

A GLOBAL HANDBOOK



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

PARLIAMENTS AS PARTNERS SUPPORTING

THE WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2000, the UN Security Council endorsed the groundbreaking Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security (WPS). UNSCR 1325 responded to a raft of lessons learned over the previous decade or more on peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The nature of warfare was changing, with civilians increasingly targeted, and women, in particular, often bearing the brunt of conflict. Women suffered a range of harms, from sexual and gender-based violence inflicted by combatants, to the loss of their spouses and families, to the loss of their livelihoods and personal autonomy. Furthermore, even during transitional and peacebuilding periods, it became clear that women continued to be marginalised, with domestic and international stakeholders overlooking their contributions and excluding them from peace processes. There is now a growing understanding that sexual minorities and non-binary gender identities also face distinct vulnerabilities during conflict, which should be reflected in a broader framing of the WPS agenda.

UNSCR 1325 called on countries to address the impacts that conflict had on women and girls around the globe and to systematically include women in peacebuilding efforts, including peace talks, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Over the last two decades, UNSCR 1325 has been complemented by an additional nine resolutions on women, peace and security (see Figure 2 for more detail). Together, these resolutions provide guidance to national and international actors on their roles in relation to WPS.

The women, peace and security agenda remains critically important in a world that grapples with complex conflict, whether it be violent state-based warfare, civil war, internal conflict or violent extremism. In nearly 80 countries, National Action Plans (NAPs) on women, peace and security have been developed to set priorities for action by government bodies and other agencies. In other countries, gender-sensitive peace and security priorities have been captured in sectoral strategies on gender, justice or national security. The participation of parliaments in efforts to support the women, peace and security agenda has been variable, with many parliaments either unaware of or uninvolved in national implementation efforts.¹

The Handbook

This Handbook seeks to provide guidance to parliamentarians on their role in supporting the UNSCR 1325 agenda. The objectives of this Handbook are three-fold, namely to:

- Provide information to parliamentarians on the global women, peace and security agenda as it applies domestically.
- Provide guidance on how parliaments and parliamentarians can help implement the women, peace and security agenda. This guidance is for use not only by Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff, but also by development practitioners who work with parliaments.
- Share examples of good practice from other parliaments and projects.

¹ Only Europe has undertaken a systematic review of parliamentary engagement in supporting the WPS agenda, through the survey by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on WPS implementation. In other regions, there is only sparse information available and a simple review of existing WPS NAPs shows only limited inclusion of legislatures; see Sarah Ferbach & Audrey Reeves, *The role of parliaments in NATO member countries in advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda: A Survey by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (2018)*, DCAF: Geneva, p.12-13.

This Handbook is aimed at all Members of Parliament (MPs) of whatever sex. Addressing peace and security issues that affect women is an issue not only for women MPs; it is the role of all MPs to ensure that every member of society has the protections and opportunities to live peaceful and prosperous lives. The Handbook is organised this way:

- Chapters 1-3 give an overview of the WPS agenda and its relationship to other global and national commitments to gender equality and sustainable development.²
- Chapters 4-8 discuss how the WPS agenda can be implemented in the context of each of the core functions of a parliament — namely, lawmaking, budgeting, oversight, and representation. These chapters provide action ideas and examples of good practices for parliamentarians and other stakeholders interested in working to advance the WPS agenda.
- Chapters 9-10 reflect upon how parliamentary groupings and staff can support women's peace and security.

At the end of each chapter is a short series of self-assessment questions and a set of action ideas to spark reflection, discussion, and action on the WPS agenda.

This Handbook is not a “one-size-fits-all” template for action. Instead, it offers information, questions and ideas that parliamentarians can apply in their own contexts to ensure implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

² For more detailed guidance on UNSCR 1325, refer to:

(a) UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/10/un-women-sourcebook-on-women-peace-and-security>; and

(b) UN Women Guidebook on CEDAW general recommendation no. 30 and the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/8/guidebook-cedawgeneralrecommendation30-womenpeacesecurity>





CHAPTER 1

THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA: OVERVIEW

Understanding the gendered nature of conflict

Since the year 2000, global understanding of the gendered nature of conflict and peacebuilding has grown substantially. Not only do we now know that conflicts are experienced differently by women and girls than by men and boys, but also that their roles in conflict and peacebuilding are varied and complex. Women and girls have long been targets of war, regularly subjected to sexual and gender-based violence and enslavement as part of the strategy of combatants. Often left to manage home life when men go off to war, in many countries, women have also been active in protecting their homes and communities. Women may act as peacebuilders, including through women's organisations and by using their influence in families and communities. They may also be agents of violence, acting as supporters or combatants in the armed groups. Finally, they may move between these roles, depending on the situation they find themselves in and the opportunities they are given.³ In recent decades, as war has morphed from inter-state conflicts between competing armies to include violent armed insurgencies and violent extremist groups, the impact on women has become even more troubling.

Despite decades of effort by the women's movement to focus attention on the gendered impact of conflict, the increase in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations during the 1990s saw the continued application of narrowly-focused military responses, with little attention paid to addressing the particular needs of women in conflict-affected contexts. Women also continued to be overlooked for peacekeeping operations and excluded from subsequent peace processes. In response to ongoing gender-blind international responses to conflict, the women's movement ramped up its efforts to force governments to act. In 2000, this lobbying came to a head, with the UN Security Council leveraging the political momentum of the new millennium to officially acknowledge women's exclusion from peace-making and peacebuilding and to call for action.

UNSCR 1325 and four pillars of WPS

The Women, Peace and Security ("WPS") agenda was formally initiated by the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which was adopted on 31 October 2000.⁴ UNSCR 1325 affirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building initiatives. The WPS agenda rests on four pillars: prevention, participation, protection and relief and recovery. (See Figure 1.)

3 UNDP, ICAN, "Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation and Reintegration from Violent Extremism" (2019).

4 UN Security Council, Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 31 October 2000, S/RES/1325 (2000).

FIGURE 1 FOUR PILLARS OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY FRAMEWORK

UNSCR 1325 is a wide-ranging resolution that reaffirms the important role of women in the conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security.⁵

UNSCR 1325 urges all stakeholders to take action to increase the participation of women and calls on the UN to incorporate gender perspectives into all of its peace and security efforts. It calls on stakeholders to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

Subsequent resolutions

In the years since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the UN Security Council has adopted nine more resolutions on women, peace and security, in order to provide more detailed guidance on specific aspects of war and its impact on women, addressing such issues as sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking and the gendered aspects of peacekeeping efforts.

Relevance to all country contexts

UNSCR 1325 was designed not for any one type of development or conflict context, but for all contexts. It applies to countries in ongoing violent conflict that urgently need to address protection and recovery issues, and it applies equally to so-called "stable" countries that may still need to address issues such as violence against women or the gendered aspects of increasing radicalisation.

UNSCR 1325 is also directed at countries that deploy forces for peacekeeping operations. These countries still need to ensure that women are included in decision-making and leadership roles in military and civilian peace operations, and that all forces are properly trained in gender-sensitive peace operations, have the skills and resources to address the conflict issues faced by women and girls where they are deployed, and are properly managed to address any shortcomings in these areas (including punishing sexual or gender-based violence committed by peacekeeping troops). Likewise, countries that provide more general development funding to support women's empowerment and peacebuilding need to ensure that their contributions are conflict-sensitive and contribute to the WPS agenda.

⁵ UNSCR 1325, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1325>.

FIGURE 2 UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS RELATED TO WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Resolution 1325 (2000)	Addresses the impact of conflict on women and recognizes the contribution of women in preventing and resolving conflict and their role in maintaining international peace and security.
Resolution 1820 (2008)	Recognizes conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of war used by warring parties to achieve military or political ends and resulting in impunity, which require strengthened efforts to end sexual violence in conflict.
Resolution 1888 (2009)	Provides for more effective implementation of Resolution 1820, including by establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to provide high-level leadership, and establishing women protection advisers within peacekeeping missions.
Resolution 1889 (2009)	Focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding, includes a strategy for increasing the number of women participating in peace talks, and calls for the development of global indicators to measure the implementation of Resolution 1325 by the UN and Member States. A set of 26 indicators have now been developed to track and account for implementation, organised into 4 Pillars: Prevention, Participation, Protection, and Relief and Recovery. The indicators are listed in the Secretary-General's Report (S/2010/498).
Resolution 1960 (2010)	Reaffirms the earlier commitments required to address sexual violence in conflict and mandates the creation of tools to combat impunity by listing perpetrators and establishing monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements.
Resolution 2106 (2013)	Requests all actors, including the Security Council, to do more to implement earlier resolutions and to combat impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict. Acknowledges the importance of civil society in preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict.
Resolution 2122 (2013)	Sets in place stronger measures to improve women's participation and representation in conflict resolution, especially through leadership positions. Reaffirms that gender equality is central to achieving international peace and security. Sets out the need for humanitarian aid to ensure access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services.

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