

## Beijing +30

### Women and Armed Conflict ECE

*“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.”*

The preconditions to the implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda (UNSC res/1325-2000) are peace and stability. Although some progress has been made, in almost a quarter of a century since its adoption, regrettably 1325 (2000) remained an aspiration. In 2020, the UN observed that there was growing evidence of the links between the level of gender inequality (Goal 5)<sup>1</sup> and gender-based violence in society with conflicts and the intensity of their violence (Goal 16)<sup>2</sup>. Gender inequalities often become worse in times of conflict and crisis, with devastating impacts on women and girls’ enjoyment of human rights (critical areas of concern E and I).<sup>3</sup> In 2019, the Security Council received information about more than 50 parties to conflict credibly suspected of having committed or instigated patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of conflict.<sup>4</sup> Recent United Nations commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions also shed light on the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of terror, torture and displacement and on the fact that, in some cases, it could be an indicator of genocide.<sup>5</sup> According to conservative estimates, at least one in five displaced or refugee women has experienced sexual violence.<sup>241</sup>

The disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women was addressed through the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This resolution also recognizes the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. It stresses the importance of women’s equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security in peace and security and

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<sup>1</sup>UN Women, SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/node/36060>

<sup>2</sup> UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division Sustainable Development Goals: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition  
[https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/?\\_gl=1\\*dpyaej\\*\\_ga\\*MjEwMTcwMzUzMy4xNjg5Nzg4Mjgy\\*\\_ga\\_TK9BQL5X7Z\\*MTcyMzA1NDUwOC41MS4wLjE3MjMwNTQ1MTAuMC4wLjA](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/?_gl=1*dpyaej*_ga*MjEwMTcwMzUzMy4xNjg5Nzg4Mjgy*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTcyMzA1NDUwOC41MS4wLjE3MjMwNTQ1MTAuMC4wLjA).

<sup>3</sup> **E/CN.6/2020/3** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly Report of the Secretary General, 2020 Para 219

<sup>4</sup> UN Document [S/2019/280](#).

<sup>5</sup> **E/CN.6/2020/3** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly Report of the Secretary General (2020) Para 233; A/HRC/37/CRP.3 and A/HRC/42/CRP.4.

requires the increased participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making. Based on this resolution many UNECE states committed to national action plans for its implementation on the domestic level.

In some states in the UNECE there have not been any adoption of national action plans for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. While many states in the UNECE have adopted national implementation strategies based on this resolution, some national implementation strategies have already expired and have not been renewed.<sup>6</sup> In this regard it is important for states to ensure gender responsive budgeting as financial resources are lacking in the implementation of national action plans which leads to their eventual abandonment.<sup>7</sup> States in the UNECE must ensure the creation and maintenance of national action plans in order to fully realize the goals of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Data shows that negotiating parties in peace processes continue to regularly exclude women and impunity for atrocities against women and girls is still prevalent by state and non-state actors.<sup>8</sup> Women continue to face entrenched barriers to direct participation in peace and political processes, and women's organizations struggle to find resources, while military spending continues to grow every year. This remains the case even though there is ample evidence that women's participation contributes to more robust democracies and longer-lasting peace.<sup>9</sup>

According to the UN Secretary General's 2023 report regarding women, peace and security, the lives of women and girls also continue to be affected in many other ways by conflict, including by significant gaps in the comprehensive and systematic delivery of the full range of sexual and reproductive health services.

In UNECE states that are still recovering from armed conflicts there is a lack of female representation and civil society organizations that work with survivors of armed conflict.

Women and women's organizations need to have sufficient funding to achieve greater representation and leadership in peace and security and in humanitarian action. States and peace brokers need to ensure that peace processes are fully inclusive, that the appointment of women mediators and negotiators is supported and encourage inclusive delegations where women are absent or underrepresented. This is in line with the commitments of many UNECE states through the Action 4 Peace (A4P) Declaration.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ("CEDAW Committee") Report, February 2024, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/7; see also <<http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/>> (accessed on 31 July 2024).

<sup>7</sup> CEDAW Committee Report, March 2023, CEDAW/C/HUN/CO/9 and CEDAW Committee Report, November 2019, CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/6.

<sup>8</sup> **S/2023/725** Women, Peace and Security Report of the Secretary-General, September 28, 2023 see e.g Para 29,30,35-39,57.

<sup>9</sup> **S/2023/725** Women, Peace and Security Report of the Secretary-General September 28, 2023 Para 1.

<sup>10</sup> Action 4 Peace Declaration <<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>> (accessed on 29 April 2024).

The killings of 34 women human rights defenders in conflict-affected countries in 2022 has been confirmed,<sup>17</sup> but this is likely only a fraction of the real number of cases. Sexual violence continued to be used as a tactic of war, ignoring the law of armed conflict.

States in the UNECE should ensure that the clear prohibition of sexual violence under the law of armed conflict is integrated into national law, military doctrine and training.<sup>11</sup> States must furthermore ensure to amend their national laws to ensure that sexual violence is designated a war crime and to provide special protective measure for victims and survivors.<sup>12</sup>

General compliance with the law of armed conflict will ensure less civilians get targeted, and that less civilian infrastructure is destroyed, which would lead to less internal displacement and would directly improve the safety and security of women in situations of armed conflict.<sup>13</sup>

In some ECE states prosecutions for war crimes are slow, this includes sexual crimes and limited assistance is also provided to victims and witnesses of war crimes.<sup>14</sup>

States should set aside funds for the compensation of women who are victims of war crimes. The capacity of witness support offices and offices that provide protection and support, including psychological support before, during and after criminal proceedings, for witnesses to war crimes should be strengthened.

Another human rights issue that is often raised by women advocates in conflict-affected countries is the fate of detained, disappeared and missing persons, including not just thousands of women but a larger number of men, whose absence has a profound impact on the lives of the women and girls in their families.<sup>15</sup>

States should encourage a systematic shift in approaches to conflict prevention that addresses the root causes of conflict, violence and instability. This would bring structures of global inequality and uneven development that fuel conflict by creating tensions between different social groups and enable the global arms trade to flourish into sharper focus.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.icrc.org/en/unsc-women-peace-security-president-statement-2023>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> 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).

<sup>14</sup> CEDAW Committee Report, November 2019, CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/6; IOM Report "Reparations for Wartime Victims..." available at  
<[https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/migrated\\_files/What-We-Do/docs/Reparations-for-Wartime-Victims-in-the-Former-Yugoslavia-In-Search-of-the-Way-Forward.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/migrated_files/What-We-Do/docs/Reparations-for-Wartime-Victims-in-the-Former-Yugoslavia-In-Search-of-the-Way-Forward.pdf)> p13 (accessed on 3 August 2024).

<sup>15</sup> ICRC Report "Missing Persons: A Hidden Tragedy" available at  
<[https://icrcndresourcecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/icrc\\_002\\_0929.pdf](https://icrcndresourcecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/icrc_002_0929.pdf)> (accessed on 2 August 2024).

<sup>16</sup> **E/CN.6/2020/3** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly Report of the Secretary General 2020 Para 264.

Ensure the right to education under all conditions and promote peace literacy education to advance conflict prevention, protection and peacebuilding, by reducing the investment in military responses and increasing funding in peacebuilding and peace mediation training and activities. And ensure that women and girls from conflict-affected areas are an integral part of all peace processes, conflict mediation and peacebuilding through National Action Plans.

**Contributing Members:**

Marelle Manders: **FAWCO**

Natia Kostava: **Global Network of Women Peacebuilders**

Kelly Franklin Talon: **Courage for Freedom**

**Convenor/Chair**

Daniela Chivu: **National Council of Women of Canada**

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