

Beijing+30 Women and Armed Conflict

“The term “Armed Conflicts” in this statement includes all types of armed conflict as recognized by the Geneva Conventions I-IV and its Additional Protocols. As it is clear from the Annex to the Beijing Platform for Action serious violations of international humanitarian law, prohibiting attacks on civilian populations, continue to occur. International Humanitarian Law is systematically ignored at times and human rights are often violated in armed conflict situations. Violations of the human rights of women in conflict situations are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.”

Methodology and Approach

The working group studied and analyzed the UNECE area of Women and Armed Conflict, looking at the commitments taken by member states and ratification of the Beijing Political Declaration and Platform for Action from 1995 to date. These analyses are focused on *section (E.) Women and armed conflict para. 131, p 56 to para. 147, p.64¹.*

To identify the existing gaps, address existing concerns, measure member states commitments, and provide recommendations, the working evaluated the aforementioned components within the framework of the UNSC/res 1325-2000, Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery, relevant reports of the Secretary-General and “Action for Peace (A4P) initiative 2018 Declaration of Shared Commitments, which has reached over 150 endorsements and provides a shared roadmap for strengthening peacekeeping. Success depends on Member States and the UN Secretariat working actively to implement their commitments. These commitments focus on a set of key priorities that build on both new commitments and existing workstreams. The implementation goals are centered on eight priority commitment areas:

- politics
- **women, peace and security**
- **protection**
- **safety and security**
- **performance and accountability**
- **peacebuilding and sustaining peace**
- partnerships

¹ Beijing Political Declaration and Platform for Action, https://14551540740633425227.googlegroups.com/attach/1e20a2ba03bc3/Beijingplatform_131.pdf?part=0.1&view=1&vt=ANaJVrH6WS0yEsVdZ1ruCcFEg4hoeEITycaQ89d_oF_AtOoWpNZm_DeGvp7eP_PQNzQz7oXNjBjYyVkhSHHuo9pkg4EK8zXbGal1Wh0ZR6UvUHRXwbRx_DA

- conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations

These eight priority commitment areas are anchored in ongoing areas of work, including the Gender Parity Strategy; the Women, Peace and Security Agenda; Santos Cruz Action Plan; Management Reform; Police Strategic Guidance Framework; Strategic Force Generation; the United Nations/African Union Joint Framework and Declaration; the Triangular Partnership Project; the Voluntary Compact on the commitment to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse; the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the Environment Strategy. A tracking system is in development so that progress can be systematically monitored and reviewed²." While the above refers to various aspects and areas of concern, the group remained focused on the ECE region, as highlighted in bold letters.

Based on the above-presented consulted documentation, the working group decided to focus on the following points:

Gaps:

1) Women Peace and Security (WPS) Evolution. UNSC/Res. 1325-2000, UNECE. Currently, 78% of the states in the UNECE have committed to developing and implementing NAPs on WPS." Therefore, 78% of the UNECE states have committed to developing and implementing National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

2) Growing Discrepancies between the protection and participation components of the WPS Agenda as connectors to empowering women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, taking into account Action for Peace (A4P) UNECE. Entrenched Barriers Women face persistent barriers that hinder their direct participation in peace and political processes and underrepresentation. Women continue to be underrepresented in formal peace negotiations and political processes. Lack of resources -women's organizations face challenges in securing resources, while global military spending continues to grow every year.

3) The empowerment of women leading peace processes, conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding within the WPS agenda through National Action Plans (NAPs) UNECE. Exclusion There is a need to address the exclusion of women from peace processes and the prevalence of impunity, requiring holistic approaches that include legal reforms, capacity-building, and changes in social norms. Underrepresentation Women continue to be underrepresented in formal peace negotiations and political processes.

² <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>

These main points enabled the working group to provide feasible recommendations, based on realistic expectations, following the commitments UNECE member states have agreed upon.

Recommendations:

Short Term

The recommendations outlined in the document underscore the critical need for women's full participation in peace processes and their access to positions of power. It advocates for gender-responsive strategies, sufficient funding, and the promotion of women's leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. *The emphasis is placed on the necessity of comprehensive and well-funded National Action Plans (NAPs) that integrate gender perspectives into peace processes.*

Medium Term:

A significant finding is that 78% of the states within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) have committed to developing and implementing NAPs focused on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). This commitment reflects a growing recognition of the importance of women's roles in these areas. However, the absence of commitment from these 22% of states represents a gap in the UNECE region's collective effort to advance the WPS agenda. At the same time, it means the *opportunity for targeted interventions and partnerships to bring these states on board, enhancing the overall impact of the WPS agenda in the UNECE region.*

Medium-Long Term:

The document identifies "protection and participation" as key components of the WPS agenda, highlighting their interconnectedness in empowering women during conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. It stresses the importance of *ensuring women's protection in conflict situations while facilitating their meaningful involvement in peacebuilding activities.* Despite these advancements, women continue to encounter substantial barriers to their direct participation in peace and political processes. The document outlines several challenges, including entrenched barriers that limit women's involvement, struggles for resources faced by women's organizations amidst rising global military expenditures, and the persistent underrepresentation of women in formal peace negotiations. Additionally, it points to the need for addressing the exclusion of women from peace processes and the prevalence of impunity, advocating for holistic approaches that encompass legal reforms, capacity-building, and shifts in social norms.

These challenges highlight the ongoing obstacles that hinder women's active participation in peace and political arenas.

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Consulted Sources:

Armed Conflict Definition:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-additional-ge-neva-conventions-12-august-1949-and>

Beijing Political Declaration and Platform for Action,

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S/2023/725 Women, Peace and Security Report of the Secretary-General, September 28, 2023 see e.g Para 29,30,35-39,57.

S/2023/725 Women, Peace and Security Report of the Secretary-General September 28, 2023 Para 1.

Action 4 Peace Declaration
<<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>> (accessed on 29 April 2024).

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Klugman, Nagel et al "Can the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and International Humanitarian Law join forces?" available at <<https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/WPSAgendaAndInternationalLaw.pdf>> (accessed on 29 April 2024).

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ICRC Report "Missing Persons: A Hidden Tragedy" available at <https://icrcndresourcecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/icrc_002_0929.pdf> (accessed on 2 August 2024).

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A/75/982 Our Common Agenda Report of the Secretary-General- Para 121

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Para 201, 203 (a and b) 206 (b and f)

Ibid

A/75/982 Our Common Agenda Report of the Secretary-General- Para 19

See <https://wpshcompact.org/monitoring-accountability/>

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S/2023/725 Women and peace and security Report of the Secretary-General September 28 2023 see e.g Para 1

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