatants. More than 600 million young people live in fragile states or areas that are affected by conflict, and constitute 40 percent of the 1.5 billion people living in war-torn and vulnerable areas.

Today's youth group is the largest ever and represents one quarter of the world's population. Youth make up the majority of the population in many fragile states, and in some countries the youth proportion are as high as 80 percent. Statistically speaking, large numbers of young people are associated with increased risk of armed conflict. This risk increases with low prospects of education, few job opportunities and exclusion from political participation.

Most young people that exert violence are not violent because they want to, but because they have no good alternative. This has to change. We must challenge the way we think about youth in conflict, from being a problem to positive change makers in the global security policy. By giving youth opportunities, and insuring real and meaningful youth participation in society, they could become the key to lasting peace.

Despite the fact that we have a lot of knowledge about the situation of youth in war and conflict, there are still large knowledge gaps when it comes to youth and peacebuilding, and their role in peace processes. Young people are mostly seen as an obstacle to peace, and there is little research that looks at the positive role of youth in peacebuilding. We need more knowledge in this field. A study from the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) focusing on Nepal, Colombia and Democratic Republic of

Congo concludes that using youth in peacebuilding processes creates more confident and active participants in society; reduces violence; contributes to less discrimination; increases peaceful coexistence; and increases support for vulnerable groups in society.

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. Because of the resolution, the need to increase youth participation in peacebuilding was put on the global agenda for the first time

Norway, together with the other Nordic countries, has been an important driving force for the international implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Lessons learned from the work on 1325 can be used in the implementation of resolution 2250. Resolution 2250 is binding, and thus Norway is required to implement it. To make sure this happens LNU proposes the two following measures:

- 1. Norway takes a leading role in promoting the resolution within the UN.
- 2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should design a national action plan on resolution 2250, Youth, Peace and Security

Promoting peace is central to Norwegian foreign policy and it is therefore natural that Norway takes a leading role in promoting the resolution. In the implementation of 1325, national action plans have been central to the success, and such a plan will give direction and form to the resolution. Participation is a fundamental principle of resolution 2250, and has to be at the forefront when Norway implements the resolution.

1. Youth in war and peace

1.1 Vulnerable Youth

The world is becoming a more peaceful place claimed researchers at The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in 2011. They had conducted an analysis in which they looked at the expected development of the level of conflict in the world from 2011 to 2050. There was reason for optimism, as the proportion of armed conflicts had been steadily decreasing since 1992. ¹In 2011 however, the trend reversed. ² Since 2011, the number of conflicts has increased, more people die as a result of armed conflict, and an increasing number of people are forced to flee.

Young people are among those most affected by wars and conflict around the world - both as civilians and as combatants. More than 600 million young people live in fragile states or areas affected by conflict.³ Thus, they make up 40 percent of the 1.5 billion people living in war-torn and vulnerable areas. ⁴Young people are affected by violence and conflict in a variety of ways - through organised crime, political violence and terror.

We know that young people, particularly young men, are the most vulnerable in terms of recruitment to extremist armed and violent groups. Young people today dominate the armed groups involved in violent conflict, as they always have. At the same time, young men between the age of 15 and 29 constitute the majority of the victims of such conflicts. ⁵ Young women also participate as combatants. In 2008, around 100 000 young women under the age of 18 fought in armed conflicts globally. ⁶

Today, we are experiencing the largest youth group ever, representing a quarter of the world's population. Statistically speaking, large numbers of young people are associated with an increased risk of armed conflict. ⁷ This risk increases with low prospects of education, few job opportunities and the lack of opportunities for real and meaningful participation.

The UN Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security is a breakthrough because it states that young people

themselves need to be an actor in creating lasting peace. The resolution limits youth to those between the age of 18 and 29, but as there is no consensus on how the term youth is defined globally, it allows for different definitions to be used depending on culture and context. This report will not limit the term youth to a specific age range, but focus on the transition from childhood to adulthood.

1.2 Insufficient knowledge

Despite the fact that we have a lot of knowledge on the situation of youth in war and conflict, there is still a large knowledge gap when it comes to the role of youth in peacebuilding, and their role in peace processes. 8 Young people are often seen as an obstacle to peace, and there is little research that has looked at the positive role of youth in peacebuilding. In the first global study that was done on violence against children, children were only considered as victims, and children and youth were not mentioned as possible change agents or as part of peaceful solutions. 9 The peace researchers Del Felice and Wisler, claim that shortage of child- and youth participation at decision-making levels are a form of structural violence, where decisions are made for children and young people without their participation. 10

Research shows a clear link between rising levels of social, economic and political exclusion and lack of opportunities, and the inclination to engage in violent activity. "The need for identity and a sense of belonging is important for young people. Where affiliation is missing, violent gangs or extremist groups may offer an alternative. Although poverty is often highlighted as an explanation for why young people are drawn to extremist groups, it is actually only part of a larger picture, where the need for affiliation is just as important.

Some research on youth as peace builders has been carried out and show that peacebuilding where youth are involved yields positive results. A study from the United Network





of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) focusing on Nepal, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of Congo concludes that by using youth in peacebuilding processes creates more aware and active participants in society; reduces violence; contributes to less discrimination; increasing peaceful coexistence; and increases support for vulnerable groups in society.

1.3 The lack of opportunities

We know that violence has a negative and lasting impact on the lives of young men and women. Many young people have traumatic experiences from war and conflict which gives long-term psychological consequences. Many lose their family members and friends, and in addition young people are losing out on a variety of opportunities that youth in peaceful societies take for granted.

Young people often have to take on a more adult role in situations of war and conflict, for example by raising siblings, taking care of family members, earning money to make a living and take responsibility in the home. Therefore, young people growing up in areas of conflict are forced to take on tasks that should be managed by adults. The consequence for many youth is lack of schooling and education. This can in turn lead to preventing or delaying the transition to adulthood, and thus the risk of being marginalised increases. Without education, there is a risk of being left outside the labour market, which can contribute to economic exclusion and the lack of a social network.

The labour market is one of the areas where it is particularly visible that young people are severely affected by war and conflict. Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, and in a number of developing countries around two-thirds of the young population are unemployed or have casual jobs. Unemployment among young people is increasing, and in 2013 there were more than 73 million unemployed young people between the age of 15 and 24. This is equivalent to 36 percent of the 202 million unemployed in the world. 12

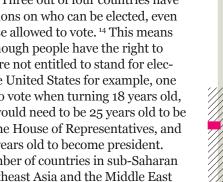
Young people are excluded not only economically and socially, but also politically. Although over half of the world's population

are under the age of 30, only 2 percent of the world's parliamentarians are under 30 years old. 13 Three out of four countries have age restrictions on who can be elected, even among those allowed to vote. 14 This means that even though people have the right to vote, they are not entitled to stand for elections. In the United States for example, one is allowed to vote when turning 18 years old, while one would need to be 25 years old to be elected to the House of Representatives, and at least 35 years old to become president.

In a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East the political marginalisation of youth is very visible. The Middle East is a region with many authoritarian regimes and a high proportion of youth. The population has few or no political rights; there is a high degree of state repression, a lack of an independent judiciary and widespread media censorship. Simultaneously, there has been a sharp rise in the number of young people who are educated, and particularly among women. Despite this, the region has the highest amount of youth unemployment in the word.

Young protesters were those who stood at the forefront of the "Arab Spring", moving from Tunisia to Bahrain in 2011, where social media and mobile phones played a key role. Many of the protesters were highly educated young people that were greatly affected by unemployment and high housing prices. The revolutionary wave has given limited political results, and protesters currently have little or no political power. 15

- 1. Stephansen S. M. (2012).
- 2. Bistandsaktuelt (2016).
- IANYD (2016).
- 4. Flyktninghjelpen and Mercy Corps (2016).
- Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2011)
- UNDP (2016).
- 7. Urdal (2010).
- 8. IANYD (2016).
- 9. Del Felice and Wisler (2007).
- 10. Ibid.
- 11. Del Felice and Wisler (2007), Barakat, Urdal and Paulson (2010).
- 12. UNFPA (2014).
- 13. UNDP and Inter-Parliamentary Union (2012).
- 14. Not too young to run (2016)
- 15. Store Norske Leksikon (2016)





2. From problem to solution

2.1 Youth as peacemakers

The 9th of December 2015, history was written in the UN Security Council when it adopted resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. This is the United Nations first resolution on peace building and security policy where young people are placed at the centre as part of the solution – not just the problem. It challenges the way we think about youth in conflict, from seeing them as a problem,

UN resolution: A UN resolution is a formal text adopted by any UN body, but in practice is published mostly by either the Security Council or the General Assembly. Resolutions adopted by the Security Council, such as 2250, are binding under international law, which means that UN Member States are obliged to follow the content of the resolution, also Norway.

Resolution 2250: Was adopted by the UN Security Council in December 2015. It is acting on Youth, Peace and Security. It is a binding agreement for all UN member states.

Resolution 1325: Was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000. Acting on Women, Peace and Security. It is binding for all UN member states. 63 countries have made their own action plans to follow it up. to a positive change player in global security policy. It recognizes the need to focus on youth as a separate group in the security policy and peace-making. Resolution 2250 is legally binding, and thus Norway is obligated to implement it.

As part of the resolution the need to increase young people's participation in peacebuilding was put on the global agenda for the first time. Resolution 2250 may generate a number of specific consequences due to the pursuit of a largely unused resource. youth, in order to create a more peaceful world. The implementation efforts have already started in several countries. In Nepal, for example, there has

been prepared a 10-year strategy for youth development where the participation of young people is central. The resolution has also changed how the UN operates at ground level, including in Somalia. ¹⁶ See interview on the next page.

2.2 By youth, for youth

Resolution 2250 is unique because it is about young people, but also because it has been prepared by young people. The efforts to develop the resolution began in 2012 when the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), a network of youth-led peace organisations from 45 different countries, began using an already existing network of youth worldwide who wanted to focus on youth in peace efforts. The group's goal was to put this issue on the agenda of the United Nations. After several rounds with key personnel, the group decided to require a separate resolution on Youth, Peace and Security - an idea that initially had been inspired by the Finnish UN Association. 17

Given the increasing threat of more young people being radicalised into violent groups – the resolution was thought to turn the table: By assuring young people real and meaningful participation in decision-making at local, national, regional and international levels, one is hoping that youth can contribute to create lasting peace. To move away from seeing youth as a potential problem and rather see them as being part of the solution is central to the resolution. The resolution was prepared and driven by the young civil

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^{16.} Youth Policy Press (2014)

^{17.} UNOY (2015)



João Scarpelini (b. 1986). From Brazil. Youth Adviser for the UN in Somalia.

PHOTO: UNSOM PHOTO, ILYAS AHMED

2250 in Somalia

Constructing peace is an integrated part of everything we do, says João Scarpelini. In one of the countries in the world with the youngest population resolution 2250 provides new tools for building peace.

What challenges are one facing with regard to youth and peacebuilding in Somalia?

It is important to clarify two things in a context like Somalia. Firstly, it is difficult to distinguish between the work we do related directly to peace-making and our other work. Basically, everything we do - to support state building, strengthening the constitutional state, develop infrastructure and create jobs - is linked to peace and stability. Secondly, it is difficult to define what the specific youth initiatives are because over 80 percent of the population is under 35 years old. Therefore, most of our work has a direct impact on young people, even programs that are not dedicated to youth. Most of our initiatives have a youth component, or the majority of beneficiaries or participants are under the age of 35, which is the official definition of youth in Somalia.

Somalia is one of the countries with the youngest population in the world, but the prospects for young people to get an education and a job are very limited. In addition,

the opportunities to engage in political, economic and social affairs are weak or non-existent. These opportunities are even scarcer for girls and young women.

To what extent do young people themselves get involved in peace-building activities?

Today in Somalia, the UN presence consists of 22 agencies, funds or programs, in addition to UNSOM, UNSOS and the World Bank. Previously, participation by young Somalis in the planning, implementation and monitoring of these programs were inconsistent. To avoid answering the needs of the country's youth would be the same as undermining prospects for lasting peace and stability in Somalia. This recognition has gradually emerged. After realizing that the Somali youth itself plays a crucial role, the United Nations systems in Somalia decided to put together a combined strategy. This framework builds on the recommendations of resolution 2250, which recognizes the role of young people as players in the UN's development work, rather than being passive recipients of UN support.

How will it be achieved?

Empowerment of young people - socially, politically and economically - is the core of the UN's youth strategy and an essential prerequisite for lasting change in Somalia. Focusing on young people will enable to exploit their full potential as social and economic actors, as well as peace builders.

An important element in empowering young people is to guarantee them the right to participate in decision-making. Lasting peace in Somalia will not be possible unless young people are represented in political life; have a voice in the national political dialogue; and a real participation in shaping the country's future. By creating permanent mechanisms for participation, it will be possible to create meaningful and sustained participation of Somali youth in decisionmaking at various levels. At a national level, participation in decision-making may happen through creating a permanent youth parliament, a national youth council, and by ensuring adequate youth representation in bodies that coordinates and monitors national youth policy.

How far has the implementation of the resolution reached in Somalia?

The implementation of the resolution is not easy, but a few things have already been done. Firstly, we have an action plan that looks at specific steps the United Nations in Somalia can take to implement the recommendations in the resolution. In relation to this we have held workshops for the UN senior management in the country, including the Secretary General's Special Envoy. The resolution has also been translated into Somali and been distributed to authorities and youth organisations and launched at a national event where 250 young people from all different regions of Somalia attended. Various working groups worked on specific measures to implement the resolution locally, and made a declaration together.

At a grassroot level, we work with

youth-led organisations to create new initiatives. These include, among others, a sports program whose aim is to gather young people across various groups and regions, and a forum for dialogue that takes place at universities in Mogadishu. We also creates space for young people to get their voices heard, including a blog project and radio training, in which young people can make their own podcasts about issues of concern to them, such as radicalisation and peacebuilding.

Other than that we are working to create a permanent mechanism for youth participation, such as the National Youth Conference, held for the second time in 2017, and the UN advisory board for young people, to be launched in 2017.

Although support is still very limited, it is not as if young people are sitting around waiting for it to come. There are already a number of youth-led grassroots projects that attempt to thwart/tackle tribal conflicts, the clan system and the general discontent caused by the conflict in the country.

What role should Norway take?

Norway is a powerful player in the international community and it would be great if Norway could use this influence to promote the need for donors to invest in young people. Especially in weak states donor money are allocated for programs that create benefits for young people, but very little is awarded (if any at all) to initiatives which are led by young people themselves, or making it possible for youth groups or youth organisations to lead their own program. It would be exciting if Norway would serve as a host for serious discussions between member states and donors about the challenges and opportunities that exist by supporting youthled initiatives in developing countries.

There is already research showing that youth-led initiatives provide good returns. I think that what we need now is to get a leader among donors to launch a truly meaningful debate on how the international community can support these initiatives in a better way.



2250: The road ahead

Hajer Sharief was part of the group that initiated the work on the 2250 resolution in the UN. For her the greatest victory is the recognition of the crucial role of youth in peace building.

Why do we need resolution 2250?

The 2250 resolution is a formal recognition from the Security Council of youth's role in peace and security work. We all know that the Security Council is the key player in shaping the global security agenda. Therefore, the fact that the Council itself says that including youth at all levels in debates on security in peace building is very important.

What are the resolutions' strengths and weaknesses?

The biggest strength is that it comes from young people themselves. The adoption of the resolution by the Security Council is a great victory for young people and a reward for all the work young peace activists lay down worldwide. In addition, the resolution has a strength in providing decision makers with guidance on how they can incorporate a youth perspective in peace and security work.

The weaknesses are related to the implementation, due to the Security Council not adopting a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the resolution. Therefore, implementation depends on each whether each member state chooses to implement it or not. The problem is that almost all governments say one thing, but do another. They say that they support youth and their role in work on peace, security and countering violent extremism, but very few actually do something concrete about it. This applies particularly to political and financial commitments to strengthen young people's role in these processes.

How should the UN member states proceed to implement the resolution?

The first thing that must happen is that they must commit politically to implementing the resolution. Once this is done, they should work closely with both national and international youth groups to develop a strategy for implementation. Young people must be included from the start; they should be given a role in early discussions with their governments on how they to best implement the resolution. In other words: They should include youth as key players in the process.

To ensure that the commitments are turned into action, the member states should also set aside financial resources to support the development of the resolution both nationally and internationally.

What role should Norway take?

There is no doubt that Norway can play a leading role in implementing the 2250 resolution. Norway presents itself as a country which is committed to promoting global human rights.

Norway is in a position where they can take a leading role in establishing, but also further develop, the global agenda on youth, peace and security. Norway has a strong influence within the UN and good relations with a number of developing countries. These relationships would enable Norway to promote the resolution both nationally and internationally in a number of countries.

11

Hajer Sharief
(b. 1992). From
Libya. Participated in the United
Network of Young
Peace Builders
(UNOY) Youth
Advocacy Team
that worked
on the 2250
resolution in the
UN. Awarded the
Students' Peace
Prize in 2017.

PHOTO: PRIVATE



Ahmad Alhendawi (second from left), the Secretary-General's first Envoy on Youth, briefs journalists on Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, after it was adopted in December 2015. At the briefing were also Sabah Ismail, youth peace activist from Pakistan; Dina Kawar, Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the UN; and Oscar Fernández-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support.

society, and this in itself is a clear sign of how big potential youth has as peace actors.

Resolution 2250 urges UN member states to establish mechanisms that provide young people the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in peace processes and conflict resolution. It calls on member states to engage local communities and civil society in developing strategies to combat violent extremism, and also to work for customised solutions for youth and other groups who are vulnerable of being recruited by violent groups. The resolution asks that young people's point of view is included in peace negotiations and in the implementation of peace agreements. Omitting youth will damage the prospects for lasting peace.

2.3 Participation as guiding principle

Resolution 2250 is addressing youth, peace and security through five different themes: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration. ¹⁸ The resolution gives a number of recommendations within each theme that member states, the UN and the civil society can use to develop policy in this field. A key point in the resolution is that young people are crucial actors in order to create lasting peace and should therefore get real participation in peace processes. Youth should participate in decision-making at all levels, both during and after conflict, but also in peacetime.

The principle of participation is a separate item in the resolution, but is also included in

LNU's principles for real and meaningful participation:

1. Independence:

Youth must independently get to choose which issues they want to engage in. Young people are entitled to be heard in all decisions affecting them and in decisions relating to topics where youth is engaged. Processes where young people are on equal terms as adults gives real influence.

2. Representation:

Participation initiatives must be based on already existing networks and youth organisations, which on its own initiative has mobilised issues they are concerned and have expertise in.

3. Expertise:

Youth who must be seen as experts with professional resources.

4. Sufficient information:

Participation means that young people should have access to all relevant information and support in the same way as other bodies have.

5. Continuity:

One-time events and processes that are not specifically amended do not bring participation.

the other themes. Without youth participation in all stages of implementation it will lose its power. Young people's rights to participate in policy making are rooted in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the CRC (the Convention on the Rights of the Child). According to LNU youth should not be included because they are the "leaders of tomorrow" or because they have to learn how the current system works. Nor should youth only be included because they know what is most important in typical youth issues. The main reason to include children and youth in political processes, and give them real power, is that it strengthens democracy. Organised youth have proven that they, more than other interest groups, are concerned about the society as a whole, and not only for young people's own interest. A common denominator for all young people is that they are not going to be young forever, they do not know

what needs they will have when they are stepping out of adolescence and into adulthood. It would therefore be in the youth's own interest to ensure that most of society is organised in the best possible way, facilitated to live a good life. ¹⁹ This means that young people have much to gain from a peaceful society.

For resolution 2250 to succeed, young people must be recognised as both partners and stakeholders. However, not all participation is good participation. LNU operates with five principles for real and meaningful participation; independence, representation, expertise, access to adequate information and continuity. These are core principles that need to be met in order for participation to be real and meaningful.

^{18.} UN Security Council (2015).

^{19.} LNU (2014).

3. Lessons from resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

3.1 Women at the forefront

The United Nation Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was created 15 years before resolution 2250. The initial goal for the resolution was to include women as actors in peace efforts. The resolution has many similarities with 2250, and the process that led up to it and the follow-up work afterwards can therefore give us many important lessons.

In many areas 1325 can be seen as a success story. First and foremost, the resolution required the UN member states to include women and gender perspective into their peace efforts. This had not been done systematically until then. Because conflicts historically mainly have involved men, particularly as military personnel, the role of women in conflict and peace-making have been underestimated. Resolution 1325 has shown that women are key actors in creating lasting peace and making humanitarian work more effective. 20 Resolution 1325 was also cited as a justification when Africa's first democratically elected female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. The Nobel Committee highlighted in their announcement that Johnson Sirleaf, after her inauguration as president of Liberia in 2006, has "contributed to securing peace in Liberia, promoting economic and social development and the empowerment of women". 21 The Colombian peace process, which Norway was facilitating, is widely cited as a model of how women and gender perspectives can be included in peace efforts, and the peace accord in Colombia is the accord where these perspectives have been integrated to the largest extent. 22

The resolution has made sure that a

number of countries now adopt a gender perspective in its peace and security policies, both nationally and internationally. For Norway, it implies among other things that there are clear procedures on how women should be included in peace processes. Norway includes both men and women in their delegations to peace talks and encourages other present parties to do the same. In addition, through training and courses, the expertise on women, peace and security have increased in the foreign service, the police and armed forces. The aim is that this should be put into practice both in Norway and in countries where Norway are being present, with special efforts in Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Palestine and South Sudan.

Per November 2016 have 63 countries adopted a national action plan on the basis of 1325. 23 Still, a number of major challenges remain to be solved. However, when resolution 1325 was adopted, it did not come with a set of indicators that made the achievement measurable. In Norway, such a set of indicators was added first in 2015. Thus, the systematic implementation has been highly variable from country to country due to the difficulties of verifying the achievements in comparison with the goals. Although research from UN Women shows that the chance of lasting peace after peace talks go up by 35 percent by including women in the process, below 10 percent of the world's peace negotiators are women.24

3.2 The women's movement as a key player

Resolution 1325 would never have been implemented if it had not been for strong women's organisations pushing for it to get passed. It was the international women's





A delegation of women from South Sudan meet foreign minister Børge Brende during the peace I negotiations in Addis Abeba in 2014. They were discussing how women to a larger extent can be included in peace processes.

PHOTO: KFUK-KFUM GLOBAL

movement who fronted it and who also authored the actual document. The process of implementing the resolution has been different in different countries. Norway has been a driving force from the beginning and has used the resolution actively in their policymaking. To follow up resolution 1325 Norway got its first action plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2006. Two years earlier, a group of 21 civil society organisations was established with the aim of providing input to the first Norwegian action plan. The group was named Forum 1325 and has played a very important role in the plan's development. Since 2006, the action plan has been revised several times. The latest action plan,

Women Peace and Security 2015 -2018, was published in February 2015.

Several of the experiences from the work on 1325 can be used when resolution 2250 is to be implemented. Particularly helpful is the experience with the preparation of a results framework, and much of this can be used when developing an action plan for resolution 2250.

- 20. UN Women (2015).
- 21. Nobelkomiteen (2011).
- 22. PRIO (2016)
- 23. Peace Women (2017).
- 24. UN Women (2015).

4. Norway's role in war and peace

4.1 A leading international role

Norway, together with the other Nordic countries, have a number of international positions, both in the UN system and in other major international organisations. The fact that Norway has been an advocate for resolution 1325 is therefore no surprise - it fits into "the Norwegian model of peace". The Nordic countries have often taken a leading role in international processes. Because of this, it is commonly said that Norway is "boxing above its own weight class".

An example of such leadership is the UN sustainable development goals, where Norway has taken a leading role on gender equality, education and health. Prime Minister Erna Solberg was in January 2016 named one of the heads of UN advocacy group on the sustainable development goals, which works to strengthen the overall effort to achieve the objectives globally. Following up the sustainable development goals has been important in Norway's international activities, and will be for years to come. Taking a leading role in following up resolution 2250 will strengthen this work and will ensure that Norway and the other Nordic countries can lead the way in fulfilling the sustainable development goal on peace and justice.

In some contexts, Norway is referred to as a peace nation. As a small country with a small population, peace diplomacy has given us status internationally. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Norway has served as a supporting player for the UN and other actors involved in mediation processes in a number of wars and conflicts, and has had a particularly important role in the peace processes in the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Colombia. 25 In addition, Norway has provided long-term assistance to conflict areas and developing countries. This effort has given Norway a good reputation, which Norway has been able to use to their advantage. Norway also awards the Nobel Peace Prize, which helps maintain the link between Norway and peace.

Even with clear principles for peace and reconciliation work, it has been difficult to maintain the reputation as a peace nation. Norwegian foreign policy is largely characterised by co-operation with our allies in NATO, and Norway has participated in military operations with and without a UN mandate. The military participation in Afghanistan, Iraq and the bombing of Libya has been heavily debated. In addition, Norway is one of the world's largest arms exporters relative to the population, and are exporting military equipment to a number of controversial regimes. ²⁶

The Norwegian peace- and security policy has evolved over time, and in 2003 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs created the department for peace and reconciliation. Today this department consists of 14 employees with a budget of over 600 million NOK dedicated to conflict prevention and resolution initiatives. 27 Norway is an active participant in a number of peace processes and post-conflict situations, either as a mediator, facilitator, or through civil society support. Norway has 12 focus countries in foreign- and development policy, and peace and stability are the main priorities in half of these, (Afghanistan, Mali, Haiti, Palestine, Somalia and Southern Sudan). Common for all the focus countries are that they are defined as "fragile states". In addition, these countries have very young populations. In Somalia, 70 percent of the population are under the age of 30,28 in Mali is half the population under the age of 15²⁹ and over 60 percent of the population in Afghanistan is under the age of 25.30 Investing in these countries is impossible without taking youth into consideration and resolution 2250 will provide good tools for this work.

Despite military participation in a number of conflicts over the last decade, Norway maintains an important voice internationally in terms of peace and reconciliation and is regarded as a relatively neutral player in most international conflicts. This gives Norway legitimacy and the space for action to promote



2250 internationally. It will be a good way to ensure the continuity of the peace- and reconciliation efforts, and international work must be seen in connection with the effort we put down at home.

In recent years, the status on international conflicts has changed - states are now facing new challenges, also nationally. War and conflict are no longer something that only take place within national borders or between neighbouring countries. Rather, also nonstate actors have become an increasing threat. International conflicts are forcing people to flee and the world is today experiencing the biggest refugee crisis since World War II. More than half of the people who have been displaced are children and young people. In 2015, over 5 000 of the refugees who came to Norway unaccompanied was minor asylum seekers. Of these, two out of three were from Afghanistan and many also came from Eritrea and Syria. 31 These are young people who has gotten their lives put on hold and who live in great uncertainty of what the future will hold.

Resolution 2250 also obliges Norway to invest in youth domestically, both in those who have grown up in Norway and those who come here fleeing from war and conflict. Lack of opportunities makes young people vulnerable to being recruited into violent activity, and it therefore important to invest in preventive measures at an early stage. Youth who lack opportunities or feel excluded from the main society are more likely to become radicalised. Norway has already adopted a national action plan to combat radicalisation and violent extremism, and much of the content of this can be used in efforts to implement resolution 2250.

4.2 A young civil society as a peace actor - two examples

To include youth and give them real participation in peace processes is the core of resolution 2250. This applies not only at the negotiating tables or in the formulation of national and international politics, but also at the grassroots level. Already, investment in youth is a focus in many countries. However, youth are very often seen as passive

recipients of aid, without being recognised as leading players.

There are already many projects led by and for young people. In the implementation of 2250, it is important that these efforts are being invested in. Supporting such projects economically will lay the building blocks for additional similar projects to emerge.

Norway already supports many grassroots initiatives around the world, and the Norwegian peace model is characterised by close co-operation between the state and the grassroots. Identifying projects which are led by young people will be very important in dealing with resolution 2250. LNU will, in in this regard, bring forth two good examples of such projects.

The first example is the Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund's (SAIH) work in Colombia. They have worked closely with the Colombian student organisation Asociación Nacional de Estudiantes de Secundaria (ANDES) since 2013, parallel to Norway facilitating the peace negotiations. In a country where pupils and students have been under severe pressure through decades of civil war, the peace efforts at educational institutions is crucial to creating a culture of peace among young people.

The other example is the work of KFUM Global in Southern Sudan. Since 2014, they have worked with the implementation of resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In their work they have included youth in general and young women in particular as actors. By doing this they have created a good foundation to continue working with the implementation of resolution 2250 in the country. The work of KFUM Global is thus an example to follow.

Continuing the support to these types of projects will strengthen Norway's work in international peace efforts.

- 25. Brende, B. (2014).
- 26. Tornes, E. (2014).
- 27. Utenriksdepartementet (2015).
- 28. UNDP (2017).
- 29. UNFPA (2017).
- 30. UNFPA (2017).
- 31. UDI (2016).

The Students under the state of the state of

• Over 50 years of civil war has made Colombia one of the most violence-torn countries. Despite a peace agreement between the guerrilla group FARC and the Colombian government signed in 2016, there is still a long way to go before Colombia is a peaceful society. Following the peace agreement, the Colombian government also initiated peace talks with the second major guerrilla group, the ELN.

There has been more money spent on warfare than on education throughout the civil war. In addition to the poorly working education system, the military presence in schools and universities has been a major challenge. Schools have been used as military bases and military have done forced recruitment of students. Recruitment of children under the age of 18 is prohibited under international law, nevertheless 289 young people were forcibly recruited in Colombia in 2015 according to figures from the UN Rapporteur for children. In addition, has educational institutions been attacked. Solely in 2015, eleven schools were destroyed in acts of war.

The attacks on schools and educational institutions in Colombia demonstrate how important it is to invest in education for young people in conflict situations. There are a number of organisations and grassroots

initiatives in Colombia that focuses on reforming the education system and working to ensure that schools are safe for Colombian youth. One of these is the Asociación Nacional de Estudiantes de Secundaria (ANDES), which has had a partnership with SAIH since 2013. The partnership was supported by NORAD until 2016 and continued by Operasjon Dagsverk (OD) from 2017.

ANDES are working on the issue to avoid that schools are being used as a place for forced recruitment into the army. They have documented and reported cases of forced recruitment and prevented that young people have been recruited to guerrillas or the Colombian army against their will. ANDES has campaigned for the right to refuse military service, and in relation to this they printed symbolic ID cards for conscientious objectors. They also made handbooks educating students about peace, which are being handed out in schools. In 2014 ANDES created human rights committees in 18 different educational institutions, and under the sponsorships of these committees hundreds of students have participated in courses on the right to conscientious objection. They have also created guidelines for raising awareness of the right to refuse military service and prohibit schools from offering lists of students to the army. ANDES are also represented in the national peace council in Colombia. Through this work, they aim to ensure that young people have an active voice in the development of national policies in the post-agreement context.

In December 2014, the guidelines for the protection of schools and universities from military use in armed conflict were finalised. Norwegian authorities have been a driving force in this work, and SAIH, ANDES and other civil society organisations have been key actors in dealing with the establishment of these guidelines. Although the peace agreement is signed, extensive important work remains, in addition to the ongoing negotiations with the ELN. SAIH, along with ANDES continue to educate young people and influence the government to prevent the recruitment of children and young people to war.



Colombia, 2014: Youth manifesting their support to the peace process, and demanding dialogue between the government and the gerilla group FARC.

PHOTO: SAIH

• Since Sudan gained independence in 1956, the country has been afflicted by civil war and has only experienced brief periods of peace. After 17 years of civil war a peace treaty was signed in 2005, and in 2011 a referendum as a result of the peace agreement led to the south disengaging from the north. In light of this, South Sudan is the youngest state in the world. Its history has been marked by conflict and after many attempts to create peace severe conflicts sparked once again in 2013. The long history of war has caused young south Sudanese to grow up with few opportunities for a safe and stable future. In addition, many young people live with traumatic experiences.

A population affected by war trauma has made peace efforts in the country difficult. In addition to poverty, lack of education and workplaces, having war trauma causes the youth to have a lacking belief in a peaceful future. Since 2014, KFUK-KFUM Global (YMCA-YWCA Global) has worked to implement the UN resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security together with South Sudan YWCA. As a youth organisation, it has been important for them to include youth in all its work, and young women in particular.

One of the main initiatives of South Sudan YWCA's work is treatment of trauma. They have a project supported by Norad where they since 2014 have educated young women to become counsellors in order to talk with young people traumatised by war. 7 counselling centres have been created across the country through the project, and they are one of very few actors who are specialised in this type of work.

With trauma treatment as a starting point, the goal of the project is to create hope among the young population, which are later followed up with concrete measures such as school access and the creation of small businesses.

Through the project the YWCA want to empower youth while making them understand that they must be active participants in order to create peace. The project trains young people to create their own tools for creating peace, as an alternative to waiting for the politicians to make change happen. Several of the young people who have been part of the project have participated in peace talks in Addis Ababa and at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva to work for increased participation of youth in peace efforts.

The young people from YWCA have also participated in peace groups, communicating a message of peace through various activities. By creating meeting points, such as sports events, they communicate their knowledge of peacebuilding in settings where young people meet.



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One of the main focusses of KFUKs work in South Sudan is trauma treatment. Through their project they train young women to become counsellors for youth with trauma.

PHOTO: KFUK-KFUM GLOBAL

On the Frontline: Youth, Peace and Security

5. Recommendations

With this report LNU aims to highlight resolution 2250, placing it on the agenda of Norway and contribute to 2250 to be implemented nationally, regionally and internationally. The resolution is adopted, but the most important part of the work remains: implementation.

Norway is obliged to follow up resolution 2250 as it is legally binding to all the UN member states. The question is not whether Norway should implement it, but how.

LNU urges Norway to take a leading role in pushing youth as an actor of change in peace efforts, and resolution 2250 has given us something concrete to hold on to in this work. LNU are asking the government to follow up 2250 in a way that allows young people to not only be passive recipients of policy measures, but also give them a real and meaningful participation in designing the measures that must be implemented. LNU proposes two measures in order to make sure this happens:

- Norway takes a leading role promoting the resolution within the UN
- 2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs designs a national action plan for resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security

5.1 Leading role in promoting resolution

Resolution 2250 was adopted in December 2015, and the first step is to make the resolution better known and put it on the agenda. LNU asks Norway to put in an effort to promote the resolution, particularly within the UN system. Norway already is a recognised actor in international forums and carries weight within the UN system on peace and reconciliation activities. There are a number of different venues Norway can use to contribute to this work:

Firstly, Norway is a candidate for the UN

Security Council from 2021. This is a unique opportunity to highlight resolution 2250. Promoting the resolution within the UN will strengthen Norway's application. Meanwhile, Norway should also support the work of the advisory group that the UN Secretary-General has established on 2250, as well as the work on the global study on Youth, Peace and Security.

Secondly, the Nordic countries traditionally hold public statements together in the UN Security Council and other United Nations forums. The idea of an independent UN resolution on Youth, Peace and Security originally came from Finland, and Norway will thus be able to benefit from close co-operation with the Finnish delegation of the UN. In addition, Sweden has a seat in the Security Council in 2017 and 2018, which also can help ensure that the Nordic countries have room to promote 2250 within the UN.

It will be very important to include youth in a real and meaningful way throughout this work. There are many different opportunities for inclusion. LNU has already created a network of organisations that wants to follow the developments around resolution 2250 in Norway. As of February 2017, the network consists of 14 organisations, in addition to LNU: SAIH, Changemaker, Press, KFUK-KFUM Global, Lawan Norway (The Kurdish Youth League), Spire, Socialist youth, Ung i kor, Plan Norway, Student's Peace Prize (Studentenes fredspris), KrFU, FN-sambandets ungdomspanel, Red Cross youth and Norwegian People's Aid Solidarity youth (Norsk Folkehjelps Solidaritetsungdom). Several of these organisations have extensive experience in working with youth and peace work, both inside Norway and internationally. The network, led by LNU will therefore be an important source of knowledge. Through the work with 1325, the Norwegian authorities



Norway is a candidate for the UN Security Council from 2021. This is a unique opportunity to highlight resolution 2250.

have been required to build up expertise on women in peace and security. Now Norway must build similar expertise on Youth, Peace and Security.

5.2 National Action Plan

An action plan provides direction and objectives when implementing the ambitions of a UN resolution. Such a plan is therefore useful because it provides a concrete template to hold on to and helps define the specific measures that must be implemented to achieve the larger long-term goals of the resolution. LNU want the Norwegian government to start the work on developing such an action plan on 2250. For this work it will be important to both listen to and include young people in a real and meaningful way from an early stage, both in Norway, as well as in partner countries in the south.

To ensure that the measures in the action plan are implemented, a fixed annual budget should be earmarked for the implementation of the resolution, both internationally and in Norway. It is very important to include youth at the grassroots level in this work, and to ensure that young people are active participants in the process and not just passive recipients of aid.

Based on the experience from resolution 1325, LNU would recommend that the government includes indicators in the action plan in order to make it easy to report on developments. Delivering annual reports should be a requirement from the start. To ensure continuity in the work the responsibility of monitoring should be added to the political leadership, with the government ensuring that the knowledge of youths' role in peace- and security work is incorporated throughout the whole of government and the authorities in general.

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"The fact that the Security Council passed this resolution is a victory for young peace activists worldwide."

Stian Seland, Chair, the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU)