



WOMEN IN WAR

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To Our International Leadership

On 29 October, 2003, I sat in the United Nations Security Council chamber for a one day meeting, during which 37 Member States spoke in commemoration of the 3rd anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325. In that ground-breaking resolution on women, peace and security, the Council acknowledged for the first time that men and women experience conflicts differently. We die different deaths. We are tortured and abused in different ways - sometimes for biological reasons, sometimes for psychological or social and, maybe, sometimes, for absolutely no reason at all.

Listening to the Council's debate, I was again amazed that the United Nations, 55 years after it was created, had only just begun to recognize at the highest level that women and girls suffer disproportionately during and after war - as soldiers, as refugees, as survivors of land-mine explosions and as survivors of sexual violence and exploitation. Here we were, witnessing the *Member States* of the United Nations confess that, relatively speaking, much, much more still needed to be done. And, yes, while I found this recognition and affirmation of the horrific crimes women suffer, and the skills they can bring to rebuilding war-torn societies encouraging, it was obvious that we had only just begun the task of making governments and institutions accountable to women and of ensuring that we are included in all aspects of peace and security.

So, what next? Will we be commemorating another anniversary of resolution 1325 next year, and then the next, and the next? Or will you, Member States, really re-allocate resources from your already-overflowing weapons arsenals to more productive human pursuits? Will you choose to invest in human security through disarmament, development, environmental protection and social services? If not, why not? What could possibly make you feel better about yourselves than for the people in your own country — your mothers, your wives, your daughters — to live in peace and security? Surely, we have not forgotten the promises of gender equality that are woven like a golden thread through the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, which was greeted three years ago with such unabashed enthusiasm!

Distinguished Presidents, Prime Ministers, Senators, Congressional leaders,

Parliamentarians and any of you that I have failed to mention, in the words of Arundhati Roy:
Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.

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