



Action plan to help women in war zones

By Online Editor

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Minister for Women Kate Ellis

Australia has drawn up an action plan to promote the role of women in international conflict resolution and cut down on sexual violence.

Minister for Women Kate Ellis said the draft plan was part of Australia's response to UN resolution 1325 which recognises the impact of war on women and girls, their increased vulnerability to sexual violence and their exclusion from peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction.

She said the fate of women in conflict zones was dire.

They were raped, abducted, humiliated, abused, forced into slavery, and ostracised from their families and communities, she said.

“Women's bodies in fact have become part of the battleground for war,” Ms Ellis said in a speech at Parliament House in Canberra today.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Central African Republic and Sudan there had been mass sexual violence, including mass rape and sexual slavery of women and girls. “This is a chilling reminder for all us here today,” Ms Ellis said.

“It is a call that no country, no government and no community can refuse to answer.”

The draft plan has four aims - prevention, increased participation, protection from sexual and gender-based violence and relief and recovery.

It recommends gender and cultural training for all Australian police, military and civilian deployments.

The draft plan points to Australia's efforts to promote the role of women in the Asia Pacific region.

In the Solomon Islands and Nauru, Australian police officers have worked with local police to help establish recruitment and training targets for women, the draft plan said. The existing male-to-female ratio in the Nauru Police Force is now close to 60:40.

Ms Ellis is seeking feedback on the draft plan and invites submissions.

SOURCE: AAP/PACNEWS