

PEACE & SECURITY

and displaced women

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The integration of a gender perspective into peace and security is one of the most important topics on a global agenda that needs united efforts to ensure sustaining peace across the UNECE region, according to the resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282. Since the Beijing conference in 1995, certain countries of the UNECE region have been threatened by terrorism (e.g. France) as well as wars and armed conflicts that are ended (e.g. Kosovo), frozen (e.g. Georgia) or still on-going (e.g. Ukraine). This has influenced women's lives in conflict zones in different ways, pushing women into displacement, precarious conditions or sexual abuse. At the same time, it encouraged women for activism and leadership in peace-building processes. Multiple policies and interdisciplinary approach should be applied to apprehend many issues that touch women in their everyday life in peaceful periods as well as in conflict or post-conflict situations.

As many governments in the UNECE region have declared the "Women, Peace and Security Agenda" to be one of the focal points of its work, we demand a progressive agenda from our governments at national and international levels. Rather than pushing back the pushbacks made by certain UN Member States, Germany for example has the opportunity to shape international security policy based on Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy and international frameworks such as BPfA, CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 and 2467. In addition, several Central and Eastern European countries have yet to ratify the Istanbul Convention on Action against violence against women and domestic violence, a treatise which calls for states to punish acts of violence against women, especially in the context of armed conflict.

The Global Study (UNWomen, 2015) also acknowledges "the attempts to 'securitize'" the agenda, reminding the states that "Resolution 1325 is a human rights mandate." Despite this, the approval of the UNSC Resolution 2242 in 2016 and the inclusion of "Countering

Violent Extremism” reinforced the risk of instrumentalization of women’s rights, especially women on the move (i.e. migrants, asylum seekers and refugees), and subordinated the need for women’s protection and a strategy of securitization. All of the above implies a shift from a human rights and gendered perspective to a security approach to the WPS agenda.



Structural barriers and negative trends

- Focus on military and security approach: the main actors implementing the NAP in many countries are the ministries of Defense and Interior (security forces) jointly with Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; there is an insufficient involvement of other ministries (i.e. justice or education) that could play a key role in peace-building and prevention processes
- Weak definition of armed conflict and lack of government accountability towards implementing the WPS agenda
- Lack of measures to guarantee that foreign policies (e.g. arms trade) do not contribute to the causes of conflicts
- Improper community policing prevents access to justice for women who face sexual or gender-based violence from within their own community
- Simplistic interpretation and systematic confusion of women’s participation in WPS, that is understood as holding consultation and information sessions for CSOs, without the inclusion in decision-making processes
- Stereotypical perception of gender roles still persists in most countries, which in turn reduces to recruitment of women into the armed forces
- Lack of vertical coherence: little correspondence between the principles, objectives, measures and areas of action
- Lack of horizontal coherence between the various frameworks, plans and instruments (i.e. CEDAW, SDGs, Trafficking Plan)
- Lack of concreteness in some countries (poor planning, no timetable) on how the frameworks, objectives and principles declared throughout the NAPs will be applied
- Lack of budget: some NAPs have no budget, undermining implementation efforts for the WPS agenda
- Lack of transparency, fragmented and dispersed information and data
- Measures to address non-compliance are not very stringent and gender indicators are often not included to measure the achievement or transformative impact of actions
- Weak geographic and thematic localizations of some NAPs do not allow an effective implementation of the WPS agenda



Progress on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action

Governments seemed committed to addressing the BPfA within the past five years. There is mention of the SDGs and use of EU resources to address some of the critical issues, especially sexual and gender-based violence. Although there are some mentions in several NAPs about linkages between the WPS agenda and gender equality, trafficking, SDGs or others, no provisions have been developed, nor resources and measures to operationalize these linkages.

Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are among the most pressing issues to address the governments to build the culture of peace, according to the resolution A/RES/53/243. The European Union (EU) claims to be a major player in fighting uncontrolled trade as well as proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on a global level. Some European states, like Germany and Spain, have started to integrate a gendered perspective in the proliferation of SALW or target the issue in their NAPs. However, the whole cycle of production, exportation and arms control is lead by a eurocentric approach and therefore marginalizes the actual interests of conflict-affected communities. Additionally, governments greatly lack a gender lens and meaningful participation of women-led organisations in their programmes on disarmament and arms control. To achieve policy coherence that is based on human rights and gender, this deficit needs to be tackled by the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security. Moreover, some current efforts have been made by the States to sign onto and ratify the TPNW. It should be noted that all countries have to follow the same rules, because as it can be seen, Ukraine's accession to the NPT did not secured its integrity from external aggression promised by neighbouring country in Budapest Memorandum in 1994.

Impunity for sexual and gender-based violence is another pressing issue requiring government's attention. Although states indicated in their national reports on Beijing+25 their commitment to fighting sexual and gender-based violence, rape and other forms of sexual exploitation in armed conflicts, they are still not being prosecuted in a meaningful manner by national and regional institutions. To date, sexual and gender-based violence is not perceived as a crime in armed conflicts. Additionally, many communities not only face sexual and gender-based violence from the "other" but also within their own communities. There is a large gap between the commitments listed in the national reports on Beijing+25 and the actual number of systematic sexual exploitation and abuse cases, including rape cases that governments actually prosecute. We demand the full implementation of CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention, jointly with DAC Recommendation on sexual exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) agreed on July 2019 that the BPfA be used as the basis for a legal framework on the governmental level that ends impunity by persecuting perpetrators of such

crimes. This is an important step to ensuring accountability on a national level, allowing for collective action and establishing legal precedent for international trials.

Proper training and understanding of gender integration in peace and security is important to take into account. While there exists relatively widespread agreement that women need to be involved in all levels of decision-making and stages of peace and security, there is a lack of proper understanding and training on what this looks like in practice. Furthermore, inclusion of women's voices from all backgrounds is vital to peace processes, in particular women living in communities under threat of terrorism, paramilitary control, and organised criminality linked to armed conflict.



Recommendations beyond Beijing+25

- Whole-of-government approach that links WPS to education, health, foreign affairs, community, social development and other issues should be developed
- Meaningful action on women, peace and security requires recognizing the interrelated, inseparable and mutually reinforcing nature of all elements of the WPS agenda, and committing to full implementation
- Policy coherence should be based on human rights and gender. Gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls are central to international peace and security. Relevant gender indicators and goals should be developed
- Definition of armed conflict should be widened to include terrorism, paramilitary activity and organised criminality linked to armed conflict
- Intra-community focus on healing trauma and harm caused by intra-community violence as well as intercommunity violence should be privileged
- Impact of internal displacement should be recognised to give more possibilities to provide support
- Decisive action to prevent conflict, avert crisis and end war should be taken
- Monitoring group to evaluate implementation of the WPS agenda throughout the peace processes should be formed to achieve more transparency and accountability. Annual monitoring and impact assessment should be conducted
- More involvement of different ministries, such as ministries of education, equality, justice, in the WPS agenda is needed
- Training on WPS, gender, and women's rights should be reinforced and promoted
- Women from diverse backgrounds should be included in peace talks
- Meaningful participation of CSOs should be reinforced by creating a mechanism for civil society and local initiatives
- Legitimacy of the work of all human rights defenders and their role in promoting peace and security should be defended, and all attacks against them should be condemned
- More funding is needed for efficient implementation of peacebuilding programs

Key recommendations from the Beijing+25 CSO Forum thematic workgroup (28th October)

There is an existing policy framework in place for WPS, but we see that it is obviously not working. The issues we bring up in our group are still pertinent, and they relate to all four pillars of the WPS agenda: prevention, protection, participation and recovery. It means there is a problem, and that is why we want to emphasize on key issues again:

- Peace is not possible without meaningful and equal participation of women; especially women from civil society groups and women affected by conflict in the peace process and decision making at all levels. The process must focus on gender-inclusive outcomes and implementation with women being equal and meaningful part of both policy making and implementation.
- We call for an expansion in the definition of security: in addition to the existing definition of state security, we need to increase the focus more on human security, which includes economic security, political security, community and personal security, environmental and food security. This shift must affect implementation and budgeting issues which are or are not covered by policy. Otherwise, we will not succeed in establishing long-lasting and qualitative peace.
- We need effective systems for early warning, conflict prevention and mitigation. This includes indicators, but also extensive peace education, training and empowerment for the groups that work for peace. It also requires protection and security for those who promote the peace agenda in their countries and communities.

Finally, we want to bring your attention to the Open Letter to Permanent Representatives to the UN: Recommendations on the Security Council Open Debate on WPS which was sent to all UN Member States on behalf of 438 civil society organizations across 94 countries in October 2019. The letter calls on Member States and the Security Council to prioritize and commit full political support for 5 key WPS issues.

Useful sources

- NGO statement - <http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/open-letter-unsc-wps-anniversary-october-2019>
- Beijing Platform for Action - http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800
- International survey - <https://forms.gle/SjcXXuCL74apcqSBA>