



# WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK

AFGHANISTAN • PAKISTAN • INDIA

**NOTES ON THE**  
**WRN Annotated Bibliography**  
**on**  
**Gender and Security**  
**in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan**

**July 2013**

**Prepared by**

**The Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights**

*(Updating the September 2011 Concept Note prepared by Phoebe K. Schreiner)*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Background & Purpose of Annotated Bibliography.....	3
II. Bibliography Format, Content & Themes .....	4
Evolution of Bibliography Format and Content .....	4
Thematic Scope of 2013 Bibliography .....	5
III. Bibliography Methodology & Limitations.....	7
Types of Resources Included.....	7
Methods of Identifying Sources .....	8
Limitations in Identifying Sources .....	8
Recommended Readings .....	9
IV. Notes on Security: Findings, Gaps & Questions .....	9
Defining Security .....	9
The Impact of Lack of Security on Women: Country & Regional Trends .....	10
Global Trends To Improve Women’s Security .....	12
Summary .....	13
Questions for WRN Members/Partners .....	14
V. Notes on Corruption & Lack of Accountability & Transparency: Findings, Gaps & Questions.....	15
The Impact of Corruption and Lack of Accountability and Transparency on Women ....	16
Global Trends to Stop Corruption and Improve Transparency & Accountability of Political Institutions.....	17
Summary .....	18
Questions for WRN Members/Partners .....	18

*“We are a society that lives under constant threat of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks. Our people, leaders, markets, bus stations, security agency deployments, parliament—nothing is safe or immune from them. Despite that, I am amazed at the extraordinary strength of our people, especially women. The source of courage is the natural desire to keep on living in my opinion. But still people do not stop from going shopping or to the airports. They still continue to live their lives. I have also developed a sympathy towards the countless youth of security forces who are under constant threat and continue to perform their duties, risking their lives for their country. I am not in favor of war, but I do feel that these security and law enforcement personnel have families, possibly wives and children as well. May peace prevail in this region soon, and we stop seeing violence and bloodshed on our television screens and roads soon.”*

*Respondent to WRN’s Pulse Wire survey, 2011.*

## **I. Background & Purpose of Annotated Bibliography**

Women from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan share a struggle with decades of intra-state conflicts, the roots and consequences of which intricately connect the politics of the three countries. The governments have maintained highly securitized states (Kat, Cohen, 1975), and in the name of state security, the enforceability of women’s human rights has taken on a highly transactional form. Women’s human rights are treated as commodities subject to trade-offs among power-wielding stakeholders including armed fundamentalist groups who are liable for violating women’s fundamental freedoms in the name of culture or religion. The security agenda has further undermined the enforcement of laws and mechanisms for accountability, and in a context of widespread corruption, this has perpetuated a cycle of impunity and lack of accountability for violations and abuse against women and girls.

The Women’s Regional Network (WRN) aims to provide an opportunity for key women leaders in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India to unify efforts across borders and to build a common vision to address issues they face in trying to secure peace and stability in the region. The Network is especially concerned with the inter-linkages between security, extremism, corruption and militarization, including the militarization of aid and development as they impact women’s lives. This Network will focus its activities on the strengthening of democratic values to ensure women’s political and economic participation is non-negotiable in the struggle towards accountability, peace and justice.

The role of the Women’s Regional Network is facilitative: to assist communities of women to share their successes, learn from each other’s challenges, construct common agendas across borders, and pursue ways to collaborate and advance common goals and values to bring stability and equitable economic growth to the region.

WRN’s activities have included a listening tour in 2010, a planning meeting in Nepal in October 2011, a Regional Summit in 2012, and a Regional Consultation in 2013. Throughout these activities, WRN has collected information from women of the region about issues that have an over-arching impact on their ability to advance their agendas and effectively serve their constituents. Issues they have highlighted include: lack of security, including personal (physical), political and economic security; the lack of accountability and transparency at all

levels of government institutions; widespread corruption, undermining rule of law as well as enjoyment of political, economic and social rights; and pervasive militarization.

As part of its facilitative role, WRN commissioned an annotated bibliography to map recent studies, reports and other materials on these topics. The bibliography is meant to provide an initial baseline that will enable WRN members and partners to become familiar with the current discourse and evidence related to these themes; it is hoped that it can inspire new thinking, enliven regional debates, and enrich the Network's members' long term strategic planning. Critically, though, it is not meant to be taken as definitive or comprehensive; rather, it is meant to be a *living, working document*, that can continuously be expanded upon to serve its members and partners. All members and partners are invited to embrace the bibliography as their own and make ongoing recommendations to develop it.

## **II. Bibliography Format, Content & Themes**

The following section describes the evolution in the bibliography's format, content and themes, from the time of its initial development in 2011 to the present.

### Evolution of Bibliography Format and Content

The current, July 2013, bibliography is the product of three separate stages of work. An initial bibliography, in the form of an excel spreadsheet, was compiled by an external consultant, Phoebe K. Schreiner, over a period of approximately three weeks – from the end of August until mid-September, 2011. While this period of time was sufficient to capture many foundational works, it also proved somewhat limiting. The focus of this first iteration of the bibliography was on gender, security, and corruption.

An updating and an expansion of the bibliography's themes and resources was completed by the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights in April 2013. The new bibliography, while incorporating Phoebe Schreiner's work, differs in several key ways:

- A. It expands the thematic scope of the initial bibliography, adding new topics such as security sector reform and militarization, including sections on the impact of small arms and light weapons, and the militarization of humanitarian assistance and development aid. (See section below on Thematic Scope of 2013 Bibliography.)
- B. Additionally, a great number of new resources on the original themes were added.
- C. Although the initial bibliography prioritized open source material for reasons of accessibility, the April 2013 bibliography includes the results of extensive searches of academic journals. To ameliorate the accessibility problem, in cases where the research studies are only available through closed, subscription databases, their findings have been summarized in the body of the bibliography, and PDFs of the full-text articles have been provided as well (see F and G below).

D. In the interest of user-friendliness and readability, the format of the bibliography was transformed from an excel spreadsheet into a word document, and divided into thematic sections which can be quickly accessed individually by clicking on the name of the section on the Table of Contents page.

E. For the original 2011 resources, all URLs were checked, dead links discarded, and new URLs found.

F. Extensive annotations were added to both the original and new sources; the goal is for readers to be able to get a good sense of the content or argument of each article or report, even if they lack time to read the full text.

G. A document library was compiled, so that WRN members can get access to all of the full-text resources cited in the bibliography, including those which are not readily available online or which are normally only available through closed, subscription databases. (The documents will be accessible to WRN members through a “Dropbox” log-in.)

In July 2013 the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights worked on expanding the bibliography once more. The goal was to expand the material available on the militarization of humanitarian assistance. In particular, an effort was made to find additional resources that explicitly address the gendered impacts of this trend; however, despite extensive searching, these materials proved impossible to find, and we must conclude that this remains a significant gap in the literature on the militarization of aid.

The July 2013 revision does, however, add significant new resources, many of which are in the bibliography’s appendix surveying the gender-blind militarization of aid literature, and the discussion of the major themes and argument on this topic was expanded and nuanced.

### Thematic Scope of 2013 Bibliography

The 2011 bibliography was divided into two separate themes: security; and corruption & lack of accountability & transparency. (The “notes” on each of those themes, with relevant findings, gaps & questions, have been retained below, as sections IV and V; they have been lightly updated to reflect new developments in the year and a half since the bibliography first came out, as well as some of the thematic expansion of the 2013 bibliography, but they remain largely intact.)

The 2013 annotated bibliography extends the thematic scope of the project in several significant ways.

- The bibliography adds a focus on the **Militarization** which is pervasive throughout much of the region, and examines the ways in which it deepens and multiplies the threats to women’s security – whether it is the militarization characteristic of:
  - **armed conflict** itself;

- or of the “national security state” / **highly militarized states** which are not officially at war but which justify many different forms of repression on the basis of “national security”;
  - or of communities awash in **small arms and light weapons**;
  - or of **humanitarian assistance and development aid** projects.
- Given this added focus on violence and insecurity that arises from the presence of state security forces, the bibliography has also added resources on **Gender and Security Sector Reform**.
  - It also adds resources about the growing influence of **Religious Extremism and Fundamentalisms** in the region, and the ways they impact women’s security.
  - **Corruption** has been looked at, not only as a violation of human rights, but also as an important cause of women’s personal, economic and political insecurity.
  - For analytic purposes, differentiations have been made between different aspects of In/Security itself -- **Personal (Physical) In/Security, Economic In/Security, and Political In/Security**. While these three aspects of security are, of course, never wholly distinct in “real life,” as the bibliography grew in length, it proved useful to create separate sections for each, as a way to enable a more focused look at any one of them.

But even while expanding the bibliography into new territory and, for analytic purposes, distinguishing between different dimensions of women’s (in)security, the WRN researchers from the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights were struck by the complex interrelations *between* all these different dimensions of security – indeed, even their indivisibility.

And this is the key point regarding the multiple themes and sections of the 2013 annotated bibliography: *all these aspects of women’s in/security are both conceptually linked and practically interrelated in women’s lives*. To cite but a few examples:

- High levels of gender-based violence sanctioned by patriarchal beliefs have been exacerbated by the rise of religious extremisms, which are themselves, at times, a response to or element of rising levels of militarization.
- Corruption often results in a lack of access to justice, which not only heightens women’s personal insecurity, but also helps fuel insurgency -- which in turn creates yet more threats to women’s security. And militarization creates the opportunity for increasing corruption.
- Widespread militarization, for example, as in the armed conflict in Afghanistan, has had multiple layers of effects.
  - It has resulted in violence against civilians perpetrated by Taliban/insurgents, Afghan, US and other international armed forces, private military and

- security contractors, and criminal networks, all exacerbated by a lack of accountability.
- It has also led to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons throughout the society, with concomitant increases in the lethality of domestic violence and street crime.
  - The increase in violent crime and the building up of criminal networks makes leaving the home more dangerous for women, hampering women's ability to participate in economic or political life – so personal, economic and political security are all degraded.
- The increasing militarization of humanitarian and development assistance poses special dangers for women: when militaries take on humanitarian assistance and development projects as a way of “winning hearts and minds,” or when they employ women soldiers as a way to gather intelligence from local women, or when intelligence agencies collect information by posing as “humanitarian assistance workers,” they create new insecurities for women, transforming women householders and local women assistance workers into more ‘attractive’ targets of attack.
  - When women take the risk of participation and leadership in economic and political life despite the dangers, patriarchal norms sanctioning sexual harassment and gender-based violence combine with pervasive corruption in governmental and private institutions -- threatening not only women's ability to accomplish their goals, but their bodily, economic and political security itself.

This list could be much longer, and the resources in the bibliography make these and many other connections evident. While the structure of the bibliography has a section-by-section focus on multiple different dimensions of women's (in)security, it is their interrelatedness that is key. And while the synergistic linking of these different dimensions may in some ways be very daunting, it also means that there are multiple critical leverage points which can have the effect of creating a cascade of changes. It is hoped that some of the resources in this bibliography will prove useful tools in that effort.

### **III. Bibliography Methodology & Limitations**

The following section describes the types of resources included in the bibliography, the methodology used to compile it, and some of the limitations inherent in its development.

#### **Types of Resources Included**

WRN sought to identify sound research studies and evidence-based reports, prioritizing reports about the region authored by scholars and research institutes from the region, but also casting a wider net. In the absence of regional reports on South/Central Asia, WRN also sought cross-regional or international studies as they may prove useful in informing the

Network's thinking. Note that in many cases where reports were published by international organizations, such as the United Nations or World Bank, authors or co-authors were often South Asian experts/scholars/researchers.

While the bibliography was initially envisioned to identify research studies, it very quickly expanded to include other types of valuable materials on relevant subjects. These include for example *handbooks or manuals* (such as security strategy guides for women's human rights defenders); *op-ed newspaper articles* (such as those reinforcing the importance of women's participation in peace negotiations); *national/international policies and action plans* (such as translations of Security Council Resolution 1325 or national action plans on women authored by governments); and other *general resources*, such as key websites with valuable information that may be of interest to WRN's members.

### Methods of Identifying Sources

The materials cited in the bibliography were identified in a variety of ways. First, WRN invited members of its global advisory board, who are leaders in the region and internationally, to provide recommendations on studies or other works related to the two themes. WRN also invited (and is particularly grateful to) Swarna Rajagopalan, a scholar with expansive knowledge on the subject matter in South Asia, who generously shared her expertise and recommendations. Second, WRN conducted open source searches using the internet, using key word searches by topic, country and region, and, when known, the names of reputable authors or well-known research institutes (see limitations on this method noted in the next section). Third, the bibliographies of the studies found also served to provide a wealth of information. Finally, the research team conducted closed-source searches of academic journals available only through university libraries.

### Limitations in Identifying Sources

Initially, the search process uncovered limited numbers of reports by locally based institutes/NGOs; however, this is in part a result of using search engines that are programmed to default to websites with the highest levels of traffic. For example, WRN's researchers frequently got search results of reports posted on United Nations (UN) websites given that UN sites receive higher numbers of visitors from across the globe. Smaller, country-based research institutes working only in their local/national context came up, but less frequently, using "google" and other popular search engines.

To remedy this challenge, WRN renewed its effort to obtain recommendations from its global advisory members from the region, such as Najla Ayubi or Dr. Sabiha Syed, as well as WRN partners, such as Swarna Rajagopalan, and international members who lived in the region, such as Clare Lockhart. Once research institutes, journals and NGOs based in the region were identified, their websites were mined for relevant resources.

Another limitation concerns the searches of electronic databases of academic journals. The subscription databases used were those accessible at a US university; although they included some journals from the region, no doubt others were not included.



Finally and perhaps most significantly, all relevant searches were conducted in English only, which may have also hindered WRN's efforts to identify locally-authored sources, such as those written in Dari, Hindi, Urdu, or other regional languages. As much as possible, WRN made note of materials written in other languages.

### Recommended Readings

Given the bibliography's extensivelength, WRN's initial bibliography highlighted recommended readings for the 2011 Planning Meeting (indicated with asterisks), some of which are referred to below. A tremendous number of resources have been added since that time; WRN members and partners are invited to highlight any of those as especially recommended for other network members, as well as to add additional readings themselves.

Again, then, WRN stresses that this bibliography is a living, working document that can be continuously expanded upon, and welcomes contributions from members and partners.

## **IV. Notes on Security: Findings, Gaps& Questions**

*“Anything that hurts humanity’s dignity is violence...The violence I have seen in my everyday life is not by the Taliban, but by their influence on people’s minds and attitudes. I have seen my uncles deny their daughters an education or [prevent them from gaining] skills outside the home. This is harsh violence. Another form of violence is the fear we have of our own people, just by keeping knives and weapons under pillows at night for security, which sometimes causes violence in the family. I have seen these types of violence in my daily life.”*

*“[The most common cause of violence in my region is] traditional conservative thoughts and beliefs, which restrict women from engaging in social activities.”*

*“Gender-based violence arising from patriarchy is the most widespread form of violence in my country – rape, dowry deaths, forced incest, abduction and trafficking of women and girls, domestic violence – there is no end to the list.”*

*Respondents to WRN’s Pulse Wire survey, 2011.*

Investigations for the bibliography yielded a variety of results on the theme addressing the impact of lack of security on women in the region.

### Defining Security

First, as reflected in the quotes above, women of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India define “security” broadly. Security for women is not simply the “national security” of the State, but rather was frequently described as freedom from personal violence and intimidation in

public and private spheres. Countless reports from and about the region also showed that security for women was a state or environment in which they maintain the ability to control their own mobility, to go to school or work, earn an income, participate freely in political affairs, and exercise the full spectrum of their fundamental human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural). (On the topic of defining security, see Rajagopalan 2005.

### The Impact of Lack of Security on Women: Country & Regional Trends

**Afghanistan:** WRN’s researchers found that there is extensive information available on the impact of lack of security on women in Afghanistan. International organizations in particular have published significant works in English,<sup>1</sup> a likely result of the vast amount of resources that have been invested into Afghanistan by the international community. Reports/studies address all angles of women’s security connected to the armed conflict, such as violence perpetrated by Taliban/insurgents, criminal networks and international security forces, etc. In addition, there are many reports looking at women’s security from a human development perspective—from maternal mortality and health (Physicians for Human Rights), to economic and food security (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights), to domestic violence (Global Rights).

In general, there were countless reports highlighting women as victims of violence, bringing attention to the failures of political and security institutions, and calling for reform. Yet when it comes to the topic of security, very few reports have recognized what women are doing as agents for change (note that Afghan women political leaders and women’s human rights defenders are specifically targeted for violence, and may also be choosing to keep their work under the radar). Very positive recent developments are under way in Afghanistan to forward the women, peace and security agenda--UN agencies in Afghanistan (UNAMA and UN Women) and women’s civil society are beginning dialogue on what women are doing in the area of peacebuilding and what they want from a peace process. A statement was prepared by women’s civil society on these topics for the Special Representative of the UN mission in Afghanistan on September 15, 2011, the “UN Open Day on 1325”. The statement affirmed that women are active in peacebuilding and want to be included in ongoing peace negotiations. (NOTE: these documents are noted in the bibliography but will have to be presented in hard copies separately, as they are not publically posted on the internet).

Finally, as the 2014 withdrawal of US and other international troops nears, there are a few reports on the ways that Afghan women and their allies are organizing to uphold the gains in women’s rights made since 2001, and to ensure women’s participation in the continuing peace processes (Afghan Australian Development Organisation 2013).

**Pakistan:** WRN’s researchers found very few references related to the impact of armed conflict on women in Pakistan. This is likely connected to a kind of ambiguity on the status of Pakistan—whether it is a country in outright conflict, or a fragile State in a frozen or quasi state of conflict. Yet many reports did address threats to women’s security, including rising

---

<sup>1</sup>It did not appear that the majority of the same works had been translated in Dari and Pashto, but this will need verification.

fundamentalisms in Pakistan, as highlighted in an NGO shadow report looking at the effect “Talibanisation” is having on women in terms of compromising the government’s implementation of CEDAW (noted as recommended reading in the bibliography). In addition, there was attention to the way the country’s blasphemy laws are playing a role in discriminating against minorities and how the laws are used to settle petty disputes through the use of violence.

There also appeared to be ample reporting on gender-based violence, including domestic violence, the impact of harmful traditional practices, and one report looking at the vulnerabilities of IDP women. Several reports highlighted the pervasiveness of sexual harassment -- in political institutions and in the workplace, as well as college girls’ experiences of sexual harassment on their way to school in the bus – all of which compromise women’s access to social, economic and political participation.

Regarding women’s initiatives in peacebuilding, the researchers found little, except there was a report looking at impediments to women’s participation in political affairs. It appears that, as in Afghanistan, women leaders (such as political leaders or women’s human rights defenders) in Pakistan are also targeted for violence.

**India:** With respect to India, WRN’s researchers found significant readings, in particular by Indian-based research institutes and NGOs. This is a positive indication of a strong, independent, and vibrant women’s civil society in the country. Many readings challenged traditional notions of security, and expanded upon them to reflect women’s security needs – inclusive of economic security, food security, and personal security (private and public). Significant works have been written on minority rights issues, reflecting on ethnic (e.g., Dalit) or religious (e.g., Muslim or caste-based) discrimination. In addition, many reports made note of female feticide, early marriage, violence and sexual harassment in public spaces, trafficking, and domestic violence as urgent security issues for women/girls.

While it appears that India has made significant progress on advancing women’s rights both at *de jure* and *de facto* levels in large part thanks to its strong civil society, at the same time, there seems to be much less discourse on women’s security issues in India’s northeast conflict-affected region – although at least one INGO has reported on the grave human rights abuses perpetrated by armed groups and government forces in areas where the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 is in force (Amnesty International 2005a). Note that there is significant reporting on the violent massacres in Gujarat and powerful demands for justice and accountability, yet the WRN researchers found only one focused specifically on how women were impacted (Amnesty International 2005b). WRN researchers were able to find some resources on the impact of the conflict in Assam and Nagalim on women (Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research 2011), and on women’s key role in peacemaking during the decades-long Indo-Naga conflict (e.g., Manchandra 2005). WRN’s researchers found only one women’s civil society initiative to strategise an action plan for building peace, providing justice and political rights in the region (NEIWIP),

In terms of problems within the security sector itself, two reports are noted in the bibliography related to the lack of accountability of the police and armed forces, and the deeply troubling Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. In addition, there appears to be a general thinking that armed conflicts are “over there” in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and not

prevalent inside India's own borders; this may have an impact on women and security agendas.

### Global Trends To Improve Women's Security

Globally, there are many initiatives underway to improve women's security. For example, many cities have joined the "Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women" initiative looking at introducing protection mechanisms to prevent violence against women, intimidation and harassment in public places (see Bibliography for example from India on the Safe Cities initiative in New Delhi). In the area of domestic violence, many countries around the world have introduced the "Community-Coordinated Response to Violence" framework (Duluth model) in which public officials, police, judges and social workers are all trained on responding to and preventing domestic violence. Many women's legal associations are also criminally prosecuting perpetrators of violence, as a means of stopping impunity for crimes against women. The Women's Initiative for Gender Justice (WIGJ) is one such organization, supporting the work of the International Criminal Court to prosecute gender-based war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide (see General Resource section for WIGJ's website).

In terms of women and security in the context of armed conflict, the most significant, landmark framework is the UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325, and its successor resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960). Resolution 1325 is best known as the "3 P's Resolution"—for protection, prevention and participation. In the words of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), "The adoption of Resolution 1325 was historic and unprecedented and marked the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women, recognized the undervalued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security."<sup>2</sup> Significantly, SCR 1325 is strongly praised by women's movements globally because it was drafted in full consultation with women's civil society and experts from the field.

Many governments around the world emerging from conflict have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) on 1325. The bibliography notes a website with links to every government NAP ever adopted, as well as NAPs from donor countries ([www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)). The researchers recommend to WRN members to review the NAP from Liberia<sup>3</sup> in particular, which is an outstanding example of a NAP adopted only after long consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including women's civil society and senior members of the security sector. Liberia is also significant because its peacekeeping operation was the first to have an all-female formed police unit (from India). Note that the bibliography includes a link to translations of SCR 1325 in Dari, Pashto, Urdu, and other languages applicable to the region.

---

<sup>2</sup> WILPF. "About Women, Peace and Security Policy in the UN Security Council."

[http://www.peacewomen.org/security\\_council\\_monitor/about-women-peace-and-security-agenda](http://www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/about-women-peace-and-security-agenda)

<sup>3</sup>See direct link to Liberia NAP on 1325:

[http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/liberia\\_nationalactionplanmarch2009.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/liberia_nationalactionplanmarch2009.pdf)

The governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India have not adopted 1325 NAPs; however, there appear to be some efforts under way to mobilize stakeholder support. As noted previously, women’s civil society and UN agencies in Afghanistan have already begun dialogue. UN Women - Pakistan’s website notes that the “Ministry of Women Development and UN Women are in the process of developing a strategic framework interventions on women, peace and security.”<sup>4</sup> Civil Society participation is not mentioned. For India, WRN’s researchers could only find one reference online about a desire by select women’s civil society organizations to draft a NAP,<sup>5</sup> but it is not clear if there has been further progress, nor buy-in from government or members of the security sector.

Finally, for any meaningful change to happen, there must be a shift in public thinking. Both in the region and globally, women’s needs for security are often seen as secondary to more “urgent” security needs of the State. This perception is reinforced by deeply patriarchal and fundamentalist thinking, as expressed by respondents at the beginning of this section. WRN members may wish to look at a report by AWID on strategies to address fundamentalisms, as well as the website of the Center for Women’s Global Leadership to see the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” media campaigns from around the world addressing women, violence and militarism, and other related themes. Both of these are referenced in the bibliography as recommended reading.

### Summary

- There appear to be no major *regional / pan-South Asian* networks or ongoing initiatives to advance the women, peace and security agenda
- How women define security is broad
- Public and private forms of violence against women are pervasive and systematic in all countries
- Governments typically view women’s security not as an integral part of national security, but rather as separate and secondary
- Women’s participation in peacebuilding is typically not acknowledged as vital to longterm peace and security<sup>6</sup>
- There is little attention to women engaged in peacebuilding
- Women’s civil society does not appear to have developed many strategic partnerships with members of the security sector in their countries (although the Safe Cities

---

<sup>4</sup> UN Women – Pakistan, “Women, Peace and Security in Pakistan – Towards Implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325.” <<http://www.unifem.org.pk/index.php/unifem/Events/Women-Peace-and-Security-in-Pakistan-Towards-Implementation-of-the-United-Nations-Security-Council-Resolution-1325>>

<sup>5</sup>Sansristi: a Gender Resource Centre and Pakistan India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD-Odisha Chapter), “Workshop on Women and Peace [in India].” Global Campaign for Peace Education News Blog. June 2011. <<http://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/newsblog/?p=252>>

<sup>6</sup>The following paper offers recommendations on how to make the case for women’s involvement in peacebuilding and security: Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) – India. Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika Sewak. “The Role of Women in Peacebuilding.” Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict: An integrated programme of research, discussion and network building (January 2005). <http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Resources/GPPAC%20Issue%20papers/The%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peacebuilding.pdf>

- initiative in New Delhi may be an exception?); there are, though, some international efforts to integrate gender into security sector reform
- There are no SCR 1325 NAPs adopted by the 3 governments, although discussions are gaining momentum

### Questions for WRN Members/Partners

The following questions are meant to help guide WRN's members and partners as they begin to envision a framework for the Network in the area of security.

- 1) *SHARE EXPERIENCES.* Very briefly, share what you or your organization has been doing in the area of security and women, OR how lack of security has impacted you/your organization directly and what your response has been.
- 2) *IDENTIFY THE IMPACT OF THE PROBLEM.* What do you consider the 1-2 most *urgent* ways women are impacted by lack of security in all three countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan and India? Very briefly, make note of what you think are the root causes.

*General Recommendation: consider how women are impacted individually, organizationally, and nationally, as well as publicly and privately.*

- 3) *DEFINE THE SCOPE OF SECURITY.* How broadly do WRN members want to define "security" for purposes of working together as a network? For example, if you focus on security related to bodily integrity, would it include "public" violence (e.g., violence perpetrated by armed groups) as well as "private" violence (e.g., domestic violence)? Would you also want to include "economic security" or "health security"?

*General Recommendation: whatever you decide, keep it focused! Organizations that spread themselves too thin often achieve the least.*

- 4) *DEFINE BENEFICIARIES.* What "women" are we talking about? Is it "all" women (and girls)? Women political leaders or women's human rights defenders who are specifically targeted for violence? Women from specific ethnic or religious groups who are specifically targeted? Poor women? Rural women? Etc.
- 5) *MAP CURRENT EFFORTS AND STAKEHOLDERS.*
  - a) What efforts are currently underway in your country to address issues of security and women? Have you observed strategies that are working to solve the problem underlying the lack of security for women?
  - b) What are you or your organization doing?
  - c) What are others from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India doing (such as mainstream civil society)?

- d) What are women's movements from other countries in South/Central Asia doing? Such as in Nepal? Bangladesh? Sri Lanka? Uzbekistan? Tajikistan? Iran?
  - e) What are global women's movements doing in the area of security and women? Are there efforts that you think might be relevant or applicable in South Asia's context?
- 6) *SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS*. Based on the security problem you identified and its root causes, brainstorm 1-2 possible concrete, practical solutions, or future advocacy recommendations, keeping in mind you do not need to have all the answers now (this is only a start to the thinking process).

*General Recommendation: Identify where more research or "homework" needs to be done in time for the Regional Summit, so that informed decisions could be made at that time.*

- 7) *OPEN DISCUSSION ON FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK*.
- a) What do you think could be the *value-added or strategic niche* of the Network in the area of 'security and women'? How could it help *you* build on and strengthen the work you are already doing?
  - b) In the area of security, what do you think the *focus* of the Network could be on (if it's still unclear)?
  - c) What kind of *impact* would you want to see the Network have ultimately? In other words, what specific kind of *concrete change* would you want to see the Network create in the region?
  - d) What kind of *members* would help the Network achieve that change? (for example, if the WRN decides to focus on security sector reform, could the Network invite 1-2 senior military or police officials who are allies to join the Network, help mobilize their counterparts, make recommendations, etc. Also, should member countries expand to include women from Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan or Iran?)
  - e) What *homework or additional research* needs to be done between now and the Regional Summit to educate members or prepare for next steps?
  - f) Time permitting, what are key elements, words, phrases or values you would want to see reflected in an WRN *mission and vision* statement related to security?
  - g) Time permitting, what do you think could be 2-3 primary *objectives* of the Network that could contribute to solving the security problem you identified?

## **V. Notes on Corruption & Lack of Accountability & Transparency: Findings, Gaps & Questions**

*"[The biggest contributors to corruption in my country] are the drug trade, lack of transparency and a fair judicial system, and ethnic discrimination."*

*“No one is monitored for what they are doing, and whoever comes to monitor is also practicing the same culture of corruption and bribery. We do not question our leaders who loot all the state wealth and convert it into their personal assets.”*

*“I don’t report corruption because there is no easy way to do it.”*

*“[The biggest contributors to corruption in my country are] impunity of those in power who are corrupt but rarely brought to justice because the system for punishment of corruption is weak...[and] the tendency of the State authorities to crack down on protests by the poor for their rights.”*

*Respondents to WRN’s Pulse Wire survey, 2011.*

States rife with corruption are not capable of effectively serving their constituents, nor protecting or respecting citizens’ rights. As shown in the preceding responses from WRN’s survey, corruption is pervasive and has a devastating impact on countries in the region. This section looks at the impact corruption has on women, trends to stop or prevent corruption, and invites Network members to contemplate possibilities for a strategic niche in this area.

### The Impact of Corruption and Lack of Accountability and Transparency on Women

There is a proliferation of resources available on corruption, but relatively few of them look specifically at the impact of corruption on women (the U4 website in the “Useful Websites” section offers the widest array of these in one place). However, the number is slowly increasing, and for the 2013 bibliography the WRN researchers were able to find several that look specifically at the impact of corruption on women in Afghanistan, Pakistan or India.

Of the studies assessing the impact of corruption on women which are not specific to South Asia, the most useful were several reports commissioned by or collected by U4 (all listing in the bibliography), as well as a report by UNDP, which looks at the impact of corruption on human development in Asia-Pacific (a recommended reading). In particular, the report hones in on the price corruption extracts on the lives of the poor and disadvantaged, including women, on for example their access to water, electricity, health, education, etc. Corruption, while affecting all, appears to have the strongest impact on women in terms of basic services, which is significant given that women are most often engaged in collecting water, caring for family members, etc.

Assessing corruption from a gender perspective appears to be a relatively new area in the anti-corruption field, but growing. Transparency International (TI) has recently begun to track gender indicators so that future reporting can better track impacts on women

While studies on the impact of corruption on women were relatively sparse, there were countless reports assessing governments’ accountability in the area of implementation of national and international standards on women’s rights. The bibliography includes multiple reports on women’s human rights issues and government performance. In many cases, laws exist (even strong ones), yet implementation or enforcement are weak—whether because of deep levels of corruption, lack of political will, lack of capacity or a combination. For more information specifically on government performance on international standards on women’s



rights, as well as national-level laws/policies/mechanisms/resources, see related CEDAW shadow reports and other studies noted in the bibliography.

Whether regionally or globally, the relative lack of information on corruption and women is in stark contrast to the abundance of information on accountability to women's rights. This demonstrates that there is a disconnect between governance or transparency-related efforts and rights-based efforts. Women's movements, while seeing the value of governance and transparency initiatives, often neglect these agendas seeing them as separate from "women's issues". Yet just as TI is beginning to track gender-specific indicators related to corruption, so too are women seeing the value of engaging in the promotion of good governance practices and conducting political oversight.

### Global Trends to Stop Corruption and Improve Transparency & Accountability of Political Institutions

There are many factors that are internationally recognized for reducing or preventing corruption. Examples include: strong mechanisms for governmental oversight vis-à-vis the legislature, an ombudsman, independent commissions, civil society, and independent media; public access to information legislation (or right to information legislation) which guarantees citizens the right to ask for information about laws, policies, government spending, etc., and which requires the government to make that information readily available for public consumption; the existence of independent media and a vibrant civil society, and corresponding legislation that protects the rights of journalists and civil society to operate freely and independently; harsh penalties and criminal sentencing for acts of corruption in the criminal/penal code; high-profile criminal prosecutions to stop impunity; a fair and transparent judiciary which respects and promotes the rule of law; trainings for judges and police on international standards; and mechanisms for citizens to anonymously report corrupt practices (such as through telephone hotlines).

There are a variety of international players involved in the transparency field, such as TI, Revenue Watch, Tiri, UNDP, IREX (for access to information legislation and independent media), among others (see bibliography under General Resources). In terms of international standards, the UN Convention Against Corruption is the most well known framework; Afghanistan, Pakistan and India have all ratified this treaty in 2008, 2007, and 2011, respectively. It appears that Afghanistan has the most locally-based organizations focused on transparency and corruption monitoring, such as Integrity Watch Afghanistan.

Interestingly, there have been significant numbers of studies conducted to assess whether increasing the presence of women in the political sector will decrease corrupt practices, premised on the notion that women are more relationship oriented, have higher standards of ethical behavior and are more concerned with the public good. Some of the reports found that indeed women are less corrupt than men (less involved in it, less tolerant of it), yet other reports found that there are other external factors which are more likely to determine prevalence of corruption, such as overall "tolerance" levels in society. Some found that a gender balance is more likely to prevent corruption. Another report argued that higher numbers of women in politics will indeed translate into lower levels of corruption, but

specifically in transition countries, based on the experience in the post-Soviet region. See bibliography for a mapping of all of these studies in the Global Resources tab.

As the saying goes, “democracy without women is no democracy”. It is clear that the inclusion of women in politics is simply a good governance practice, whether or not it can be proven that their participation statistically reduces the incidence of corruption. In the meantime, it may prove meaningful for WRN members to follow these debates and continue monitoring findings of these studies, noted on TI’s website (see bibliography under General Resources for the specific website).

### Summary

- There appear to be no major *regional / pan-South Asian* networks or initiatives related specifically to corruption and women, but there are significant efforts to promote accountability for women’s human rights standards
- Corruption significantly impacts women in terms of basic service delivery (if there are other impacts, they have not yet been fully studied)
- Women’s movements and transparency/governance movements do not appear to have developed effective strategic partnerships, regionally or globally (if partnerships are strong, it is not publicized or widely recognized)
- All three governments in the region have ratified the UN Convention Against Corruption
- There appear to be many national and international organizations engaged in promoting transparency and integrity of political institutions
- The work of justice institutions / the judicial sector are also vital to preventing corruption, yet justice institutions in the region are also weak
- Corruption in the region is pervasive, destroys the public’s trust in political institutions, and drives conflict

### Questions for WRN Members/Partners

The following questions are meant to help guide WRN’s members and partners as they begin to envision a framework for the Network in the area of corruption/accountability and transparency.

1) *SHARE EXPERIENCES*. Very briefly, share what you or your organization has been doing in the area of corruption/lack of accountability and transparency, *OR* how these themes have impacted you/your organization directly and what your response has been.

2) *IDENTIFY THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION*. Although the readings were vague on this topic, what have you observed about how corruption impacts women’s lives in your countries? What do you see as common trends in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India? Very briefly, make note of what you think are the root causes.

*General Recommendation: Discuss if you think it is worthwhile for WRN to support or undertake a study that identifies the impact of corruption on women in each country.*

3) *MAP CURRENT EFFORTS AND STAKEHOLDERS.*

- a) What efforts are currently underway in your country to fight corruption and advance accountability and transparency? What are strategies you have observed that are working or not working?
- b) What is your organization doing in these areas? What are you not able to do in this area?
- c) What are other organizations doing in the region (including mainstream civil society)? What are they not doing?
- d) What are women's movements from other countries in South/Central Asia doing (and not doing)? Such as in Nepal? Bangladesh? Sri Lanka? Uzbekistan? Tajikistan? Iran?
- e) What are global women's movements doing (and not doing)? What are global transparency organizations doing (and not doing)? What global efforts might be relevant in South Asia's context, if any?

4) *DEFINE THE SCOPE OF CORRUPTION & LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY.* What do you see as the possible scope or focus of WRN in the area of corruption/accountability/transparency for purposes of working together as a network? As you reflect, consider the following:

- a) How would you build on or link with the work of "mainstream" transparency organizations in the fight against corruption? Would WRN join in solidarity with the efforts of transparency organizations already engaged in anti-corruption work (for example, by conducting political process monitoring, advocating for implementation of 'right to information' legislation, or enforcement of the UN Convention Against Corruption, etc.)? Or would you join them, but add a gender perspective? If so, what would be the gender perspective? Or would you seek to break out on your own? If the latter, what would be the focus?
- b) To what extent would WRN want to focus in the broad area of "accountability" (which could extend into accountability for implementation/enforcement of women's human rights)? How broadly would WRN members want to define "accountability" for purposes of working together as a network?

*General Recommendation: whatever you decide, keep it focused! Organizations that spread themselves too thin often achieve the least.*

5) *DEFINE BENEFICIARIES.* Who are the primary or secondary beneficiaries of your focus? Is it the whole population/all citizens? "All" women/girls? Poor women? Rural or marginalized women? Etc.

6) *SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS.* Depending on the focus you chose in the areas of corruption/ accountability/transparency, brainstorm 1-2 possible solutions, or advocacy recommendations, keeping in mind you do not need to have all the answers now (this is only the start of the thinking process).

*General Recommendation: Identify where more research or “homework” needs to be done in time for the Regional Summit, so that informed decisions could be made at that time.*

7) OPEN DISCUSSION ON FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN’S REGIONAL NETWORK.

- a) What do you think could be the *value-added or strategic niche* of the Network in the area of ‘corruption/accountability/transparency and women’? How could it help *you* build on and strengthen the work you are already doing?
- b) If it is not already decided, what do you think the *focus* of the Network could be on in the area of corruption/accountability/transparency?
- c) What kind of *impact* would you want to see the Network have ultimately? In other words, what kind of *concrete change* would you want to see the Network create in the region?
- d) What kind of *members* would be needed to help the Network achieve that change (for example, senior members of transparency organizations)?
- e) What *homework or additional research* needs to be done between now and the Regional Summit to educate members or prepare for next steps?
- f) Time permitting, what are key elements, words, phrases or values you would want to see reflected in a WRN *mission and vision* statement related to corruption/accountability/transparency?
- g) Time permitting, what do you think could be 2-3 primary *objectives* of the Network that could contribute to solving the corruption/accountability/transparency problem you identified?