



News Release

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Women's rights more likely to feature in peace deals, study says

Women's rights are increasingly being incorporated into peace processes despite being historically overlooked in agreements, research says.

Analysis of the more than 1500 peace settlements signed between 1990 and 2015 found that only one fifth made any reference to women, girls or gender.

There are signs that this is improving, however. By 2015, nearly a half of the peace processes made some provisions for women.

Experts say that including an explicit reference to women's rights in peace agreements recognises the importance of women for social cohesion and ensures that the process of rebuilding a society is fully representative.

The United Nations' call for a gender perspective in peace agreements has made an impact, according to the study by the University of Edinburgh.

Before the resolution passed in October 2000, only 12 per cent of agreements signed by the UN contained reference to women, compared with 42 per cent since.

Researchers at the University's Political Settlement Research Project (PSRP) developed an online tool that charts the progress of peace agreements since the end of the Cold War.

The database – called PA-X, a Peace Agreement Access Tool – records more than 140 peace processes since 1990, which have produced in excess of 1500 agreements aiming to resolving conflicts.

The resource includes agreements related to conflicts that include Bosnia, Colombia, Northern Ireland, Yemen, Syria and Sudan.

Particular kinds of peace processes are more likely to include women. For example, power sharing agreements are seven times more likely to include a reference to gender quotas.

Researchers found that only nine agreements referred to sexual orientation. Six of these protected against discrimination, while three prohibited same-sex marriage.

Professor Christine Bell, PSRP director and report author, said: "By tracking the growth - and assessing the significance - of including women in peace processes, this database can

encourage those involved in resolving conflict to include a gender perspective in future agreements. By doing so, they could help improve the lives of women and girls in post-conflict societies, to the benefit of all.”

The study, co-authored with Kevin McNicholl, is published in *Feminists@Law*, as part of a special collection on women and peace processes.

The PA-X dataset and more information on PSRP can be found at www.politicalsettlement.org

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