

Los Angeles Times, 12-12-2018:

‘Global Development: Africa is increasingly open to women in politics. In Congo, they have a fight on their hands.’[[1]](#footnote-2)

# Summary

A milestone was reached with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000. It was the first time in history the crucial role of women in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding was solidified in one single resolution. Over time several resolutions were adopted to extend the framework and underline other important aspects linked to women participation. Resolution 1325 consists of four pillars. These pillars are the foundations that need to be addressed in the struggle to improve the position of women in peacebuilding processes: participation, prevention, protection and peacebuilding & recovery.

The focus will mainly be on the participation pillar, as a key element when trying to establish prolonged peace. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, after several decades of intense conflict and massive human rights violations, often sexual, throughout the country, is seeking such peace. Women were victim of these violations, and generally do not have the same rights or social status as men which has a negative effect on their ability to reach high, public positions in the Congo. To be able to help the Congo with the transition to ongoing peace the United Nations commenced the MONUSCO mission in 1999. Mainly due to resolution 1325 an increased awareness with regard to women participation was present during the MONUSCO mission. The participation pillar highlights the importance of women’s participation in post-conflict peacebuilding and in political positions. The corresponding research question finds its roots in the participation pillar and tries to analyze the extent to which the implementation of this pillar was successful in the DRC. In this study, participation is defined as the inclusion of women in political institutions. As a result of this definition, it was possible to measure progress, even if very small. An increasing percentage of women (roughly 2%) are able to reach political positions in the Congolese government, for example in the Senate or National Assembly. In addition, more and more women are able to cast a vote during elections and stand for election. The progress that has been made should be applauded, but it is difficult to definitely say whether or not this increase can be credited to UNSCR 1325.

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# Acronyms

DFS Department of Field Support

DRC Democratic Republic of the Congo

DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations

GBSV Gender-Based Sexual Violence

GGR Gender Gap Report

NAP National Action Plan

MONUSCO Mission de l’Organisation Des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo

UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN United Nations

UNCHR United Nations Refugee Agency / United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UN DPKO United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

UNIFEM United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNSCR United Nations Security Council Resolution

WEF World Economic Forum

WWII World War II

# Introduction

*“I was only fourteen years old when I was approached by three men as I worked in the field. They tied my hands with rope and took it in turns to rape me. After three months I discovered I was pregnant but I didn’t know which one of the three was the father. Me and my baby ended up on the street as my family were ashamed. That made life very difficult for me and I was raped many times. I’m now 25 years old and have four children from that. I have no one to help me and no home. I now live with my children in an area with others like me and when it rains we all have to run under some tin sheeting to stay dry. I don’t know what will happen to me and my children. We have no hope.”*[[2]](#footnote-3)

These kinds of stories are widespread in the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Many conflicting groups have used sexual violence as a weapon of war, especially in the DRC.[[3]](#footnote-4) The impact of rape or sexual assault on women, girls and men will last a lifetime.[[4]](#footnote-5) Mainly the northeastern and eastern part of the Congo are being ravaged by armed conflict and sexual violence. Often people who were victim of sexual violence are abandoned by friends and family and are forced to flee their village.[[5]](#footnote-6) Research conducted by the American Medical Association shows that roughly half of women has experienced some type of sexual violence in her lifetime in the DRC.[[6]](#footnote-7) In addition, impunity is alarmingly high in the DRC since only a small number of perpetrators are being convicted.[[7]](#footnote-8) While at the same time more and more international institutions and organizations are beginning to recognize that women’s input and engagement in the peacebuilding process can be beneficial for the establishment of long-term peace and conflict prevention.[[8]](#footnote-9) In contrast to this development, the Los Angeles Times reports that women in the DRC are still fighting a heavy battle for equal representation in politics.[[9]](#footnote-10)

In post-conflict situations research has shown that a sustainable peace can only be achieved when it is inclusive.[[10]](#footnote-11) This means that not only men but also women need to be included in the peacemaking process.[[11]](#footnote-12) Several studies highlight the underlying relationship between gender inequality, the likelihood of intrastate conflict and the use of violence to ‘solve’ those disputes[[12]](#footnote-13). These studies have shown an increased chance of intrastate conflict and violence in settings where gender inequality thrives. Despite the growing narrative in favor of women participation they still face a lot of challenges when trying to be part of the peace negotiations.

The United Nations (UN) is a clear advocate for increasing women rights and in particular, participation in conflict resolution. That is why in October 2000 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) accepted resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) which commits the UN and all member states to further the engagement of women in conflict prevention and peace-building.[[13]](#footnote-14) Within resolution 1325 there are four pillars that can be distinguished: participation, prevention, protection and peacebuilding & recovery.[[14]](#footnote-15)

## Research Question

The present paper will analyze the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and more specifically the participation pillar. This pillar stresses the importance of an equal representation and participation in post-conflict peacebuilding between men and women, but also the need for more women in political, decision-making positions. The spotlight of this paper will be on the latter mentioned principle. Due to the broad nature of the participation pillar, this paper will focus primarily on the implementation in the DRC during the MONUSCO (Mission de l’Organisation Des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo), initiated by the UN, which started in 1999 as MONUC but was named MONUSCO in 2010. This mission is still active until this day. What is the progress that has been made regarding the implementation? Are women capable of reaching political positions in the Congolese government?

This paper sets outs the extent to which UNSCR 1325 and its participation pillar are and were implemented successfully in the DRC. Whether or not the implementation could be deemed successful is subject to many different arguments, various points of view and initial goal.

In this paper the implementation will be seen as successful when an increase can be measured in the number of women participating in decision-making positions. The main reason to use this type of definition is because it is a good indicator to use when measuring the participation pillar. To answer the research question, data is required with regard to the number of women in these positions. This definition however lacks a certain depth because the implementation is presumed successful the slightest of increase can be measured. Therefore, in favor of the viability of this study, the definition needs to be altered a little bit. A time component needs to be added to be able to comprehensively measure the progress made over a longer period of time. In that way a more complete image can be presented which allows for a thorough analysis. The period of the MONUSCO mission in the DRC will therefore provide the time window. Within this time window (1999 – 2020) two years are selected which are used as ‘checkpoints’ to measure any progress: 2006 and 2018. In those years the DRC held (national and provincial) elections which provides new information and numbers on women and their participation in the political system whether as a voter or as an elected representative.

The MONUSCO mission will serve as a case study in this analysis for two reasons. First, the MONUSCO mission was primarily used to intervene in the conflict in the DRC but several subsequent projects were added, mainly due to UNSCR 1325, to help women mobilize in the community and raise public awareness.[[15]](#footnote-16) The broader set-up of the mission provides the opportunity to see the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in actual reality. Second, the sexual violence that women experience in the DRC has a big impact on their lives and their position on the social ladder which made it harder for them to be able to participate in peacemaking processes or have a say in political affairs. Women often did not find any justice for what happened to them during and after the conflict.[[16]](#footnote-17) In addition, the psychological and physical health and legal rights of women were affected by conflict and sexual violence.[[17]](#footnote-18) These conditions made it more difficult for the international community to achieve the change that is needed in favor of women. Since UNSCR 1325 calls for the advancement of women in peacemaking processes the MONUSCO mission gives an opportunity to see the implementation in action.

## Method & historiography

The term peace will be used a lot throughout this paper. Peace is normally defined as the absence of war but some academics have stretched the term to encompass much more than just that.[[18]](#footnote-19) Mac Ginty offers several different explanations for the term peace[[19]](#footnote-20). Just like Shamir and George who came up with various ways of explaining peace when looking for a description of the term to clarify the Israeli-Egyptian relations[[20]](#footnote-21). The well-known dichotomy between negative and positive peace jumps to mind where the distinction is made between the absence of violence (negative peace) and the long-process to actively tackle the root of the violence (positive peace). [[21]](#footnote-22) Since this research focusses on the peacebuilding processes and the establishment of long-term peace with the inclusion of women, peace in this paper will be defined as positive peace. In the context of this paper defining peace only as the absence of war or violence would exclude many elements of peacebuilding that are essential for studying the DRC.

Besides peace a lot has been written about the study of conflict in relation to women in general, and their participation in post-conflict peacebuilding. The idea that women’s contributions are essential for the establishment of long-term peace has gained a lot of influence over the past few decades.[[22]](#footnote-23) (Political) Power is often something linked to a male instead of a female actor.[[23]](#footnote-24) Melander even highlights the need for gender equality in armed conflict.[[24]](#footnote-25) Contrary to what one might think Arostegui argues that conflict can be beneficial for women in multiple ways. She gives some examples: an increase in economic responsibilities, more influence in private and family matters because of the absence of her husband and increased cooperation with women who suffered similar experiences during the conflict[[25]](#footnote-26). Samual confirmed this idea in the context of Sri Lanka.[[26]](#footnote-27) Others have stated that the participation of women is necessary for post-conflict reconstruction.[[27]](#footnote-28) This paper builds on this notion, while simultaneously adding a political point of view: women’s participation in post-conflict peacebuilding is essential for establishing long-term (positive) peace.

The term participation is a key component in answering the above stated research questions and for that reason, it is necessary to define the term to fit the context of this paper properly. Participation will mean the inclusion and the seating of women in the Senate, National Assembly, National Government, provincial positions, such as Governors or Deputies, and Secretary-Generals of Public Administration through an election. In the DRC the Senate and National Assembly together form the Parliament. These political institutions were chosen because of several reasons. First, it is possible for women to be elected into these parts of government. An elected woman can be seen as a representation of the progress that was been made in women participation. Second, in the positions that elected women reach they have the ability to let their voices be heard in debates or think tanks. Third, the elected women have the possibility to vote for or against notions and bills. The fourth argument for choosing these institutions is the fact they were highlighted and used as points of references in the National Actions Plans (NAP) of the Congolese government for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

## Source material

To be able to answer the research question, this paper will use documents released by international human rights organizations, NGO´s and UN and UN bodies. There is a significant amount written about the DRC and women rights by organs linked to the UN, like UN Women, UN Human Rights Office and UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) or other international organizations such as Human Rights Watch. These organizations have investigated numerous of conflicts in relation to human rights and possible violations of those human rights. Furthermore, an analysis of existing secondary literature on peacebuilding processes in relation to the DRC and women rights will be done to provide an overview of the scientific discourse. A lot has been written about conflicts, wars and the ways to deal with them. Some of this is in the context of interstate violence[[28]](#footnote-29), others talk about conflict at intrastate level.[[29]](#footnote-30)

As mentioned earlier, resolution 1325 and its participation pillar will serve as the analytical framework in which the progress and achievements that have been made in the DRC regarding peace, women and their security are examined. To be able to talk about the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the DRC, it is important to understand the legal and normative framework that was created with the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and six other resolutions that were adopted between 2008 and 2013.[[30]](#footnote-31) It is essential to understand in what manner the MONUSCO mission tried to implement UNSCR 1325 in the DRC.

The Ministry of Gender, Family and Children in the DRC came up with a NAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The NAP, which has two versions respectively published in 2010 and 2019, is a valuable document because it shows the projected initiatives that the government is planning to fund and promote in order to successfully implement UNSCR 1325 and it provides statistical information about women participation.[[31]](#footnote-32)

In addition to the NAPs this paper will also use the set of indicators provided by the Secretary-General which are used to measure the progress. A total of twenty-six indicators were made for the measurement of UNSCR 1325.[[32]](#footnote-33) For the participation pillar seven indicators are available. Some of these indicators are not of any use in the context of this paper because they try to measure the progress in a way that is not compatible with the research conducted in this paper. For example, indicator 8 focusses on the ‘number and percentage of peace agreements with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls’.[[33]](#footnote-34) Although this is an interesting approach for the measurement of the participation pillar, it does not have the focus on women in political positions which is essential for this study. The same goes for indicators 9, 10, 11(a & b) and 13. Indicators 9 and 10 are clustered together and primarily use the ‘number and percentage of women in senior UN decision-making positions’ and the ‘level of gender expertise in UN decision-making in conflict-affected countries’ in order to measure the progress of implementation.[[34]](#footnote-35) Indicators 11a and 11b are more concentrated on women and their role at the beginning and the end of (formal) peace negotiations.[[35]](#footnote-36) Indicator 13 focusses on the use of the ‘number and percentage of Security Council missions that address specific issues affecting women and girls in their terms of reference and mission reports’ when trying to measure progress.[[36]](#footnote-37) The above mentioned indicators are all useful in their own way and measure the implementation in various ways but for the sake of this paper indicators are required that track the implementation in a different way. That is why indicator 12 was chosen for this study. This indicator puts an emphasis on women’s political participation in conflict-affected countries.[[37]](#footnote-38) Indicator 12 is much more useful for this study because of its attention to the participation of women in political contexts. Indicator 12 will be analyzed and explained further in chapter 3. Can signs of successful implementation be detected or is little improvement made? This methodology translates into the following structure in this paper.

## Structure

Chapter 1 in this paper is dedicated to UNSCR 1325. In this chapter UNSCR 1325, its four pillars and the six resolutions that followed will be discussed to provide an overview of the framework in which the MONUSCO mission is studied. Chapter 2 will build on that and takes a specific look at the situation in the DRC to better understand in which context the MONUSCO mission was carried out. The situation regarding women participation in the DRC will also be discussed in chapter 2. The first two chapters will support the analyses, provided in the third chapter, of the way UNSCR 1325 and the participation pillar are implemented in the DRC. In this chapter statistical evidence will be presented to support the analyses. The final chapter will be used to provide the reader with a discussion with regard to this study, including any shortcomings and possible further research.

# Chapter 1: Resolution 1325 and its successors

In this chapter UNSCR 1325 and the six resolutions that were accepted in relation to UNSCR 1325 will be described. The concept of women rights is a subcategory in the bigger concept of human rights. When someone discusses human rights, they are also talking about women rights. One could argue that resolution 1325 which solely focused on the improvement of the situation of women is more important for women rights in general than a document such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This might be true but the UDHR is an very important first step in acknowledging and establishing the universal rights that every human being has. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a milestone document with regard to human rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.[[38]](#footnote-39) This declaration will be used later on by the UN General Assembly to make the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 (CEDAW).[[39]](#footnote-40) This convention underlines the importance of women’s leadership and participation. Something which is an essential concept for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. After the CEDAW the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) was adopted in December 1993 by the UN General Assembly. This resolution is generally seen as complementary to the CEDAW because it encompasses and recalls the same rights.[[40]](#footnote-41)

During the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 the Beijing Platform for Action was accepted.[[41]](#footnote-42) Strategic objective E.1. in the Beijing Platform of Action focusses on the actions that government can undertake to *‘increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation’*.[[42]](#footnote-43) Since then, numerous different resolutions have been made and various forums and conferences have been held. It is clear that there is a growing trend within the UN that tries to create more awareness for women rights.

Resolution 1325, which was the result of ´*decades of activism by women´s organizations and advocates´*,[[43]](#footnote-44) calls for women’s participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict peacebuilding, peace processes and governance.[[44]](#footnote-45) Furthermore, this resolution also calls for the protection that women need when facing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations and for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives throughout the entire process of peacebuilding.[[45]](#footnote-46) Resolution 1820 which was adopted in 2008 urges actors within armed conflict to stop the use of sexual violence as a method of war. It notes that rape or other forms of sexual violence will constitute a war crime or even crime against humanity.[[46]](#footnote-47) Resolution 1820 also calls for the deployment of more and more women to peace operations.[[47]](#footnote-48)

In 2009 resolution 1888 was adopted which is an important part of the normative framework created by the UN. It strengthens the implementation of resolution 1820 through the assignment of leadership. A Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict was appointed by the UN to be a spokesperson and a political advocate on the topic of conflict-related sexual violence.[[48]](#footnote-49) It also calls for the deployment of Women Protection Advisors (WPA) in conflict situations. After that, resolution 1889 (2009) was adopted. Maybe not as important as previous resolutions but it is noteworthy. This resolution calls for a group of indicators that can be used to keep track of the implementation of resolution 1325 at a global level.[[49]](#footnote-50) These indicators were provided by the Secretary-General.[[50]](#footnote-51) In 2010 resolution 1960 was adopted by the Security Council. This resolution created the institutional tools that were needed to be able to punish those who commit (sexual) crimes in conflict settings. With a new ‘naming and shaming’ mechanism this resolution tries to bring justice for the victims of assaults.[[51]](#footnote-52) Resolution 2106 was adopted in 2013. It builds on resolution 1888 and calls for further deployment of WPAs. It also urges member states to do more to implement previous mandates.[[52]](#footnote-53)

The last resolution is resolution 2122 (2013). UNSCR 2122 creates stronger measurements that the UN and her member states need to take to actively include women in peace processes. An increase in attention from the UN is needed to enforce and renew mandates that include provisions to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.[[53]](#footnote-54) It is clear that UNSCR 1325 has brought a lot of renewed energy within the UN and the international community to combat the global struggle for women participation. According to a report written by the Secretary-General for the Security Council an increase can be seen in the amount of peace agreements that mention gender equality.[[54]](#footnote-55) A graphical overview of these resolutions is provided in the form of a timeline.

Legenda: orange box = event. This timeline shows all events, conferences and resolutions that are of importance in this paper or in the global struggle for equal women´s rights.

Resolution 1325 consists of four pillars. The UN, its member states and other UN entities are committed to take actions in these four areas to be able to strengthen the support for the implementation on local, regional and national level. The four pillars also give the UN the opportunity to adequately analyze the progress that has been made. The Prevention pillar focusses on *´prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations’*.[[55]](#footnote-56) The Protection pillar in UNSCR 1325 calls for the protection of women and children from Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV).[[56]](#footnote-57) According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNCHR) GBSV finds its roots in gender inequality and thrives significantly during wars and times of crisis.[[57]](#footnote-58) Peacebuilding and Recovery is the third pillar. The main point in this pillar is to make sure that when managing an international or humanitarian crisis not only the needs of men are used as the norm but also for those of women.[[58]](#footnote-59) That is why the fourth and final, participation pillar is important. An equal representation in decision-making processes between women and men is something that will help establish a prolonged peace.[[59]](#footnote-60) A schematic overview of the pillars is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: the four pillars of UNSCR 1325.



Many different dimensions are important when trying to achieve peace. A political system in which both women and men are represented equally,[[60]](#footnote-61) justice for the victims of conflict, and an attention to human rights in the aftermath of the conflict are all elements which are needed for the establishment of prolonged peace.[[61]](#footnote-62)

# Chapter 2: DRC and the MONUSCO Mission

The conflict in the DRC, then Zaire, commenced in 1996 when Rwanda invaded the DRC.[[62]](#footnote-63) This war could be characterized as conventional warfare because it was fought between two armies of sovereign nation states. The opposite of this type of warfare is unconventional warfare which is described by Kalyvas as non-state (rebel) actors contesting the government’s military apparatus with guerilla-style tactics.[[63]](#footnote-64) Kalyvas notes that the severity, duration and outcome of civil wars can differ drastically based on whether or not the conflict is fought conventional or unconventional.[[64]](#footnote-65) The President of Zaire, Mobutu Seko was replaced by the rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila. Some thought this would be a change for the better but because of the nature of his regime this would not be the case. Kabila’s administration had several conflicts with the UN and the UNCHR regarding basic human rights violations and the killings of Hutu refugees.[[65]](#footnote-66) The conflict was called the First African World War because of the scope of destruction and the number of casualties[[66]](#footnote-67). This war was the foundation for the Second Congo War which was fought between Kabila’s government forces and several allies from 1998 until 2003. Over time the nature of this conflict changed involving multiple groups. Before WWII armies of different nation-states would battle in a war that started because of opposing interests[[67]](#footnote-68), nowadays conflict is often fought at the intra-state or civil level. Instead of (professional) armies fighting different types of actors have come into play, which was the case in the DRC.[[68]](#footnote-69) The DRC was called ‘the rape capital of the world’ by the Secretary-General’s Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2010.[[69]](#footnote-70) Women and little girls of all ages are victims of soldiers and combatants.[[70]](#footnote-71) Sometimes they are infected with HIV/AIDS, forced into pregnancy, used as (sex) slave or suffer genital mutilation.[[71]](#footnote-72) The unsettling situation in the DRC was enough for the UN to initiate the MONUSCO mission in 1999 which was the start of a $8 billion dollar project. This money was largely used to station (military) personnel, or to fund projects to help local communities and victims of sexual exploitation. The deployment of UN troops was authorized by resolution 1258 (1999).[[72]](#footnote-73) The UN followed the dominant model of state-building in the DRC which is primarily focused on the advancement and promotion of liberal democracy. It is believed that this is a way to avoid even more conflict but still be able to push for elections to give the government legitimacy.[[73]](#footnote-74)

According to Whittle the UN changed its role significantly throughout its presence in the DRC.[[74]](#footnote-75) Where at first the UN was a passive actor which tried to protect civilians as much as possible and refrained from the use of violence, the birth of the Intervention Brigade in 2013 changed that.[[75]](#footnote-76) Research has shown that the protection of civilians is a keystone for the development of sustainable peace and the central government.[[76]](#footnote-77) The Intervention Brigade has the task to actively fight back armed groups and dismantle rebel networks. The switch from passive to active was a big impact on the way civilians perceived UN safety personnel. It was unclear when UN forces acted as peacekeepers or peacemakers which contributed to the chaos and uncertainty in the DRC.[[77]](#footnote-78) Multiple academics have given reasons for the continuous instability in the DRC.[[78]](#footnote-79) These range from a lack of provided resources to a failing social contract between state and civilians. Cliffe and Luckham used the term Complex Political Emergency to describe a situation of heightened tensions and widespread chaos in which peacebuilding needs to be done in the context of a failing state which is constantly contested by multiple sources of authority.[[79]](#footnote-80) The DRC and the surrounding Great Lakes Region has become a complex political emergency where many different armed groups all pursuit their own interests and agenda[[80]](#footnote-81).

# Chapter 3: Results and Analysis

The Ministry of Gender, Family and Children developed a NAP in 2010 with regard to UNSCR 1325 which committed the DRC to a set of objectives in terms of gender equality. A commitment was made to ‘incorporate gender into all levels of decision making at a national level, and regional and international cooperation in the prevention, management and peaceful settlements of conflicts’.[[81]](#footnote-82) This statement was repeated in the NAP of 2019.[[82]](#footnote-83) It becomes clear that the willingness of the DRC government to actively promote women equality is present. The first Congolese NAP also gives four possible obstacles that make it harder for women to reach positions of power and decision-making. Even though men and women are equal before the law in the DRC[[83]](#footnote-84), the reality shows the opposite. Women experience high level discrimination throughout their lives in education, work environment, politics and the socio-economic sphere.[[84]](#footnote-85) In addition to this, the cultural and social climate in the DRC does not favor women and their autonomy.[[85]](#footnote-86) Also, lack of (basic) education makes women unaware of their rights and does not provide them with the tools and skills required to adequately fulfill public positions. The last obstacle, but not the least important, is the sexual violence that women suffer, even in professional circles.[[86]](#footnote-87) These conditions hamper women significantly in their day to day lives, in their ability to escape poverty and their ability to reach public positions.

The first edition of the Congolese NAP, published in 2010, provides numbers and statistics into women participation in government institutions: 4,6% women in the Senate, 8,4% in the National Assembly, 13% to the Judiciary, 9,2% of women in National Government, 12,7% in provincial governments and 13% women as Secretary-Generals of Public Administrations.[[87]](#footnote-88) In the NAP it is estimated that in positions of power or decision-making women representation is roughly 10% for the whole national territory.[[88]](#footnote-89)

The Second version of the Congolese NAP, published in 2019, also provides statistical information regarding women’s representation in government institutions: 4,6% women in the Senate, 10,4% in the National Assembly, 10,2% of women in National Government, a combined 12,8% women as Provincial Governors and Deputies, and 10,6% as Secretary-Generals of Public Administration.[[89]](#footnote-90) Table 2 shows the percentual changes in women representation that can be derived from both NAPs, the election results and the Gender Gap Report (GGR) made by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2018 and 2020.

Table 2: Female representation in government institutions. Due to lack of information or trustworthiness, some numbers maybe estimates.



In this table some increase can be seen in women representation at decision making levels. The DRC does not have a women quota.[[90]](#footnote-91) The political parties MLC, PPRD and RCD each adopted a voluntary quota to increase the female representation to 30 percent in candidate nomination but this was not enforced and no parties was able to reach that threshold.[[91]](#footnote-92) The Gender Gap Report did not yet feature the DRC until it was mentioned for the first time in the report of 2018. In this report it becomes evident that the gender gap in the DRC is one of the biggest in the world. The index consists of four aspects which are used to calculate the gender gap within a certain country: Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, Political Empowerment and Economic participation.

The GGR of 2018 has the DRC ranked at number 144 out of the 149 countries inducted in the study at the global index level. [[92]](#footnote-93) In the subindex for Political Empowerment the DRC ranked 136 out 149 countries with a score of 0.063. This score is measured between 0 and 1 with 1 indicating total equality between men and women and 0 indicating no equality whatsoever. Women are not remotely close to being treated equal in political or decision-making affairs in the DRC. In addition to their low place on the global ranking, the DRC is ranked as the second-worst in the Sub-Saharan Africa region with only Chad ranking lower. African countries generally rank lower in the Political Empowerment index than other regions, but they do well in female labor force participation which is a characteristic of Sub-Saharan Africa. As a part of the Economic Participation and Opportunity index some African countries rank high amongst other developed countries in this category.[[93]](#footnote-94) A possible explanation for this is that women are needed to provide sufficient food within the community or at family level.

In 2020 the World Economic Forum published a updated version of its GGR. Where the DRC earlier checked in at number 144, the country dropped to place 149 out of 153 countries.[[94]](#footnote-95) It should be noted that four new countries (Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea) were added in comparison to the Gender Gap Report of 2018. The DRC dropped by five places, while four more countries were inducted in the study. This seems like a bad case for the DRC but in the subindex of Political Empowerment there is progress that should be applauded. In Political Empowerment the DRC was ranked at number 126 out of 152.[[95]](#footnote-96) The corresponding score with this place is 0.089.[[96]](#footnote-97) This is an increase of 0.026 between 2018 and 2020. In contrast to this increase, the DRC drops to the last spot in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. According to the Gender Gap Report of 2018 in the DRC for every female in parliament ten men can be counted (or 0.10 female per man).[[97]](#footnote-98) This ratio increased to 0.11 female per man in 2020[[98]](#footnote-99). The ratio was slightly better when talking about the ratio of women to men in positions in National Government at 0.13.[[99]](#footnote-100) The GGR of 2020 reports that more women took seat in the National Government. Per 2020 the ratio is 0.22 which indicates that roughly a quarter of all positions in National Government is filled by women.[[100]](#footnote-101)

Indicator 12 was selected because of its focus on women’s political participation in conflict-affected countries. The information above, in combination with the indicator allow for an analysis of the progress. Indicator 12 is formulated as follows: this indicator tracks the meaningful representation and participation of women in governance structures. The five components include the percentages of women who are registered to vote, those who actually vote, those who are parliamentary candidates, those actually in parliaments and those in ministerial positions. This indicator is responsive to paragraph 1 of resolution 1325 (2000).[[101]](#footnote-102)

Paragraph 1 of UNSCR 1325 urges ‘member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.’[[102]](#footnote-103)

Of the five components that are mentioned in this indicator, three can be of use. Very little information could be found with regard to the percentage of women that is registered to vote in the DRC, which made it difficult to analyze the first two components in indicator 12. This is the case for both elections. As a result of this, it is challenging to say how many women have actually voted during these elections. However, it is possible to offer a suggestion as to how many women voted in total. In 2006 a total of 16.8 million valid votes (out of 25.4 million registered voters) were counted, this number grew to 18.3 million (out of 40.3 million registered voters) in 2018.[[103]](#footnote-104) Women make up roughly half of the population[[104]](#footnote-105), so a quick calculation would suggest that in 2006 and 2018 respectively around 8 and 9 million women have voted. This increase can be the result of an expanding population or because more voters were able to cast their vote because of new infrastructure or international assistance.

The last three components fall under the same umbrella. They are all linked to the other side of elections; not the voters but those who are elected. More is known about the number of female candidates or parliamentarians in comparison to number of (registered) female voters.

In July 2006 the DRC held elections for the seating of the National Assembly. A total of 9709 candidates were up for election, of which 1374 or 14,2% was female.[[105]](#footnote-106) In 2018, 15,276 total candidates were available, of which 1786 or 11,7% women.[[106]](#footnote-107) Out of the possible 500 seats that need to be filled in the Congolese National Assembly only 42 women or 8,4% were elected as representative in 2006.[[107]](#footnote-108) This number increased to 49 women in 2018, which is 9,8%.[[108]](#footnote-109)

This positive development is unfortunately overshadowed because of allegations of possible fraud and impurities. Based on a research conducted by UN Women, published through the UNCHR, instead of 8,2% women in National Assembly, women occupy only 7,2% of positions in 2006. Another example of data that doesn’t correspond with each other is the percentage of women in the Senate in 2006. International Alert, an international organization combating violence and building peace for over 30 years, states that women made up 4% in the Senate in 2006.[[109]](#footnote-110) This contradicts the 2,5% provided by The Carter Center[[110]](#footnote-111), and the 4,6% that can be found via the Inter-Parliamentary Union.[[111]](#footnote-112) One could argue that these numbers are still relatively close together, but that is not the case when looking at women representation in the Senate after the 2018 elections. The 2019 Congolese NAP measured 4,6% in the Senate while the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an institute collecting data on national parliaments around the world, calculated a much higher percentage; 21,3%.[[112]](#footnote-113) Where these discrepancies come from is unclear. It is difficult to argue which one is correct and for which reasons since not all data was collected. It should be noted that the DRC is a country with a very weak state apparatus and, in addition to this, lacks a certain objectivity that is required when collecting evidence and data. Both NAPs of the Congolese government were dedicated to ‘His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila’.[[113]](#footnote-114) Even though this doesn’t have to mean anything necessarily, it does raise questions regarding the neutrality of the presented data. A consequence of this is that all information and numbers coming out of the DRC need to be verified through an independent party. In the conclusion some additional comments on this situation will be made.

# Conclusion

This study tried to analyze the extent into which the participation pillar of UNSCR 1325 was implemented in the DRC. A more prominent role for women in political contexts in conflict-affected countries was one of the most important aspects within this pillar. That is why participation was defined as the inclusion and seating of women in government institutions. In order to measure any progress, several indicators were developed by the Secretary-General. Some indicators were not of any use in this paper because they measured improvement based on different aspects such as women’s participation in peace negotiations or women in senior United Nations decision-making positions. First, it was required to provide some background information regarding the DRC, the position of women there and of course, UNSCR 1325 and the several other resolutions that were adopted. UNSCR 1325 has a very broad character and encompasses various elements that require attention in the struggle for women participation. It was rather difficult to find accurate or trustworthy data, due to the limited capabilities of the Congolese government or international organizations to track down these numbers. After finding some data, the combination of this information with the indicator allowed for a framework to measure the development of the implementation. As can be seen in chapter 3, there was an increase in women in political functions. There are too many variables and unknown circumstances to pinpoint exactly what caused the increase, and whether or not this is the sole consequence of UNSCR 1325. However, the resolution did have a certain influence since it was ratified by the DRC, and it was mentioned in both NAPs. To conclude, more women are able to reach positions within the Congolese government, but this improvement cannot be fully accounted to UNSCR 1325. When conducting future research, it may be interesting to take a look at the other pillars of UNSCR 1325 to analyze their implementation in reality. Here it could be helpful to use a more in-depth analysis of initiatives at grassroot levels which could increase the knowledge about the implementation and its process. It could also be interesting to study the implementation in a different setting such as a different country, political environment or time window. So, the heading of the Los Angeles Times article was right, women are fighting a heavy battle for equal representation, and a lot of ground needs to be conquered.

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