

# Incorporating Gender Perspectives in Peace Operations since 2018

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## Question

*What evidence is available on the progress on incorporating gender perspectives in peace operations since 2018, including the deployment of female peacekeepers, and what are emerging issues that are likely to be important in this field going forward?*

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# 1. Summary

For over two decades, the UN's peace and security entities have recognised that there is a gender dimension to their work. The UN's women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda was institutionalised in 2000 with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for gender considerations to be placed at the centre of peace and security initiatives. This rapid literature review collates evidence from academic, policy focussed and grey literature on progress on incorporating gender perspectives in peace operations since 2018, including the deployment of female peacekeepers, and the emerging issues in this field. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of the WPS agenda and its development, it explores definitions of gender perspectives and attempts to incorporate these into peace processes. The section also includes an overview of key statistics on women's representation. The section concludes with an overview of critiques, themes and challenges associated with the implementation of the WPS agenda.
- Section 3 provides a snapshot of how different organisations have sought to incorporate the WPS agenda in their work. This section focuses on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); African Union (AU), Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and European Union (EU).

Key messages that emerge from this review include:

The focus on women's participation in peace processes has led to several initiatives and efforts to promote increased representation, of which the launch of regional women mediators networks and new tools and guidelines on how to increase women's representation in these contexts are examples.

The multidimensional nature of the WPS agenda is illustrative of the complexity of contemporary peace operations, which face an increasing array of challenges due to the changing nature of conflict, the complexity of mandates, and the sheer number of tasks they are expected to undertake.

The following new and emergent issues in National Action Plans (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security: asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons; climate change or environmental degradation; disasters; violent extremism or terrorism; the inclusion of men and boys in the WPS agenda; reproductive rights or healthcare; and trafficking in persons.

It is clear that the range of issues with which NAPs are concerned is growing, with the number of concerns addressed under the auspices of WPS proliferating, although attention is still paid to the traditional "pillars" of WPS activity, notably participation and prevention.

Critiques of Resolution 1325 suggest that while the resolution provides some examples of what a gender perspective means in the context of a peace agreement, e.g. addressing the specific needs of women, supporting local women's peace initiatives, ensuring protection of women's rights, it does not define what it means to apply a gender perspective to peace processes.

Gender perspectives are largely absent from peace negotiations. While gender-related issues are occasionally touched upon in discussions on humanitarian issues, they play a limited role in discussions about the security or military aspects of a conflict.

Despite an increased focus on gender in the international community, the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace processes is still rare. It was reported that only 18% of peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2015 made reference of women

More recent analyses, suggest that in 2020 only 29% of global peace agreements contained references to women, girls, and gender (6 out of 21 peace agreements). However, none of the eight ceasefire agreements reached in 2020 referred to women, girls and gender

Despite the evolution of this agenda, most contemporary peace processes are still top-down, elite-driven exercises that contribute to marginalisation and exclusion. Gender, which cuts across all identities, often functions as a basis for such exclusion. Whilst there is high-level commitment towards the strategy and what it aims to achieve, institutional barriers, assumptions, and politics undermine its implementation. Key challenges identified in the literature, related to incorporating Gender Perspectives in Peace Operations include.

**Buy-in from leadership**: Without buy-in from leadership the incorporation of gender perspectives at a strategic level will not take place.

**Mandate and context**: Gender considerations are different for each peacekeeping operation, depending on its mandate and context

**Gender and expertise**: It is important to distinguish between the number of women in leadership and gender expertise.

**Terminology**: In research, policy, and programming on peace and security, the terms “women” and “gender” are often conflated and confused.

**Under-representation of women in peacekeeping**: is striking.

**Meaningful participation**: Policy debates and practices tend to focus on counting women in peace processes and treating participation as synonymous with a gender perspective.

**Gap between norms and provisions**: A principle challenge relates to the gap between the proliferation of norms and guidelines, and their implementation in field operations.

**Practical/logistical/training issues in implementing the WPS agenda**. While many activities aim to incorporate gender analysis into the preparation, training, and work of senior leaders, this is not easy and capacity building on WPS is inconsistent.

## 2. Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

For over two decades, the UN's peace and security entities have recognised that there is a gender dimension to their work. The UN's WPS agenda was institutionalised in 2000 with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for gender considerations to be placed at the centre of UN's work. This resolution was in part a response to past exclusionary peace processes where a notion of peacebuilding as something implemented 'from above' was the norm (FCDO, 2020). Inclusive approaches were advocated based on normative arguments that different groups and actors, including women and civil society, have an equal right to participate, as well as pragmatic arguments that the participation of certain groups and actors increases the legitimacy of and public support for the process and the sustainability of a ceasefire (Cóbar et al., 2018).

Resolution 1325 brought to the fore a number of issues that women and girls face in situations of armed conflict, covering<sup>1</sup>:

“human rights violations, gender-specific humanitarian concerns, prevention of conflict, protection and assistance during conflict, accountability for crimes committed during war, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.”

Subsequent resolutions adopted lay out the specificities of ‘representation of women at all decision-making levels’ in peace and security matters and also clarify directives on how to incorporate an understanding of gender into efforts to create and maintain international peace and security. Since 2000, the Security Council has adopted ten dedicated resolutions on women, peace and security: resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

The agenda develops a complex understanding of gender, including constructions of femininity and masculinity; support for LGBTQ communities targeted in conflict; the specific needs of women with disabilities and of women widowed by conflict; and the intersectional dynamics of race, ethnicity, and gender in armed conflict (IPI, 2019). The agenda further provides an architecture to operationalise relevant aspects of women’s leadership, gendered conflict analysis, and steps that peace operations can take to incorporate gender perspectives into their work (UNDPO, 2020). The four main pillars of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda are ‘prevention’, ‘participation’, ‘protection’ and ‘relief and recovery’.

The focus on women’s participation in peace processes has led to several initiatives and efforts to promote increased representation, of which the launch of regional women mediators’ networks and new tools and guidelines on how to increase women’s representation in these contexts are examples.

- The [Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action \(WPS-HA\) Compact](#)
- The [Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network](#)
- [Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks](#)
- [Counterterrorism Committee Executive Directorate](#)

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, 2020: 3) comment that

- peace operations that are gender-sensitive are more likely to be effective and achieve their mandates e.g. military patrols that gather information from communities in a gender-sensitive manner are more likely to gain the trust of both women and men in the community and be able to identify protection threats against civilians.
- Conflict and instability amplify pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination and affect women, men, girls and boys differently, resulting in women and men having different needs and priorities. If gender differences, contextual and other factors (including sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity, (dis)ability) are ignored, peace operations may do harm by reinforcing gender inequality and discrimination.

The multidimensional nature of the WPS agenda is illustrative of the complexity of contemporary peace operations, which face an increasing array of challenges due to the changing nature of conflict, the complexity of mandates, and the sheer number of tasks they are expected to undertake (IPI, 2019).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

## Gender Perspectives

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality<sup>2</sup>,

a gender perspective means taking gender-based differences into account when looking at any social phenomenon, policy or process. The gender perspective focuses particularly on gender-based differences in status and power, and considers how such discrimination shapes the immediate needs, as well as the long-term interests, of women and men. In a policy context, taking a gender perspective is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

This definition illustrates that a gender perspective is not only focused on the protection of women but treats power relations between and within genders as relational and dynamic.

Resolution 1325, seeks to ensure that gender perspectives are represented in security forums and "calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective". While the resolution provides some examples of what a gender perspective means in the context of a peace agreement, e.g. addressing the specific needs of women, supporting local women's peace initiatives, ensuring protection of women's rights, it does not define what it means to apply a gender perspective to peace processes (Cóbar et al., 2018).

Some scholars have attempted to define what a gender perspective might mean in different aspects of a peace process. However, how a gender perspective can be applied throughout the process is largely unexplored (Cóbar et al., 2018). The non-specific language in the resolution has contributed to different interpretations of implementation of the resolution.

One example of an attempt to define what including a gender perspective entails in practice is provided by Bell (2015). She adopts a fourfold approach to the levels and phases of a peace process where a gender perspective can or should be adopted. Bell (2015) states:

- First, the inclusion of women and marginalised groups and their meaningful participation in peace processes are central to a gender perspective. The participation of women and other groups should be ensured in processes that lead to peace agreements and also addressed in the peace agreement to ensure their participation in transitional and post negotiation processes. In addition to participation in peace processes and negotiations, gender-balanced representation and involvement in the wider meaning of transitional processes, including post-negotiation processes, is required. Peace agreements need to include consideration of women and groups with other gender identities as decision makers in government and leadership roles, as well as their presence in the implementation of the peace agreement at all levels of society. However, this point must be addressed with due consideration for the intersectional nature of social identities. There is a need to understand diversity within women's representation in order to appreciate the needs and interests of different groups of women.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1197>

- Second, a gender perspective should explicitly address the differences in needs and demands between and within genders in the text of peace agreements and subsequent implementation processes. Different needs must be specifically addressed in order to ensure that gender-based inequality is not perpetuated. This is arguably the most common form of inclusion in existing peace agreements. Acknowledging the different needs within and among different genders could contribute proactively to reshaping gender power relations in a transitional process, as well as power relations more broadly.
- Third, the adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach throughout the language of a peace agreement is required and an evaluation of how the different provisions of a peace agreement address the gendered impacts of it. Based on the notion that peace agreements are by no means gender neutral, this dimension requires a more holistic approach to peace agreements that looks beyond gender-sensitive language. It considers how different genders are differentially affected by the provisions of peace agreements that might be described in gender-neutral terms, such as how socio-economic rights are addressed, how the agreement deals with refugees and displacement, and the choice of electoral system.
- Fourth, a gender perspective requires an understanding of power relations and power dynamics more broadly, and how these relate to conflict. It acknowledges that power imbalances between genders are embedded in society and a root cause of gender-based violence. It requires a multidimensional understanding of conflict based on the relationship between the parties to conflict and gender, which results in, for example, the overrepresentation of men in political settings and hence elite dominance in the public sector, compared with women's more visible participation in non-elite social movements. A gender perspective tackles more fundamental questions about how peace processes are defined and understood, and how to reshape the negotiation table to make peace processes more inclusive.

OSCE (2019) have developed a toolkit to support the integration of gender perspectives in official negotiation processes. The research process to develop this toolkit confirmed the weakness of gender integration and acknowledged the need to find better ways and new methods to mainstream negotiation processes. The OSCE (2019) identified two possible ways to strengthen gender mainstreaming – this included:

- Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis
- Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Issues Under Negotiation

### **Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis (OSCE, 2019)**

Conflict analyses facilitate a better understanding of conflict causes, dynamics and actors. It is also the starting point for developing a strategy for the peaceful resolution of a conflict. A missing or weak gender perspective in a conflict analysis can impeded the identification of adequate responses to conflict-related incidents and developments as well as the recognition of potential peace drivers and opportunities (OSCE, 2019).

A major element of conflict analysis is actor and stakeholder mapping. A gender-sensitive actor mapping, even if based on rough estimates rather than detailed statistics, can make visible the exclusion of marginalisation of women in conflict resolution processes. It can also help a mediation team to assess whether the representatives of conflict parties speak for their entire group.

A gender-sensitive mapping can also illustrate how some women's groups may be closely connected to one conflict party or another. Such groups may take public action in support of a conflict party or may be able to influence a particular group's position at the table.

According to OSCE (2019) a conflict analysis should examine the gender aspects of structural and proximate conflict causes and symptoms e.g. systematic violations of human rights – including women's rights – may not only entail violence against women but also other factors that must be kept in mind, such as denying women opportunities to participate in political and public life. Further to this, women can provide more and different types of information on how the conflict affects the daily life of the local population (OSCE, 2019).

### **Gender Perspectives in Negotiations**

According to the research for the OSCE (2019) toolkit, gender perspectives are largely absent from peace negotiations. While gender-related issues are occasionally touched upon in discussions on humanitarian issues, they play no role in discussions about the security or military aspects of a conflict.

Recent studies show that there is no mention of gender in the majority of ceasefire agreements. Women's inclusion in ceasefire processes have been considered irrelevant. Reasons given for the lack of gender perspectives in negotiations include:

- Working groups include few or no women, particularly when they focus on hard security issues.
- Women in negotiation teams may not be empowered to put forward their views.
- Gender aspects are perceived as something only women should raise.

To ensure a gender perspective is included in a peace agreement, it must form part of the preceding negotiations. Integrating a gender perspective at the conflict analysis stage and in the early phases of negotiations may help identify possible ways to shift the focus from power-sharing arrangements toward a settlement that is more sustainable because it benefits the population more widely (OSCE, 2019).

### **Statistics on inclusion of women and gender perspectives in WPS**

Despite an increased focus on gender in the international community, the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace processes is still rare. It was reported that only 18% of peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2015 made reference to women (Bell, 2015).

More recent analyses (Wise, 2021 drawing on *Version 5 of the PA-X Peace Agreements Database*), suggest that in 2020 only 29% of global peace agreements contained references to women, girls, and gender (6 out of 21 peace agreements). However, none of the eight ceasefire agreements reached in 2020 referred to women, girls and gender, comparable to previous years. Since 1990 only 9% of all ceasefires reached between 1990 - 2020 contained gender provisions, whilst 58% of comprehensive agreements included references to women, girls and gender. Wise (2021) comments that as formative stages of peace processes, ceasefires often set the inclusion parameters for subsequent negotiations and this lack of gender references in ceasefires in 2020 shows that more work would need to be done to integrate the WPS agenda into ceasefire negotiations.

Further to this Wise (2021) comments that the only gender references found in current ceasefire agreements are those regarding sexual violence in conflict. A tendency to link

gender aspects with only sexual and gender-based violence or the protection of civilians was also identified by OSCE (2019).

Below a series of key figures are provided to highlight challenges associated with engaging women and ensuring their multifaceted perspectives in peace agreements.

- The low representation of women in multilateral forums dealing with arms control and non-proliferation has been documented, averaging between 20-35% (UNIDIR, 2019).
- Between 1992 and 2019, women were, on average, just 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 6% of signatories in major peace processes worldwide. About seven out of every ten peace processes did not include any women mediators or women signatories (UN Security Council, 2021).
- Among the four United Nations-led or co-led peace processes in 2020, two were led by women mediators, and all these four processes consulted with civil society and were provided with gender expertise (UN Security Council, 2021).
- In 2020, women represented 23% of conflict parties' delegations in UN supported peace processes – a share that would have been even lower without persistent measures by the UN<sup>3</sup>.
- The percentage of peace agreements with gender provisions was 29% in 2020, which remains well below the peak of 37% in 2015<sup>4</sup>.
- Research shows that peace agreements mentioning women, girls or gender often arise at the comprehensive agreement stage. None of the ceasefire agreements reached between 2018-2020 included gender provisions or the prohibition of sexual violence (Forster & Bell, 2019; Wise, 2019)<sup>5</sup>.

Recent examples of efforts to include women have also struggled. The Council on Foreign Relations<sup>6</sup> report for example, women represented only around 10% of negotiators in the Afghan talks, just 20% of negotiators in Libya's political discussions, and 0% of negotiators in Libya's military talks and Yemen's recent process.

In terms of women's representation in security provision e.g. peacekeeping roles, the following statistics are illuminative:

- As of December 2020, the United Nations exceeded the 2020 targets set in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy but lagged behind for military troops. Women represented (UN Security Fund, 2021):
  - 18.7% of military observers and staff officers against the 17% target
  - 29.1% of individual police officers against the 22% target

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures#notes>

<sup>4</sup> Data come from PA-X Peace Agreements Database (2021) Version 5. Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh ([www.peaceagreements.org](http://www.peaceagreements.org)),

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/>

- 14% of formed police units against the 10% target
- 34% of justice and corrections government-provided personnel against the 27% target, and
- 5% of military troops against the 6.5% target.
- As of 31 December 2020, three women served in the most senior military positions in the field and four women led United Nations police components, a record number of women serving in such senior uniformed positions in the organisation (UN Security Fund, 2021).
- Based on the pace of change over the past ten years, it may still take 30 years to reach gender parity for military troops, 12 years for formed police units, eight years for individual police officers, and seven years for military observers and staff officers, keeping all other factors (The Elsie fund, 2021).
- In resolutions renewing peacekeeping mandates, the Security Council added gender considerations to the request for support to the reform of security and defence forces in only 4 out of 11 country-specific situations (UN Security Council, 2021).
- In 2020, 17% of total allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse received across the United Nations system involved personnel in peace operations and special political missions. 70% of the 66 reported allegations were related to MINUSCA and MONUSCO, a proportion similar to 2018 and 2019 (UN Security Council, 2021).

National and regional strategies for advancing women's peace and security have also developed.

- As of August 2021, 98 countries and territories (50% of UN Member States) had adopted dedicated national action plans (NAPs) on women and peace and security, and twelve regional organisations had regional strategies or plans in place. 86% of NAPs have monitoring indicators to track progress (UN Security Council, 2021).
- The Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact was launched at the Paris Generation Equality Forum on 2 July 2021. As of October 2021, 153 signatories, including Member States, regional organisations, UN entities, the private sector, civil society and academia, had endorsed the Compact Preamble and Framework Actions by investing in at least one of the proposed actions (UN Security Council, 2021).
- Since its foundation in 2016, the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network has continued to guide and advocate for accelerated implementation of the WPS agenda among Member States and regional organisations. The network includes 89 members (UN Security Council, 2021).
- Since Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) called for the integration of the WPS agenda in efforts to counter violent extremism and terrorism, there has been a significant increase in gender-related recommendations to Member States by the Counterterrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN Security Council, 2021).

## Emergent themes

A number of new and emerging security issues, and matters of concern to the WPS agenda are noted in more recent resolutions. In 2015, for example, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 noted in its Preamble.

the changing global context of peace and security, in particular relating to rising violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, the increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, the impacts of climate change and the global nature of health pandemics.

Further, this resolution reiterates “the important engagement by men and boys as partners in promoting women’s participation in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, peacebuilding and post-conflict situations.”

OSCE (2020) identified the following new and emergent issues in National Action Plans (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security: *asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons; climate change or environmental degradation; disasters; violent extremism or terrorism; the inclusion of men and boys in the WPS agenda; reproductive rights or healthcare; and trafficking in persons.*

The (OSCE, 2020), concluded that it is clear that the range of issues with which NAPs are concerned is growing, with the number of concerns addressed under the auspices of WPS proliferating, although attention is still paid to the traditional “pillars” of WPS activity, notably participation and prevention.

OSCE (2020) continue that there has been an increased focus on prevention since 2014 and NAPs have begun to feature emerging WPS issues such as disasters and terrorism and violent extremism.

Experts are also in agreement that the COVID-19 pandemic, with its multifaceted security dimensions, is, in fact, proving the centrality of the WPS agenda to contemporary global peace and security challenges.

## Critiques of the implementation of the WPS agenda

A common critique levelled against the implementation of the resolution is that instead of adding gender, Resolution 1325 adds women into existing security practices, institutions and policies, through its reference to ‘women, peace and security’ rather than ‘gender, peace and security’ (Ellerby, 2013). Following this critique, it is stated that the way the resolution has been interpreted, e.g. in NAPs, can be portrayed as a form of instrumentalisation. WPS language has been criticised for characterising women as objects who are ‘fragile’, ‘passive’, ‘potential victims’ and consequently ‘beneficiaries and recipients of care’ (Shepherd, 2011). This framing of women as victims has often made the protection pillar the main focus, overshadowing the other three pillars of the WPS agenda.

Academics and women’s rights organisations have consistently identified how ‘adding women’ to existing policies is a narrow interpretation of Resolution 1325 that fails to address power relations, masculine norms and the root causes of women’s exclusion, as well as the exclusion of gender minorities (Cóbar et al., 2018). Although the subsequent resolutions have aimed to reinforce the representation of women as actors and agents, structural causes such as gender-based discrimination that inhibit women acting as agents are still

rarely challenged in the analytical frameworks of mainstream international organisations (Shepherd, 2011).

Critiques of the implementation of Resolution 1325 underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of gender perspectives that move beyond the descriptive representation of women and men, in order to address the differences in needs and impacts of conflict (Cóbar et al., 2018). A comprehensive understanding of gender would acknowledge that a gender perspective cannot be separated from the overall process since all aspects of a peace agreement are gendered and have gendered implications, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes, power sharing, the reform of security sector institutions, and post-conflict recovery and development (Cóbar et al., 2018).

## Challenges in implementing the WPS

Despite the evolution of this agenda, most contemporary peace processes are still top-down, elite-driven exercises that contribute to marginalisation and exclusion. Gender, which cuts across all identities, often functions as a basis for such exclusion (Cóbar et al., 2018). Whilst high-level commitment towards the strategy and what it aims to achieve, institutional barriers, assumptions, and politics undermine its implementation. Key challenges identified in the literature, related to incorporating Gender Perspectives in Peace Operations include.

**Buy-in from leadership:** Without buy-in from leadership at all levels the incorporation of a gender perspective at a strategic level (including in decision making at every level) will not take place. This buy-in is difficult to achieve, as many senior leaders do not understand either the WPS agenda or how missions are obligated to address it (IPI, 2019).

**Mandate and context:** Gender considerations are different for each peacekeeping operation, depending on its mandate and context, including everything from which members of a population are most vulnerable to sexual violence to the social structures that prevent women from participating in peace processes. As OSCE (2019) comment, gender-sensitive conflict analyses can support better understanding of context.

**Limited expertise in addressing gender issues:** It is important to distinguish between the number of women in leadership and gender expertise. Studies show that women being in leadership positions matters to other women, as well as to the wider community, as a sign of women's right to participate at the highest levels of decision making. However, not all women are experts in (or interested in being champions of) gender mainstreaming or the implementation of the WPS agenda (IPI, 2019).

**Terminology:** In research, policy, and programming on peace and security, the terms "women" and "gender" are often conflated and confused. These all-too-common misunderstandings see gender analyses only applied to women, reflect primarily binary understandings of gender, and promote the misconception that women have an innate ability to dismantle structural gender inequalities (Cóbar et al., 2018).

**Under-representation of women in peacekeeping:** The under-representation of women in peacekeeping is striking. Whilst initiatives such as the UN Policy Directive on Gender Equality in Peacekeeping Operations (2006) and the Guidelines for Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations in Peacekeeping Operations" (2010) are of note, the goals set by these initiatives remain largely unmet. In 2013, women still represented less than 4% of UN peacekeepers globally, 3% of UN military personnel, and

9.7% of UN police (Dharmapuri, 2013). The gap becomes even greater when looking at women in decision-making positions. More recent estimates (Sharland, 2020) suggest that while the numbers have moved upward when it comes to the representation of women in the military and policing components over the last two decades, progress is slow, with women representing just over 4% of the military, and 10% of the police in peacekeeping missions.

Global Peace Operations Review provides details on women in UN Peacekeeping roles from 2006 to 2017.

*Figure 1: Women in UN Peacekeeping*<sup>7</sup> Score. Ghittoni, 2018, p. 10

[https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Elsie\\_GenderReport\\_2018\\_Final.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Elsie_GenderReport_2018_Final.pdf)

Reflecting on other organisations, Ghittoni et al. (2018: 10) comment:

- The EU has had a policy of increasing participation of women in its Common Security and Defence missions since 2005. The number of women steadily increased from 8% in 2006 to 20% in 2013.
- For NATO, as of 2016, there are still only 7% of uniformed women in NATO operations.
- OSCE missions have proportionately high numbers of women, ranging from 33% in 2006 to 37% in 2012 relative other organisations missions.
- As for the AU's peace operations, there is no gender-disaggregated data available making it difficult to identify trends.

**Meaningful participation:** Policy debates and practices tend to focus on counting women in peace processes and treating women's participation as synonymous with a gender perspective. Despite the growing understanding that participation should be differentiated from meaningful participation and representation that can influence the process, a headcount or the presence of women is still often understood as a sufficient condition for inclusive peace processes and infusing a gender perspective into them (UN Women 2021).

**Gap between norms and provisions:** A principle challenge relates to the gap between the proliferation of norms and guidelines, and their implementation in field operations. Whilst the UN's normative framework promoting gender equality in peacekeeping and addressing gender issues during conflict and post-conflict situations has developed in the past decades, there remains a fundamental gap between norms and provisions, and their application in field operations particularly regarding women's representation (Reig-Amette, 2019).

**Practical/logistical/training issues in implementing the WPS agenda.** While many activities aim to incorporate gender analysis into the preparation, training, and work of senior leaders, this is not easy to do, and current capacity building on women, peace, and security is inconsistent. Three key challenges to incorporating gender perspective include (IPI, 2019):

- **The broad and complex field of knowledge:** Designing effective training requires carefully analysis of the relationship between the training program and the desired organisational change. Translating international norms and policies into practice

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<sup>7</sup> [https://peaceoperationsreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/data\\_UN\\_women\\_peacekeeping\\_902x576.png](https://peaceoperationsreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/data_UN_women_peacekeeping_902x576.png)

involves “the interpretation of often vague formulations and arguments in a continuously evolving debate filled with contestations.” This level of knowledge requires time and political will to digest and then systematically integrate into time-constrained trainings that rarely allow for in depth coverage of the issue.

- **The siloed approach to gender:** Despite the normative WPS framework, training is inconsistent in the approach taken. In some, there is no gender-specific content. In other trainings, there are isolated references to gender dimension as standalone issues that are not relevant to the other issues being discussed.
- **A lack of trainers with gender expertise:** Having trainers and facilitators who are responsive to gender components of training modules and who understand the gender dynamics among training participants is intrinsic to ensuring effective gender analysis. Facilitators should encourage discussion on gender-related topics. If participants do not raise key gender considerations, facilitators must be prepared to follow up on them. Facilitators need to be familiar with the components of the WPS agenda that need to be highlighted to ensure that training participants are considering all aspects of the material being discussed.

More specifically OSCE (2020) undertook a review of challenges for effective implementation of WPS NAPs in country contexts and identified the following.

- A key challenge in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** was tensions between the State and the entity-level authorities, which has impeded the implementation of the NAP at the national and sub-national level.
- In **Moldova**, a key challenge was that the NAP steering committee had not been sitting due to political changes. While there was an interest in bringing in Transdnistria<sup>8</sup> into the scope of the NAP or at least into WPS work more broadly, this faces numerous challenges as Moldovan state authorities cannot directly support or implement activities on the left bank, leaving only openings for civil society and those international organisations with an appropriate mandate to work on these issues. The NAP falls under the responsibility of the Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration who is also the Chief Negotiator of the Moldovan government in the Transdnistrian settlement process.
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, respondents from civil society and state institutions repeatedly raised issues of Islamist radicalisation and cross-border conflicts as key WPS issues and these have been reflected in the current NAP. However, the degree to which actual preventing violent extremism (PVE) work and reactions to cross-border incidents take WPS into account remains debateable.

### 3. Organisational approaches to WPS

#### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>9</sup>

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO aims to address gender inequality and integrate the WPS agenda through the alliance’s core tasks of collective defence, crisis

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<sup>8</sup> An unrecognised breakaway state located in the narrow strip of land between the river Dniester and the Moldovan–Ukrainian border

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_91091.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm)

management and co-operative security. NATO recognises the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls, the vital roles women play in peace and security, and the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in all that the Alliance does. NATO's approach is framed around the principles of integration, inclusiveness and integrity.

- NATO's first policy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was developed by Allies and partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 2007.
- In 2018, NATO Heads of State and Government endorsed the revised WPS policy that introduced the principles of integration, inclusiveness and integrity.
- NATO is integrating gender perspectives across its three core tasks (collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security) and throughout its political and military structures.
- Gender equality is an important focus of NATO's cooperation with other international organisations – in particular the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN) – as well as civil society.
- NATO's Civil Society Advisory Panel provides a platform for women civil society organisations to engage with NATO to shape policy and practice.
- The NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security serves as the high-level focal point for NATO's work in this domain.

In 2019, NATO issued a Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by its personnel. In 2020, NATO was developing an action plan to implement the new policy, with support from staff provided by the UK. NATO also has a military directive in place on how to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) through its military operations. Three principles guide NATO's work on WPS: integration, inclusiveness and integrity.

Integration: gender equality must be considered as an integral part of NATO policies, programmes and projects guided by effective gender mainstreaming practices. To achieve gender equality, it must be acknowledged that each policy, programme, and project affects both women and men. This includes:

- conducting gender analyses to ensure operations and missions take account of the different perspectives of women and men;
- examining gender aspects of early warning to better assess where crises may emerge;
- considering how to design defence capabilities that work for all those who serve – women and men alike;
- exploring the gender dimensions of terrorism, recognising that women are not only victims of terror but also powerful actors who can prevent or perpetrate terrorist actions;
- working with women's civil society to get a better understanding of the experience of women around the world and the potential impact of NATO policy and practice on various communities.

Inclusiveness: representation of women across NATO and in national forces is considered necessary to enhance operational effectiveness and success. NATO seeks to increase the participation of women in all tasks throughout the International Military Staff and International Staff at all levels.

- improving gender balance in NATO's civilian and military structures and encouraging Allies and partners to do the same;
- using gender-inclusive language throughout the Organisation;
- modelling gender-inclusive practices in defence capacity building programmes.

Integrity: systemic inequalities are addressed to ensure fair and equal treatment of women and men Alliance-wide. Accountability on all efforts to increase awareness and implementation of the WPS agenda are made a priority.

- developing policies to demonstrate and support certain standards, like the NATO policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;
- ensuring effective measures are in place to prevent and respond to sexual harassment;
- providing training to ensure that policies and procedures are known and understood by those to whom they apply.

#### **Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on WPS 2021-2025<sup>10</sup>**

1. Recognising the critical importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and stability, as well as the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls, NATO is committed to fully implementing the WPS agenda set out by the UN Security Council.
2. The NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security<sup>1</sup> (WPS) was agreed in 2018 and endorsed by NATO leaders at the 2018 Brussels Summit. The Policy affirms that NATO and its Partners aim to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on WPS by making the Policy an integral part of their everyday business in both civilian and military structures.
3. The Policy supports the advancement of gender equality through the guiding principles of integration, inclusiveness and integrity. To support implementation of the Policy, an Action Plan<sup>2</sup> was agreed and endorsed in 2018. While initially foreseen to cover a period of two years, the Action Plan timeframe was extended by one year<sup>3</sup> to enable staff to further embed the changes that were in process.
4. The Policy continues to provide a firm foundation on which to base NATO's work on WPS. The next review of the Policy on WPS should take place following the adoption of NATO's next Strategic Concept and no later than 2025.
5. This new Action Plan builds on progress made since 2018 and is intended to guide the implementation of NATO's work on WPS for a four-year period. It is expected that this Action Plan would continue to provide appropriate guidance on advancing

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_187485.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_187485.htm)

NATO's WPS agenda even through the next Policy review, though it will be updated, as needed, to reflect any changes introduced in that context.

6. Working together with Partners, International Organisations, and civil society, NATO will consistently continue to implement the NATO/EAPC Policy on WPS, and, in this context, will advance gender equality, integrate gender perspectives and foster the principles of the WPS agenda in all that the Alliance does.

Integration of Gender Perspectives in NATO activities:

2.1 Gender perspectives are identified as part of all current and ongoing work, as well as work in **new and emerging areas**, and are appropriately integrated into related policies, programmes and activities.

2.2 Gender perspectives are identified and integrated into NATO's **defence policy, planning, capability development, exercises<sup>7</sup>, resilience and broader deterrence and defence efforts**.

2.3 Gender perspectives are identified and integrated into NATO **operations, missions, and Council-approved activities** and reported through Periodic Mission Reviews.

2.4 Gender perspectives are identified and integrated into NATO discussions and activities on **geo-political challenges and opportunities** faced by the Alliance.

2.5 **Data that is disaggregated by sex<sup>8</sup>** is regularly gathered, used as the basis for planning and decision-making, and included in relevant reporting.

2.6 Gender perspectives are included in **strategic communications**.

## **African Union (FemWise-Africa)<sup>11</sup>**

African Union (AU). The AU has a 10-year Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment and a Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for Peace Support Operations. In 2019, the UK continued to support work to integrate gender sensitivity into AU peace support doctrine and AU Commission standards. The UK also supports the Friends of FemWise group: a group of donors actively supporting the AU Commission's work to promote greater female mediation efforts. The AU Commission has a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security who spearheads work on the WPS agenda, including in AU peace support operations.

The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, officially referred to as FemWise-Africa, is a subsidiary mechanism of the Panel of the Wise, one of the critical pillars of the Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (APSA).

FemWise-Africa was officially established through a decision of the AU Assembly of Heads of State (AU Summit) on 4 July 2017.

The Network aims to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts by providing a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity-building and networking. The African Union in its commitment to women's meaningful participation in the peace and

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<sup>11</sup> [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36195-doc-52569\\_au\\_strategy\\_eng\\_high.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36195-doc-52569_au_strategy_eng_high.pdf)

security of the Continent took three landmark decisions that ultimately led to the establishment of FemWise-Africa: the 2010 Decision of the Peace and Security Council asking the Panel of the Wise to undertake a study on women in armed conflicts; the 2014 Decision of Ministers of Gender calling for the creation of an association of women in mediation; and the 13 March 2017 Decision of the AU Peace and Security Council endorsing the modalities for the Network. Further endorsement was given by the UN Security Council on 27 March 2017 as part of their Arria Formula meeting.

FemWise-Africa priorities were formulated as:

1. Professionalising the role of women in preventive diplomacy;
2. Ensuring a channel for women's meaningful and effective participation in peace processes, including as heads of official high-level mediation missions;
3. Initiating women's action that will catalyse and mainstream the engagement of women in mediation in line with the African Union's "Agenda 2063" and the SDGs;
4. Bridging the gap between Tracks 1, 2 and 3 mediation and synergising efforts towards inclusive peace processes with sustainable outcomes.
5. Strengthening the mediation interventions of FemWise-Africa with the facilitation of Quick Impact Projects and the establishment of local and national peace infrastructures as foundations and Launchpad for medium and longer term initiatives that will ensure that stability and development take root.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Overall Goal: Peace processes in Africa are shaped by women's leadership and participation

1. The women's movement in Africa is mobilised and brought together to foster women's participation and contribution to conflict prevention, mediation and peace stabilisation Outcome.
2. Conducive environment for women's leadership and participation in peace processes created at different levels in Africa Outcome.
3. Enhanced capacity of African women engaged in conflict prevention and mediation to ensure their engagement and influence in conflict prevention, mediation and peace stabilisation efforts Outcome.
4. Enhanced synergy between women leading and active in conflict prevention and mediation efforts at sub-national and community levels and political processes at Tracks 1 and 2; Outcome.
5. Enriched political solutions at tracks 1 through the Involvement of women's social options approach Outcome.
6. Women leadership is systematically mobilised to facilitate quick impact projects and resource mobilization efforts to lead social cohesion activities at the community levels, healing, reconciliation and quick recovery projects.

## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)<sup>12</sup>

The OSCE is committed to mainstreaming gender considerations into the OSCE's three dimensions (the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions), as well as into its internal management policies, recruitment and staff development. These commitments include "highlighting and promoting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace reconstruction processes". As of 2020, the OSCE is also developing guidance on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by its personnel and updating its 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

The OSCE is committed to promoting and supporting the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on WPS in the OSCE region. These recognise the importance of women's full and equal representation and participation in peace and security governance at all levels. They also call for special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict. OSCE stresses the need to engage women and men in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

- OSCE (2020). Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region. OSCE. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/4/444577.pdf>
- OSCE (2019). Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes: a Toolkit. OSCE. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/5/440735.pdf>

## European Union<sup>13</sup>

The EU supports the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations across Europe, Africa and the Middle East through budget contributions as well as personnel. The EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024 describes the EU's approach to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, which also applies to its CSDP missions and operations. The EU's Civilian CSDP Compact commits EU member states to strengthen civilian CSDP missions, including through gender mainstreaming, and to increase the representation of women on its missions.

Based on the Strategic Approach, the Action Plan identifies objectives as already defined in UNSCR 1325, under the key priority areas of prevention, protection, relief and recovery, and the three overarching and cross-cutting principles of participation, gender mainstreaming and leading by example. All these objectives are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

### Participation

To increase women's leadership and participation in all areas related to peace and security within the EU services and institutions and in the EU Member States (Internal participation); To help increase women's leadership and participation worldwide in all policy-making decisions/processes in all areas related to peace and security inter alia Conflict-Prevention, Conflict-Resolution, Mediation, Post-Conflict Rehabilitation, Rule of Law, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Peace-Building in both formal and informal decision-making and priority setting. (External participation).

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/107451>

<sup>13</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11031-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

## **Gender Mainstreaming**

To systematically mainstream a gender perspective as an integral part in all EU policies as well as in internal and external actions and that such a gender perspective, based on gender analysis, is integrated into the implementation of all objectives of this Action Plan.

## **Leading by Example**

To enhance further EU's political commitments and actions for the implementation of the WPS Agenda at local, national, regional and international levels.

## **Prevention**

The EU plays an active role globally, regionally, nationally and locally, in conflict-prevention and the WPS approach is cardinal to its success;

The EU plays an active role in prevention, monitoring and reporting of conflict-related human rights' violations against women and girls and in the promotion of zero-tolerance/full accountability policies to help end impunity and bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice;

The EU supports legislative and institutional reforms as well as transitional justice processes that integrate the principle of non-discrimination and comply with international human rights standards.

## **Protection**

The EU actively promotes the protection and safeguarding of women's and girls' rights as well as the increase in women's and girls' access to justice at local, national, regional and international levels through special emphasis on restorative justice and the rights of survivors and victims.

The EU supports all efforts for institutional mechanisms to be established and/or activated for the protection of women and girls, as well as men and boys, in fragile environments and or conflict-affected contexts to help prevent all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

## **Relief and Recovery**

The EU provides adequate and appropriate relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict situations that meet the needs of women and girls.

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## About this report

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## 5. Annexe 1

### Recommendations / good practices for developing NAPs

Throughout the OSCE (2019) toolkit development research process, various good practices emerged, some of which have been implemented and some of which have not, but appear promising based on the research findings (OSCE, 2020: 76-78).

#### Framing and developing NAPs

- Undertake knowledge-sharing activities with state and civil society actors from contexts facing similar challenges, and provide the drafting group with capacity-building support where needed.
- Ensure the participation of individuals and CSO representatives from diverse backgrounds, which are not limited to capital city-based, policy-oriented organisations, to ensure the diverse needs of women and girls are considered.
- Ensure Ministries of Finance are involved in NAP design processes from the outset in order to maximize buy-in as well as give budgeting/costing support. Use gender-responsive budgeting processes as an entry point to raise WPS-relevant issues with Finance Ministries.
- Integrate specified costs and budgets for all dimensions of NAP activities, including independent external evaluations. Time NAP revisions to coincide with government budget setting and consider gender-responsive budgeting.
- Build in activities for implementing agencies that are on-going, extending beyond the life of the NAP, and ensure harmonisation between WPS NAPs and other gender equality related strategies and plans.

#### NAP implementation

- Ensure ownership, buy-in and understanding of WPS and gender issues at all levels of government, with properly resourced helpdesks for implementers and support for local administrative structures.
- Integrate tasks and performance indicators into job descriptions and performance reviews in order to ensure accountability for implementation.
- Reform institutional regulations to open up more positions to women in security and defence institutions, and consider the use of affirmative action measures where appropriate.
- Ensure gender advisers and gender focal points have the necessary mandate, political and institutional support, resources and capacity to fulfil their tasks, and that their superiors understand their role and mandate.

#### Monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and impact

- Ensure the entity responsible for collecting data on implementation, evaluation and reporting has necessary resources (personnel, skills, and funding) to carry out this task and has leverage with implementing agencies to ensure reporting. Effective reporting is enhanced by the development of specific and realistic indicators that are achievable and feasible to monitor.

- Harmonise, where possible, reporting processes for various gender- and security related action plans (e.g. WPS, VAWG prevention, promotion of gender equality, prevention of human trafficking, disaster risk reduction).
- Create more opportunities for implementing ministries and institutions to problem-solve together and learn from each other beyond only reporting on implementation.
- Set up a dedicated parliamentary body responsible for scrutinising government reports on implementation to help ensure accountability to elected representatives.

#### **Recommendations for OSCE and other international organisations**

- Explore ways to forge closer links between gender advisers and gender focal points in implementing agencies across participating States.
- Facilitate regular and inclusive ways of sharing good practices among participating States.
- Develop accessible resources such as one-page guides and infographics to guide the development, implementation, and M&E of NAPs based on good practice across participating States.
- Support to find better ways to implement WPS principles and commitments in the peace processes.