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The Role of the Security Council's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Promoting Global Peace

The Case of Colombia



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ABSTRACT

Feminist scholars have shown that the attainment of equality for women is necessary to achieve the United Nations Security Council's goal of protecting global peace and security. Despite the implementation of the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the needs of women and girls continue to be overlooked in UNSC's efforts. Furthermore, the WPS agenda has failed to take a nuanced approach to address gender-based inequality issues necessary to achieve sustainable global peace and security, especially within regions such as GRULAC. Feminist scholars argue that women's participation in peacebuilding activities would prevent the adoption of male-centred systems that keep women from achieving equality. Feminist scholars such as Christine Bell, Jennifer Klot, Catherine O'Rourke, and Diane Otto also argue that participation alone is not enough. International organizations need to expand their peacebuilding objectives from solely ending violence to act as transformative agents of women's rights. Using the recent case of Colombia, this research argues that the current UN framework about women within peacemaking does not adequately identify and exploit the plethora of opportunities that peace agreements hold to redress gender-based inequalities. This research also forwards the claim that it is essential for peace agreements to adopt feminist elements to secure substantial and material gains for women in the transition after the war.

KEYWORDS:

Colombia, International Law, Peace Agreements, Security Council, United Nations Organization

“Universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice.”(*International Labour Organization (ILO) Constitution, 1946, 15 UNTS 40 2017, Preamble*)

1. Introduction

The year 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security (UNSCR 1325) (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), SC Res 1325, UNOR, 2000, UN Doc S/Res/1325 (2000), 1255 2000*). UNSCR 1325 represented a change in the focus of the United Nations Security Council (SC), as it “constituted the first time that the SC turned its full attention to the subject of women and armed conflict” (Bell and O’Rourke 2010, 943). Despite the improvement that adopting a gender perspective would represent for peace agreements, the Council of Foreign Relations reported that, by 2017, only two women, Miriam Coronel Ferrer (from the Philippines) and Tzipi Livni (from Israel), have ever served as peace agreement Chief Negotiators. Furthermore, only one woman in history, Coronel Ferrer, has signed a final peace accord as Chief Negotiator (Council of Foreign Relations 2017). This shows the Security Council (SC) Member States’ lack of attention on implementing the standards created by UNSCR 1325.

Recognizing the numerous complexities in the implementation of a women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and using the 2016 Colombian peace agreement experience, this paper studies the role that the SC plays in enforcing the standards of UNSCR 1325 in the negotiation of peace agreements. In particular, this paper will argue that the SC has failed to clarify its scope, responsibilities, and role in enforcing WPS principles in peace agreements, thereby failing to implement the goals in UNSCR 1325. The SC is therefore missing a significant opportunity to advance global peace and security. For example, the lack of participation and representation of women in the early stages of peace negotiations for the 2016 Colombian Peace agreement was not questioned by the SC but rather by local women’s groups supported marginally by the UN. Further, the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement was celebrated as a success for its gender perspective, although it does not reference any of the SC resolutions on WPS as guiding this perspective.

The normative development of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is strong in certain areas such as protection of women victims of sexual violence. However, the normative development on other areas such as understanding and addressing the social, political and economic factors that keep women oppressed and act as catalysts of armed conflict has been scarce, and controversial with some permanent Council members like China, Russia and United States at times arguing for the elimination of these themes from the SC’s agenda and reallocating them to other bodies of the UN (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3). Despite the ongoing discussion about the normative framework of the SC WPS Agenda, some practices within the SC, such as the work of Informal Expert Groups (IEG) have been strengthened and consolidated (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 11), therefore attracting the attention of SC WPS’ advocates. This paper will study IEGS’ nature and essential role in providing Member States with relevant information about the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in countries devastated by war such as Colombia. This paper concludes that the SC would greatly benefit from taking a systematic and comprehensive approach to WPS by ensuring that every peace negotiation

reflects and respects the WPS agenda. The fulsome application of the WPS agenda will help prevent future gender-based violence and ensure sustainable peace. By taking action on issues of gender inequality as a catalyst of war, the WPS agenda assists the UNSC in maintaining global peace and security (*United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI 1945*, p. art. 24). In a time where international law is criticized for its inability to promote substantial global change, ignoring the opportunity that the WPS agenda has in upholding the SC's goals established in Chapter V, Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, represents a missed opportunity for the SC.

1.1 Normative Framework of the UN Security Council Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Since its passage in 2000, UNSCR 1325 marked an essential step in the legal and political recognition of political violence's gendered nature (O'Rourke 2013, 3). The resolution asserted the importance of women's role in global peace and security and called for the adoption of a gender perspective in peace negotiations and the maintenance of peace agreements (Bell and O'Rourke 2010, 3). Additionally, the creation of UNSCR 1325 represented progress in streamlining efforts to achieve meaningful participation of women in all SC discussions. Specifically, UNSCR 1325 solidified two fundamental principles: first, that gender inequality is directly linked to insecurity, and second that "successfully preventing, resolving, and rebuilding after conflict requires both women's participation and the incorporation of gender equality concerns, in local, national, and international processes" (Goetz and Jenkins 2018, 1). For example, UNSCR 1325 mandates an increase in the numbers of women participating in peace negotiations and calls on the UN Member States to guarantee that this participation is meaningful and in decision-making positions. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 represents a significant advancement in the way in which the UNSC promotes global peace and security.

The SC's WPS developed its normative body around four main subjects: participation and decision making, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. Since the creation of an international agenda for WPS, the SC has adopted ten subsequent resolutions.¹ Overall, Member States agree that "the normative framework of the WPS agenda is strong and does not need to be developed further at this point" (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 5). However, after taking a closer look at the themes developed in WPS resolutions, it is noticeable that the SC has focused on developing one area more than the others. Indeed, the matter of protection has been discussed multiple times, leaving the areas

¹ In 2008, UNSCR 1820 further developed the protection area of UNSCR 1325 by linking sexual violence as a crime against humanity, a war crime, and a constitutive act with respect to genocide. This resolution explicitly defines sexual violence as a tactic of war and a war crime (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008)*, UNOR 2008, UN Doc S/RES/1820 (2008) 2008, 1). Resolution 1820 also calls on actors in an armed conflict to take measures to protect civilians from sexual violence (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008)*, UNOR 2008, UN Doc S/RES/1820 (2008) 2008, 2). In 2009, issues of sexual violence were again addressed in UNSCR 1888, which requests that the Secretary-General appointed a special representative on sexual violence during armed conflict (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009)*, SC Res 1888, UNOR 2008, UN Doc SC Res 1888 2009, No. 4). The exact UN Resolution also calls on peacekeeping missions to protect women and children from sexual violence during armed conflict (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009)*, SC Res 1888, UNOR 2008, UN Doc SC Res 1888 2009, No. 3). In the same year, UNSCR 1889 called on the UN to construct metrics to effectively measure progress made on the standards established by UNSCR 1325. In 2015, UNSCR 2242 (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242(2015)*, SC Res 2242, UNOR, 2015, UN Doc S/RES/2242(2015) 2015) created deadlines for the increased participation of women in police and military contingents of UN peacekeeping operations. This resolution analyzed the SC's working methods and presented the SC intention and commitment to call for Informal Experts Groups on women, peace and security, and invite female civil society briefers to country-specific thematic meetings. In 2019, UNSCR 2493 expressed alarm at the persistent barriers in the full implementation of the WPS agenda (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 2493 (2019)*, UNOR 2019, UN Doc S/RES/2493 (2019) 2019).

of participation, prevention, and relief and recovery mainly to the realm of other bodies within the UN. Despite this, the passing of UNSCR 1325 was and still is crucial for the overall goal of promoting global peace and security.

One of the accomplishments of UNSCR 1325 is that it introduces the implementation of feminist methodologies into the SC. Feminist methodologies are concerned with questioning the fundamentals of the international legal system, the language it uses, the organization of materials, the reliance on confrontational adversarial techniques, and the commitment to male hierarchical structures in all legal and political organizations (Charlesworth, Chinkin, and Wright 1991, 3). To foster a feminist analysis of international law, feminist scholars propose the implementation of an interest in gender perspectives as an issue of primary importance, a focus on women as individuals and as members of groups, a political agenda geared to real social, political, economic and cultural equality regardless of gender, a critical stance and an analysis of masculinism and the hierarchical power of patriarchy, a means of interpreting and reformulating substantive laws so that they reflect the experiences of all people, and an alternative method of practicing and learning about the law.(Charlesworth, Chinkin, and Wright 1991, 7). Indeed, the creation of a SC's Women, Peace and Security Agenda, fostered the expectation of an implementation of feminist methodologies into the SC's discussions, hence promoting feminist ideals such as global disarmament, anti-militaristic solutions to conflicts, and the promotion of peace negotiations to resolve violence. However, as noted by Diane Otto, the effect of the UNSC 1325 in promoting feminist ideals was not as initially expected,

[w]hile there is much to celebrate about the Security Council's WPS Agenda in terms of policy and institutional developments, admission into the inner sanctum of the Security Council's work has come at some cost to feminist goals. One cost has been the softening of feminist opposition to war, evidenced by a shift in the focus of feminist peace advocates from strengthening the laws to make armed conflict illegal (*jus ad bellum*) to seeking to humanize the laws that govern the conduct of arm conflict (*jus in bello*); from aiming to end all wars to making wars safer for women. (Otto 2017, 2)

Indeed, the SC's focus on legalizing the terms of armed conflict to protect of the rights of women victims of war and leaving social justice elements such as participation, prevention, and relief and recovery, to other organizations within the UN, has manipulated feminist goals "to support the expanding exercise of unaccountable power by the SC since the end of the Cold War and to legitimize its militaristic and carceral approach, in the name of protecting women, mostly from sexual violence, and promoting their rights" (Otto 2017, 2). In summary, feminist scholars call for a shift on the SC's focus from protecting women victims of war to addressing the issues that foster armed conflict and gender disparity.

This sentiment is echoed by countries affected by war in the Latin American region, such as Colombia. After suffering from decades of conflict, Latin American countries recognize that including social justice elements in their peace agreements is the only way to assure their practical implementation and achieve long-lasting peace for their countries. Therefore, they call for the SC to shift its focus from legalizing war to eliminating the factors that promote violence, including gender equality (Igarape Institute 2016). Indeed, ignoring the WPS's ability to forward gender equality by challenging the

binary logistics that keep women away from peace and security discussions and empowering the participation of grassroots and women groups in peace negotiations would be a gruesome mistake.

As a UN Member State and a country troubled by decades of war, Colombia is called to follow the guidelines, protections and standards established by UNSCR 1325 and subsequent Resolutions. Furthermore, the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in General Recommendation 30, requested that State Parties to CEDAW provide information about progress made with regards to the WPS agenda (*United Nations General Recommendation No. 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations, UNOR 2013, UN Doc CEDAW/c/6c/30 2013, D(27)*). Therefore, apart from its obligations to implement UNSC resolutions, as a State Party to CEDAW, Colombia is expected to follow the WPS agenda.

1.2 Barriers to the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

Despite the progress that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 represents for the inclusion of women's and gender issues in SC discussions, its introduction has generated abundant controversy within feminist scholarly circles. Indeed, scholars have voiced concerns about the SC's inadequacy to advance feminist goals and the lack of effectiveness in implementing the standards created by UNSCR 1325 (Goetz and Jenkins 2018, 1). For example, speaking at a side-event titled 'The Road to 2020: Accelerating Action on Women, Peace, and Security, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka argued that, "[a]fter nearly two decades, we have not been able to realize the agenda in its fullness" ("Women, Peace and Security Experts Look Ahead to 2002" 2019). Furthermore, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) echoes Mlambo-Ngcuka's concerns and identified substantive gaps in the implementation of UNSCR 1325. They called on the SC to elevate the urgency of enacting UNSCR 1325 standards and focusing on specific neglected topics: a deficit of gender expertise in peace negotiations, the failure of peace negotiations to address the continuation of patterns of gender inequality prevalent before and after a conflict, and the discrepancy between policy commitments made by UNSCR 1325 and the adequate financial and political resources allocated to their implementation (WILPF 2020). In addition, WILPF explains that the SC discussions focus on military security and arms while neglecting discussions about gender equality and women's role in peace and security (WILPF 2020). WILPF's concerns affect the location of the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda within the SC:

[t]he system is broken when it comes to Women, Peace, and Security. We live in a world that invests in and glorifies war. Yet, the war system does not protect women from violence. Instead, it makes violence worse. Preparing for, engaging in, and cleaning up from war diverts critical resources from gender justice and peace. It glorifies militarism and violence. It contributes to rape culture and gender discrimination, and it puts the spotlight on men and violence while putting over a curtain over women and leadership for peace (WILPF 2020).

In other words, WILPF is concerned that the SC is over-focused on the use of force and under-focused on peace, including gender-just peace.

In addition to the concerns presented by WILPF, scholars have identified the existence of gaps in the resolution's language. These gaps impair the attainment of the resolution's primary goals. One of the most prominent WPS issues is that the SC has failed to define the term gender perspective and to implement this definition into its operations. On this matter, Christine Bell explains that UNSCR 1325 did not specify what a gender focus is, what it means, or how it would be implemented (Bell 2015). Scholars such as Dianne Otto and Jennifer Klot caution that UNSCR 1325 did not provide a clear framework of how women's participation will drive change into the SC discussions (Otto 2017; Klot 2014). In addition to the issues presented by Bell and Klot with regards to precise definitions and objectives, Otto also notes that UNSCR 1325 does not impose clear consequences for Member States that do not follow its premises or work in the achievement of its standards (Otto 2017). As noted by scholars and international law analysts, without clear guidelines, legal definitions, and consequences, UNSCR 1325's implementation remains at the mercy of the political will of Member States, which undermines the overall credibility of the SC as an effective international entity to promote global peace and security (Security Council Report Inc. 2020).

Since the enactment of UNSCR 1325, it has been clear, for most Member States, that gender equality is directly linked to the SC's goal of promoting global peace and security. However, the SC's discussions have recently shifted to question this connection. Indeed, Member States such as China and Russia argue that some of the WPS agenda's obligations exceed the SC's scope and should be addressed by other UN bodies with mandates to protect human rights and promote social change (Security Council Report Inc. 2020). For example, In April 2019, Security Council Members passed by thirteen votes in favour, and two abstentions, the adoption of Resolution 2467 (2019) on conflict-related sexual violence (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019)*, *UNOR 2019*, *UN Doc S/Res/2467 (2019)* 2019). Only two countries abstained from their vote, Russia and China (UN Meetings Coverage 2019). Russia explained its abstention by strongly condemning sexual violence as an "odious crime" but also stating that "it is also important not to underestimate the significance of maintaining a united approach to understanding the scope of the Security's Council mandate on combating sexual violence in conflict and or refraining from attempts to broaden its interpretation and take the Council beyond its remit of maintaining international peace and security" (UN Meetings Coverage 2019). During the same debate, China explained that "we believe that the Council should address sexual violence in conflict in line with its mandate, instead of going too far to address what should have been entrusted to other bodies" (UN Meetings Coverage 2019). Indeed, the recent discussions about the expansion of WPS scope and agenda "brought widespread recognition of a deepened gulf among members over aspects of the Council's women, peace and security agenda, and over its relationship to international peace and security" (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3).

In sum, scholars have identified barriers that have delayed the full implementation of UNSCR 1325. Some of these barriers are: the continuous deficit on gender expertise in peace negotiations, the failure of peace negotiations to address patterns of gender inequality after a war, evident discrepancies between Member States policy commitments and the allocation of financial and political resources to support WPS efforts, the gaps in language and clear definitions within the UNSCR 1325 standards, and the political interests on Member Parties and their rejection of previously agreed concepts such as the relationship between gender equality and peace and security.

2. Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) And Its Effects in Latin America

The Latin America region has a rich history of participating and implementing peace processes with diverse outcomes. Countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, Peru, Chile, Colombia, and Argentina, amongst others, have suffered the effects of political violence and have gone through peace negotiations resulting in the signature of peace agreements. Each country's experience is different. However, research done by the Woodrow Wilson Centre about peace processes in Latin America concluded that the main piece missing in achieving sustainable peace is that most peace agreements are only concerned with ending military violence and do not directly address the social, political, and economic issues that keep supporting the resurgence of war (Arnson 1999). Achieving gender equality and addressing the factors that keep women oppressed represents one of these issues that is often missed in peace agreements. The following sections of this paper will look at UNSCR 1325 and its implementation in peace agreements signed within the Latin America Region, with a specific focus on the Colombian Peace Agreement of 2016.

Countries in Central and South America compose the 'Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries', termed GRULAC. This is one of five United Nations regional groupings, and, with thirty-three Member States, it represents 17% of all UN members. Even though six countries (Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Guatemala, and El Salvador) have developed National Action Plans (Peace Women 2021), GRULAC, like many other regions, has yet to implement the standards of UNSCR 1325 fully. It is worth noting that the GRULAC represents a group of countries with different political and social characteristics. However, representatives of the region have identified unique common issues that have slowed down UNSCR 1325 standards. For example, in a Regional Meeting on WPS held in 2007, several countries indicated that the main barrier for implementation is the lack of knowledge about the content of the UNSCR 1325 at both civil and governmental levels (Luciak 2009).

Furthermore, participants at this regional meeting explained that the link between defence, security and gender equality remains unclear for some region members (Luciak 2009). Nine years later, the 2016 Latin America Dialogue on International Peace and Security report recognized that "Latin America has a more chauvinist tradition" where political, legal and social systems continue to maintain women oppressed (Igarape Institute 2016). This recognition of a continuation of systematic discrimination against women points to the importance of expediting the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 principles. Examples of these principles are, increasing gender expertise and women's participation in decision-making positions to challenge the discriminatory political, legal, and social systems that keep women oppressed and marginalized from positions of influence within government institutions.

The Latin American Dialogue on International Peace and Security report also expanded on barriers present in the region for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325. The report noted that the GRULAC region has unique historical, political and social elements. There is a need for the UN and its organizations to first understand and focus on the region's priorities and characteristics to implement Security Council's initiatives such as those in UNSCR 1325. Some of the priorities identified in the report are: a) the availability of sustained and predictable financial and political support in conflict prevention; b) focused initiatives on the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, injustice,

and impunity; c) guarantees for the continued implementation of a gender perspective in all peace operations; and d) establishing a clear link between security and development, as well as avoiding military interventions (Igarape Institute 2016). The first three points of the group's identified priorities call for more action and support in conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflict, such as social justice issues and gender inequality. This priority comes from the experience of failed attempts to achieve peace through the signature of peace agreements in the region. For example, Colombia has gone through several peace processes. The most recent peace agreement was signed on October 24, 2016, between the Colombian government and the armed group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC). However, the 2016 peace agreement failed to end the war in the country. The experience of Colombia's peace process shows the importance placed by Latin American countries on more action in conflict prevention and addressing war causes. Therefore, one of the GRULAC's main priorities is the need for the SC to understand its critical role in preventing war. They argue that the SC must expand its scope and focus to include conflict prevention by influencing the social justice issues that act as catalysts of violence in the region. Furthermore, they argue that the SC should focus on providing more direction to the UN and other bodies to take active roles in peace agreement negotiations. Indeed, peace accords offer a unique momentum for implementing new political and legal systems and creating social orders that condemn discriminatory practices, prevent the continuation of violence, and offer an opportunity to implement a gender-sensitive language that sustains women's rights. For example, members of the GRULAC region call for more UN support in activities such as promoting the creation of National Action Plans, providing predictable funding for organizations working to develop the goals in WPS, promoting the empowerment of women, supporting efforts to build capacity at governmental and civil levels, and increasing accountability and action against impunity for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes (Igarape Institute 2016).

In conclusion, countries in the Latin American region have experienced the devastating effects of war and have been through peace negotiation processes. Some of these processes have been unsuccessful in ending violence, such as the 2016 Colombian peace agreement. Therefore, the GRULAC region countries have recognized a connection between social justice and conflict prevention in the Latin American region, and they are now asking for more attention and support on addressing issues that act as catalyzers of war. However, to this day, the SC's role in peace agreements in the region has been focused more on legalizing war and promoting the end of armed conflict than on creating environments to address social justice issues to prevent future violence.

The implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions on WPS is a great vehicle to address social issues that promote gender equality and prevent war. In the words of Jennifer Klot:

[s]ince its adoption, SCR 1325 has provided a vehicle for women peace advocates to engage the UN's highest military and political authority in a quest to transform dominant approaches to peace and security. It sought to ensure that systemic violations of women's rights in conflict situations would be considered threats to international peace and security, not be relegated to the private domain. It intended to redress the paltry allocation of humanitarian resources to meet women's emergency, sexual, reproductive and health needs. And it also sought to demonstrate how women's participation and gender perspective could tangibly contribute to sustainable peace and help reshape

priorities for post conflict peacebuilding. (Klot 2014, 18)

One of the tools available for the SC to understand global conflicts' unique characteristics is the organization of Informal Expert Group meetings. Therefore, the next section will speak briefly about the IEGS' nature and essential role in providing Member States with relevant information about the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in regions such as GRULAC and countries devastated by war such as Colombia.

2.1 Informal Expert Groups

UN Security Council Resolution 2242 of 2015 created a space for Informal Expert Groups (IEGS) to access Security Council Members and provide status reports and expert advice on country-specific issues in the Council's agenda (*United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242(2015), SC Res 2242, UNOR, 2015, UN Doc S/RES/2242(2015) 2015*).

[t]he IEG provides a space for systemic discussions of country-specific situations on the Council's agenda between senior UN representatives from the field and the Council members' country experts and women, peace and security experts with the goal of informing the work of the Council and UN activities in the field and to mainstream the agenda (Security Council Report Inc. 2020).

IEGS meetings are an essential element of the WPS agenda because they directly support women, peace, and security experts in implementing its standards. IEGS' meetings also provide a space for civil women groups to report barriers, make suggestions, and request SC State Members' support in addressing issues. The role of IEGS has been the centre of positive remarks from women groups that see these meetings as an opportunity to provide first-hand information to Council's Members about the implementation of UNSCR 1325 standards in their specific countries.

Despite the importance of the information provided by IEGS' meetings and their role in reporting on activities on the field, they are also criticized for not having enough legal weight to inform change and create accountability for the implementation of their recommendations (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3). For examples of these concerns are, "IEG co-chairs are not included in the list of chairs and vice-chairs of Council subsidiary bodies" (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3). Also, the "IEG meetings are not reflected on the Council's subsidiary organs programme of work, and there is no obligation for Council members to attend" (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3). The lack of formal recognition of IEGS as an official body of the SC raises questions about how their recommendations can be assessed, implemented, and improved (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 4). However, despite these concerns, there is hesitancy in formalizing IEGS meetings mainly because the lack of formality keeps their meetings independent from political influence and allows them to continue their work without political issues arising from State Members' priorities (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3). Therefore, "it seems that Council members, relevant parts of the UN system, and civil society agree that the IEGS works well as an informal body and that there is no current need to institutionalize it further" (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 4). Consequently, a discussion into changing the way IEGS operates may not be relevant for the SC at this time.

Despite discussions about the nature of the SC's IEGs, their role is essential in regions that experienced war, such as GRULAC. As explained in the previous section, the Latin America Dialogue on International Peace and Security report submitted recommendations to the UN on region-specific strategies to effectively implement peace operations, peacebuilding, and the women, peace and security agenda (Igarape Institute 2016). Some of these recommendations refer to UN rules and institutions' need to understand and adapt to the fast-changing nature of armed conflicts worldwide. Informal Experts Groups meetings provide the SC with the opportunity to gain insight into the unique characteristics of global armed conflicts by "providing a space for systematic discussions of country-specific situations on the SC's agenda between senior UN representatives from the field and Council members' country experts and WPS experts to inform the work of the Council and UN activities in the field and to mainstream the agenda" (Security Council Report Inc. 2020, 3). Indeed, IEGs meetings represent a valuable tool for SC to learn experts' opinions on country-specific conflicts, such as those in the GRULAC region, and allow the Security Council to adapt and consider these characteristics when deciding how to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325. An example of the work of IEGs in the performance of UNSCR 1325 standards after the war is the case of Colombia's peace agreement of 2016. The SC organized an IEG meeting about Colombia on July 29th, 2020, four years after the final peace agreement's signature and seven years after the start of the peace negotiations (UNSC 2020, para. 1; Security Council Report Inc.). The IEG meeting about Colombia was important because it provided a summary to SC members about women's status during the peace agreement implementation and submitted recommendations on areas where the Council's support was needed to promote gender equality and prevent the continuation of violence. In precis, experts who submitted the report on Colombia recommended that the Council followed up on the status of the government's announcement about Colombia's National Action Plan production. In addition, they demanded the expedited implementation of all the gender-related indicators of the government's implementation framework, they asked for financial and operational support for the Special Forum on Gender and for the advocacy of women's civil society organizations with regards to opening a case on conflict-related sexual violence within the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (UNSC 2020). All these recommendations were presented as essential for achieving gender equality in Colombia after the peace agreement's signature. The report submitted by the IEG meeting on Colombia's peace agreement represents a valuable tool for the development and implementation of gender-specific items in the Colombian peace agreement of 2016, which would ultimately support the implementation of UNSCR 1325 standards, the achievement of gender equality, and the prevention of future violence.

Indeed, analyzing the experience of cases such as the 2016 Colombian peace agreement lead to the identification of opportunities for the SC to modify its methods in a way that could result in immediate benefit to the WPS agenda. For example, it could hold Member States responsible for ignoring or delaying the WPS normative framework's implementation by naming and shaming them in UNSC resolutions or UNSC reports. It could also support women's groups in upholding UNSCR 1325's principles, perhaps by requesting UN Women to provide ongoing WPS-related assistance. The SC could also strengthen and formalizing the role of the IEG's recommendations within SC discussions.

The following sections of this paper will take a closer look at the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement's case.

2.2 The 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement

In 2012, Colombian President, Juan Manuel Santos, initiated peace talks with the armed group FARC-EP (Oion-Encina 2020, 337). Understanding the opportunity that the peace process represented in the achievement of gender equality in Colombia, women's groups gathered and advocated for their participation in the peace negotiations, using the message "we don't want to be agreed on, we want to participate in the decision-making process" (Oion-Encina 2020, 337). The message sent by women's groups revealed a substantial commitment of Colombian women to actively participate in the new legal and social order emerging after the armed conflict.

In 2013, and with the explicit purpose of influencing the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, women's groups organized the First Women and Peace Summit (Oion-Encina 2020, 337). UN Women, a UN entity created by the UN General Assembly to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, provided technical support to the Summit. The Summit called for the peace process to observe the mandates created by WPS and its resolutions altogether. Women expressed their concerns on three main points: "their unconditional support for the dialogue process, the demand for actors to reach an agreement, and the equal participation of women at the negotiation table" (Oion-Encina 2020, 337). The Summit's impact was crucial and represented an effective method for civic groups to demand the inclusion of a gender perspective into the peace negotiations taking place in La Habana, Cuba. In September 2014, following up with the Summit's recommendations, the negotiation delegations created a dedicated gender sub-committee, with the mandate of providing a gender perspective to the peace agreement and ensuring the inclusion of women's rights in all points of the agenda ("Women Take the Reins to Build Peace in Colombia" 2017). The creation of a gender sub-committee to oversee the inclusion of a gender perspective in the final peace agreement is recognized at local and international levels as a significant achievement for the Summit. Furthermore, it serves as an example of the strong impact that grassroots organizations' participation can have in promoting WPS standards in peace agreements and peace negotiations.

The organization of women in groups with UN Women's support shows the indirect influence of international entities to advance the WPS goals. It also shows the essential role that grassroots organizations can have in supporting the advancement of UNSCR 1325's goals. However, UN Women's influence on the Colombian peace negotiations was significant but merely ancillary and limited to providing technical support to the Summit's organizers.

[i]n October 2015, on the 15th anniversary of Resolution 1325, the National Women and Peace Summit announced its full support for the peace process and reminded the Mesa de Conversaciones of the disproportionate impact of the armed conflict on women and the need for equal participation in all areas of the negotiation: protocol events, top positions and subcommittees. (Oion-Encina 2020, 338)

The Summit represented a united front of women groups that closely monitored the peace process to ensure the implementation of UNSCR 1325's standards.

Despite the Summit's success in promoting the inclusion and consideration of the UNSCR

1325 into the negotiation process, the final peace agreement failed to mention or reference the WPS agenda or its resolutions (Oion-Encina 2020, 341). The lack of explicit language referring to the Resolutions can be interpreted as an intentional oversight of the international obligations generating from UNSCR 1325. Cristine Bell and Catherine O'Rourke explain that, in some cases, parties to peace negotiations intentionally exclude gender-specific concerns from the final text of the peace agreement. They clarify that on specific circumstances, "to include them would make it more difficult for the parties to reach an agreement or destabilize any agreement reached" (Bell and O'Rourke 2010). Considering the disproportionate effect that war has imposed on Colombian women and the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, parties to the peace process may have been hesitant to add the WPS framework into the final peace agreement's text. Bell and O'Rourke call this effect the 'gender justice vs peace dilemma' (Bell and O'Rourke 2010). As they explain, "cases, where inclusion of gender is seen as in some respects in tension with the requirements of peace are unlikely to be affected by the existence of normative standard alone" (Bell and O'Rourke 2010).

Furthermore, scholars such as Hilary Charlesworth, Christine Chinkin, and Shelley Wright identified language in the final text of peace agreements as an important factor in analyzing political and legal processes from its gender perspective:

[f]eminist method must be concerned with examining the fundamentals of legal persuasion: the language it uses; the organization of legal materials in predetermining the watertight categories; the acceptance of abstract concepts as somehow valid or "pure"; the reliance in practice on confrontational, adversarial techniques; and the commitment to male hierarchical structures in all legal and political organizations (Charlesworth, Chinkin, and Wright 1991).

Indeed, Charlesworth, Chinkin, Wright, Bell, and O'Rourke agree that a study of the language used in the final text of peace agreements is essential to their analysis from a gender perspective. Despite the lack of specific reference to the WPS normative framework, the final text of the Colombian peace agreement referred extensively to gender-related matters and the advancement of gender equality after conflict:

[t]he final peace agreement integrated the gender focus in 100 measures within six points: 27 measures within Integrated Rural Reform, 17 on political participation, 16 with regard to the end of conflict, disarming and reinsertion, 14 on victims, and eight on implementation, verification and endorsement (Oion-Encina 2020, 339).

The WPS agenda has served as a valuable normative tool for women's rights advocates. While it did not prompt a direct reference to the relevant WPS UNSC resolutions in the peace agreement, its normative framework did lead to the involvement of women's groups within the peace process and the resulting inclusion of gender-specific action items.

In conclusion, The Summit represented an essential vehicle to promote women's participation in the negotiation and signature of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement. The group was also successful in bringing the standards of UNSCR 1325 to the centre of the peace negotiations between

the Colombian government and FARC-EP. Even though the final agreement did not mention any of the WPS Resolutions, the deal addressed women's issues and created a compromise to use a gender perspective in the implementation of its mandates.

2.3 Colombia's Steps in the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Women's groups in Colombia have been working on the implementation of UNSCR 1325's standards since 2010 when they organized meetings with more than 600 women "who drew proposals for putting the resolution into action" (Oion-Encina 2020, 337). Indeed, there is no doubt that female leaders in Colombia clearly understand the connection between peace, security and gender equality. However, and despite the work of women's rights advocates, Colombia has been slow to implement the standards of UNSCR 1325, and it has not yet produced a National Action Plan (Peace Women 2020). The Colombian government has received the demands of women's groups to implement the UNSCR 1325 without any sense of urgency for action.

An essential characteristic of Colombia is that the country has experienced, and continues to suffer, the devastating effects of war for more than fifty years, leaving an enormous and painful burden on all sectors of the population. The Official Register of Victims (RUV), created by Law 1448/2011 on Victims and Land Restitution, recorded 9,078.038 victims of various conflict-related crimes by November 30, 2020; of this number, 50.3% of the victims identify as women and 49.6% as men ("Registro Unico de Victimas" 2020). The effects that the armed conflict has imposed on women, men, children, members of LGBTQ, Indigenous, and Afro communities is harrowing and will take decades to overcome.

Women participate and experience the consequences of war in different and disproportionate ways. Scholars, and judicial institutions such as the Constitutional Court of Colombia, have studied and recognized the inordinate effects that the Colombian conflict has had on women (Auto 092 de 2008, MP Manuel Jose Cepeda Espinosa 2008, sec. II.2). They recognize that women are most likely to suffer as victims of crimes of sexual violence, loss of their family members and communities, displacement, and poverty (Auto 092 de 2008, MP Manuel Jose Cepeda Espinosa 2008; Bouvier 2016). However, women's participation in armed conflict is diverse. Even though they are impacted as victims, they also participate as members of armed groups and combatants (Bouvier 2016). Indeed, speaking about women's participation as combatants, FARC-EP's leader, Jorge Torres Victoria, aka Pablo Catatumbo, reported in an interview with a Colombian newspaper that 40% of the FARC-EP members were women (Maldonado Tovar 2017). Due to the lack of documentation within the armed group, the exact number of women that have participated as part of the FARC-EP army is problematic to calculate. However, it is clear that women have played an essential role as combatants and supporters of armed groups, members of the government, and human rights defenders; therefore, "civil society and women's organizations have had to play and still play an important role in peacebuilding in Colombia" (Oion-Encina 2020, 337).

The signature of the 2016 peace agreement was welcomed by women groups working in the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. Indeed, "In September 2016, before the national plebiscite to endorse the Final Agreement, the 2nd National Women and Peace Summit was organized for support

and in order to reflect the points of the final agreement, territorial peace and implementation” (Oion-Encina 2020, 338). Furthermore, they recognized the peace agreement as an opportunity to introduce gender-focused concepts into the new legal and political order and change the systems that have kept women oppressed. As we explained in the previous section of this paper, The Summit successfully added women and gender perspectives into the final agreement’s text; however, the implementation of gender standards has been challenging in the post-conflict phase.

Women’s rights advocates argue that one of the causes for the delay in implementing UNSCR 1325 is the Colombian government’s difficulty understanding the direct role that gender-equity plays in the achievement of sustainable peace. They claim that the government sees the WPS as a framework essential to end the war but not necessarily valuable for the post-conflict phases (Kaptan 2020). Indeed, the 2016 Colombian peace agreement was celebrated globally for including women and gender issues in the final agreement’s text (Oion-Encina 2020, 339). However, a WILPF representative from Colombia explained that “the mention of women’s issues in the peace accords is used [as pretext] as being enough [for women’s rights] and there is no need for WPS implementation [in the country beyond the conflict]” (Kaptan 2020). Women leaders’ claims show a gap between the government’s message reaffirming the importance of the WPS agenda and their action to implement its mandates (Kaptan 2020).

Further to the government’s lack of action regarding the implementation of women issues in the peace agreement, another barrier identified by women working on the field is the lack of protection and security offered to them and their families (UNSC 2020, para. 5). In the Security Council IEG meeting on Colombia, it was reported that the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia has documented “the killing of 45 female human rights defenders and social leaders” since the signature of the peace agreement in 2016 (UNSC 2020, para. 5). The same report also condemned the continued use of sexual violence as a tactic against women’s leadership (UNSC 2020, para. 6). Furthermore, in a WILPF report, representatives from Colombia described the difficulties women human rights defenders (WHRD) must face doing their work. They reported that “WHRDs live in precarious conditions especially facing poverty, economic, and safety vulnerabilities” (Kaptan 2020). These concerns point to a lack of gender-sensitive measures available in the country to protect and promote the role of WHRDs in the post-conflict stages (Kaptan 2020).

The lack of urgency and formality in implementing the standards created by UNSCR 1325 is a by-product of the SC’s lack of action in creating timely measures to ensure that Member States, such as Colombia, abide by the principles of the WPS. The SC’s delayed action in the context of peace agreements and post-conflict situations creates yet another barrier for women’s rights advocates that work in promoting the observance of the WPS agenda’s principles without the international community’s support and protection. A change of focus from the SC will represent an immediate change in the Colombian government’s attention to implementing WPS standards. Considering that “women in Colombia continue to be a driving force” (UNSC 2020, para 1) in the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement; ensuring consistent and predictable support from the SC will provide protection to the brave women who are holding up the standards of UNSCR 1325 and upholding sustainable peace.

3. Findings and Analysis

The sections of this paper have used the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement's experience to present the vital role that social-justice and specific gender-equality plays in achieving sustainable peace and security. The following sections of this paper will provide further analysis of three main areas that emanate from the Colombian peace agreement experience. Firstly, the SC's WPS agenda's role in achieving the Council's goals by directly addressing gender inequality and social justice issues as catalysts of war. Secondly, the importance of clarifying definitions in the UNSCR 1325's language, such as the meaning of adopting a gender-perspective in peace agreements. Thirdly, the essential role of the WPS agenda is to prevent humanitarian crises and armed conflict.

3.1 The Connection of the Security Council Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Addressing the Mechanisms and Catalysts of War

Drawing from the 2016 Colombian peace agreement's experiences, this paper has studied both the benefits and barriers that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions have experienced since its enactment in the year 2000. This paper has argued that, recognizing the connection between gender equality and the achievement of international peace, the implementation of the WPS agenda is essential to the fulfillment of the SC's functions as described in articles 24 and 33 of the Charter of the United Nations in ensuring international peace and security and promoting the pacific settlement of disputes (The Charter).

Scholars have also questioned the SC's limited scope in issues where international peace and security are not immediately imperiled. For example, Ivan Shearer comments that the Charter's Article 33 confers only recommendatory powers to the SC and "limited to disputes which are likely to endanger peace and security. It has no such powers with regards to all disputes, although it may investigate any dispute to see if it is likely to endanger peace and security" (Shearer 1994, 581). A narrow analysis of article 33 may conclude that the SC power and scope are limited to international conflict. Therefore, under this approach, it should not be involved in the more local conflict prevention efforts through social justice, such as gender equality. The SC's scope and powers depend on the level of threat that a conflict represents for the maintenance of peace and security. The SC "shall determine the existence of any threats to the peace, breach of the peace, or acts of aggression" (*United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI 1945, art 39*). However, "the understanding of what constitutes a "threat to the peace" has broadened considerably from the narrow concept of the absence of the use of armed force to the wider concept of situations that may lead to the use of armed force" (Currie et al. 2014, 279). Indeed, the mechanisms of conflict and its catalysts are understood to be connected to social justice issues since the beginning of the 1990s,

[t]he absence of war in military conflicts among states does not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security. The United Nations membership as a whole, working through the appropriate bodies, needs to give the highest priority to the solution of these matters (UNSC 1992, 3).

As recognized by scholars, jurists and UN members, there is a connection between the instability caused by social justice issues, such as gender equality and war. From this recognition, the SC council developed UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda, with the explicit purpose of avoiding instability and humanitarian crisis that endanger international peace. However, as we will study in the following sections of this paper, the SC has not yet clarified its role in preventing humanitarian crises. Furthermore, the Council has a huge opportunity to accelerate UNSCR 1325's implementation by recommending its language in peace agreements and following up with the Member States on these efforts' results. The Colombian war is a clear example of a conflict that has disrupted the international relations between Latin American countries for decades. Therefore, it represents an apparent hazard to the region's peace and security. Considering the connection between gender equality and peace, the SC's role should have been more direct in recommending and monitoring the inclusion of UNSCR 1325's language into the 2016 Colombian peace agreement.

3.2 The Definition of Implementing a Gender Perspective and its Effects on Peace Agreements

Despite the importance of UNSCR 1325 for the achievement of SC goals, scholars have noticed a delay in implementing its mandates. After studying various barriers that have limited the Resolution implementation, authors such as Catherine O'Rourke and Christine Bell have identified that gaps in the resolution's language represent a limitation for achieving its standards (Bell and O'Rourke 2010, 978). For example, the resolution calls for the implementation of a gender perspective into all SC discussions and peace activities; however, it does not clearly explain what adopting a gender perspective means and how it should be implemented. This gap has been addressed by scholars, jurists, and UN entities. For example, in 2014, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court defined 'gender perspective' in its Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes in the following terms,

g]ender perspective requires an understanding of differences in status, power, roles, and needs between males and females, and the impact of gender on people's opportunities and interactions. This will enable the Office to gain a better understanding of the crimes, as well as the experiences of individuals and communities in a particular society (International Criminal Court 2014, 3).

This definition helps clarify what a gender perspective entails and the essential elements when carrying out a gender-focused analysis.

Scholars have joined the discussion about what adopting a gender perspective in peace agreement means and how to use it. For example, Bell explains that an analysis of peace processes from a gender perspective requires a deep understanding of "what gender power relations characterize the political settlement that is being moved from and to in the peace negotiations, to understand and address the implications of that settlement on women" (Bell 2015, 8). Furthermore, Bell develops a list of elements necessary for a gender-sensitive assessment of peacebuilding activities:

[c]onsultation of women regarding peace negotiation structure and modalities, the inclusion of women in peace negotiation fora, explicitly addressing women's needs and

demands in the text of any peace agreement and subsequent process of implementation, a consultative conflict assessment of the power relations at the heart of the conflict, and its relationship with gender power relations, and technical support for women in addressing both sets of inter-woven relationships simultaneously, a consultative assessment of the implications for women and men of draft peace agreement provisions, including provisions for legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels. This assessment should aim at addressing women's as well as men's concerns and experiences in peace agreement design so that men and women benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (Bell 2015, 4).

Therefore, the gap in the definition of what adopting a gender perspective means has been the center of attention by feminist scholars, such as Bell. In the specific area of peace agreements, Bell calls for a holistic analysis of the role, the level of consultation, and participation of women, as well as a study of the power-dynamics embedded deep in the legal systems of the society. Understanding these factors would enable peace negotiators to address gender disparity issues in peace agreements and ensure that inequality is not perpetuated in the implementation and post-conflict phases.

During the 2016 Colombian peace process, most of the work of ensuring that the peace process observed UNSCR 1325's standards was done by the 1st Women and Peace Summit.² The Summit advocated for the implementation of a dedicated gender-perspective approach into the peace negotiations (Oion-Encina 2020, 337). The advocacy of the Summit had a positive impact in the participation and representation of women in peace negotiations and achieved the creation of a Gender Subcommittee that "took on the task of incorporating the gender and intersectional focus into the points of the agreement" (Oion-Encina 2020, 338). The 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement "has been heralded as a positive example of the active and meaningful participation of women in a peace process" (UNSC 2020, para. 1). However, in the SC's IEG about the situation of Colombia on July 29, 2020 it was reported that four years after the signature of the agreement issues such as conflict-related sexual violence, security threats and protection needs of women leaders and human rights defenders, and the inequitable access to land, continue to represent an important barrier in the achievement of gender equality in the post-conflict phase (UNSC 2020, 1, 2). The IEG on Colombia also made recommendations to the SC, such as "the Security Council, in its messaging on Colombia, should commend the Mission's efforts to achieve gender parity and encourage the Mission to continue to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue into its planning, operations and reporting" (UNSC 2020, 5).

The case of Colombia is an example of how a unified understanding and implantation of a gender-perspective is key in helping peace agreements address the issues of disparity deeply embedded in the nucleus of legal and political systems of societies emerging from war. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for the SC to be more active in promoting the implementation of UNSCR 1325 standards by providing technical, security, and financial support to women's human rights defenders

² The Summit was integrated by Alianza Iniciativas de Mujeres por la Paz (IMP), Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras, e Indigenas de Colombia (ANMUCIC), Casa de la Mujer, Red Nacional de Mujeres (RNM), Colectivo de Pensamiento y Accion "Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad, Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afro-Colombianas (CNOA), Grupo de Seguimiento de la Resolucion 1325, Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad (LIMPAL), Mujeres por la Paz, Ruta Pacifica de Mujeres.

during all stages of peace activities. Another way to support local activists' efforts is to shift State Member's attention to the recommendations and reports provided by IEG meetings. IEGS represents a clear opportunity and window for Member States to learn about specific conflicts' nuances and adopt recommendations that will further sustain the UN and civil society groups' work in preventing future violence.

3.3 The Prevention of Humanitarian Crises through the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 Standards

Peace agreements represent an opportunity for the prevention of humanitarian crises. The concept of security has changed from defending States national borders to understanding the effects that armed conflict inflicts on civilians.

"[t]he end of the Cold War reconfigured the relationship of States and the international community to the concept of security. The traditional concept had been focused on defending national territory against outside aggression; now security is analyzed from the human perspective and in terms of protecting civilians. The new concept of security, inspired by the fact that 90 per cent of war and conflict victims were civilians, went beyond State security to take a holistic perspective centered on the prevention of human rights violations, the protection of civilians from organized violence, and civilians experiences during conflicts" (Nduwimana 2008, 11).

This new understanding of security places the human experience and the prevention of humanitarian crises as one of the main purposes of peace negotiations, "there is a direct connection between conflict prevention and human security in that armed conflicts compromise the two twin foundations of human security: freedom from want and freedom from fear" (Nduwimana 2008, 13). Peace agreements represent a tool to end and prevent future conflict, by placing human security as a priority, they hold a key role in preventing humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, positioning the concept of security within the realm of the human experience, the discussions would inevitably include the different effects that war has on people based on personal characteristics such as gender.

"adopting a gender perspective in humanitarian situations allows us to emphasize the skills and capacities of men and women, and to identify missed opportunities to reinforce women's skills within humanitarian activities. But more importantly, it points to opportunities for removing social-cultural barriers that reproduce and exacerbate discrimination against women". (Nduwimana 2008, 14)

Peace agreements have the potential to change the systems that keep specific communities, such as women, Indigenous, and LGBTQ individuals, marginalized and vulnerable.(Reilly 2007, 164). Feminist scholars such as Niamh Reilly explain that "transitions offer extraordinary opportunities for recasting societies and transforming pre-existing terms of power – social, economic, cultural, and political – specifically for the benefit of those previously denied human rights and access to decision-making processes" (Reilly 2007, 164). Additionally, peace negotiations should often encompass discussions about new political, legal, and economic systems to be implemented in emerging orders

within countries moving out of conflict. These emerging systems can either advance women's rights or continue with the systems that keep them oppressed, unable to fully participate in the decisions that affect their communities, and in a continued state of insecurity and vulnerability.

[a]chieving gender justice in transitions, therefore, demands an interrogation of the causes and consequences of women's marginalization on high-level political decision making. This is especially critical in the negotiation of peace settlements and drafting of constitutions, which represent particularly important windows of opportunity because they establish the legal and political framework for the transition over the long term (Reilly 2007, 164).

In the case of Colombia, Despite the fact that the Government of Colombia has yet to create a National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and that the Final Peace Agreement did not mention in its text any of the Resolution that create the normative framework of the SC WPS Agenda; the Final Agreement, implemented gender-focused elements in 100 measures within the six main points of the agreement. "27 measures within Integrated Rural Reform, 17 on Political Participation, 16 with regard to end of the conflict, disarming and reinsertion, 14 on victims, and 8 on implementation, verification endorsement" (Oion-Encina 2020, 339). For this reason, it is considered "to be one of the most advanced in terms of gender approach" (Oion-Encina 2020, 339). However, as noted by the IEG about the situation of Colombia, the implementation of the 100 provisions about gender equality has been slow and WPS advocates reported that more government resources need to be allocated to achieve their full implementation. Furthermore, the IEG meeting report stated that "since 2018, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), has received 274 reports from victims' organizations and government institutions, and at least 20 of them have been submitted by women victims of sexual violence during the conflict" (UNSC 2020, 3). This enduring issue has moved women's organizations to demand that the SJP opens a macro-investigation related to conflict-related sexual violence. In the same report the IEG submitted a recommendation that "Security Council members and other international partners should support the advocacy of women's civil society organizations with regards to opening a case on conflict-related sexual violence within the SJP" (UNSC 2020, 5). In addition, the IEG on Colombia has also recommended that the SC should support the Colombian Government in developing a NAP in consultation and engaging all sectors of the civil society. (UNSC 2020, 5)

The Security Council has the power and scope to recommend the inclusion of UNSCR 1325 language into the text of peace agreements and promote the abolition of the systemic barriers that keep women from fully participating in their communities. Indeed, ignoring the SC's opportunity to recommend the implementation of UNSCR 1325 standards into the new legal and political systems of countries going through peace negotiations represents a lost opportunity for the SC to advance the achievement of UNSCR 1325 goals.

The connection between social justice, the mechanisms of conflict and its catalysts is recognized by the SC and identified as an opportunity for achieving global peace.

[t]he members of the Council agree that the world now has the best chance of achieving international

peace and security since the foundation of the United Nations they undertake the work in close cooperation with other United Nations members in their own efforts to achieve this as well as to address urgently all the other problems in particular dose of economic and social development required the collective response of the international community they recognize that peace and prosperity are indivisible and that lasting peace and stability require effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in large freedom. (UNSC 1992, 5)

Indeed, by recommending and monitoring the adoption of a gender perspective and social justice issues into the text of peace agreements, the SC's has a window of opportunity to expand their role from merely stopping conflict to preventing future violence.

4. Conclusion

In a press release on November 30, 2017, the UN Security Council stated that "Colombia's peace process has sparked high hopes and expectations around the world and continues to inspire those seeking to end conflicts elsewhere" (United Nations News Service Section 2017). After analyzing the Colombian case, this paper argues that women's involvement in the Colombian peace process was scarce until 2013 when the National Summit of Women and Peace pressured the government to live up to the WPS agenda's standards. The Summit's intervention significantly impacted the peace process, turning its direction and successfully bringing women's issues into the final agreement's text. This was achieved by adopting the elements of gender analysis into the peace process' dialogues through more women's appointment to the delegations and organizing a gender sub-committee to analyze and inform the negotiation tables. "The Colombian case shows finally that strong, independent, civil society organizations - especially women's organizations - can prepare the way for a peace process and influence its shape - both from within and from outside" (Bouvier 2016, 28). The success of the Colombian peace agreement is owed to women advocates and supporters' efforts, including UN Women.

The peace process in Colombia has been hailed by members of the international community and scholars globally as a proven success of women's participation in peace negotiations (Council of Foreign Relations 2017). However, this victory of women's involvement is not directly linked to the UNSCR 1325, which is not mentioned in the agreement's final text. Instead, the success is attributed to the work of civil women's groups and advocates. The UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions on WPS's role provided legal and moral support for women's groups pressing for gender-specific additions to the peace agreement.

The work of the women's group is essential to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. However, even though the Colombian peace agreement includes gender-specific norms, these mandates' execution has been challenging in the post-conflict phases. Furthermore, the recommendations provided by the IEG meeting on Colombia have not translated into a sense of urgency for the Colombian government to focus on gender issues in the post-conflict era. Indeed, the Colombian government's attention would improve if the SC's provided clear expectations and monitor the execution of the gender-related items in the agreed-upon final text of the 2016's peace agreement.

Stepping back from the country-specific example into the larger picture, this paper has proposed changes that the SC can make to its methods that would result in a more robust implementation of the WPS agenda. Some of these changes include a) providing financial and technical support for women human rights defenders, b) calling for timely IEG's meetings and monitoring implementation of their suggestions, c) ensuring that WPS is considered as part of all discussions within the Council, and d) holding Member States accountable for failing to implement the WPS agenda.

In conclusion, this paper forwards the notion that while the SC has focused its attention on developing a normative framework to protect women victims of armed conflict, it has not focused enough on understanding and addressing the social, political and economic factors that keep women oppressed and that are perpetuated from former legal and political systems into the new emerging systems created after war. These factors keep women, and other minorities oppressed before and after the implementation of a peace agreement and prevent the achievement of long-lasting peace. Therefore, there is opportunities for the Security Council to shift its attention on the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 standards and the implementation of gender-perspectives through the application of feminist methodologies into its structure and discussions. For example, SC has the power to provide economic, legal, and security support to women's civil groups that advocate for the implementation of the language of UNSCR 1325 and all the WPS Resolutions into the texts of peace agreements. In addition, the SC should enhance the consideration and inclusion of IEG meeting reports into its decision making and considerations.

Indeed, after twenty-one years of enacting UNSCR 1325, women continue to demand a central role in peace negotiations, not only as victims in need of protection but as active participants in the design of the new political systems result from peace agreements. The UN and the Security Council have a role in supporting the execution of UNSCR 1325. The Council's direct recommendation to parties involved in the negotiation of peace agreements, addressing gender-inequality issues in the final text of peace agreements, will support local women groups and ultimately advance the implementation of UNSCR 135's standards. Finally, as Michelle Bachelete stated during the UN Women's anniversary, the world cannot promote social issues that encourage violence and inequity.

We simply can no longer afford to deny the full potential of one-half of the population. The world needs to tap into the talent and wisdom of women. Whether the issue is food security, economic recovery, health, or peace and security, the participation of women is needed now more than ever. (Bachelet 2012)

The UN Security Council has a clear path to consolidate its role in promoting global peace and security.

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