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## NORMATIVE FRAME OF WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

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**Abstract:** Women, peace, and security (WPS) represents a policy framework aimed at raising awareness on the critical need for women to be viewed and to be included as key actors, if we are to achieve sustainable peace and security. The main idea of the WPS is raising awareness about the gender equality, and subsequently including the women in each stage of the peace process. The purpose of the paper is to elaborate shortly and closely on the guiding documents and the normative frame of the WPS agenda: UN Declaration on Human Rights (1948), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), World Conferences on Women (1975-95), UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS (2000). The landmark resolution of the WPS agenda, 1325, has four pillars: prevention, participation, protection and peacebuilding and recovery. In an attempt of supporting the WPS agenda, global partnerships and alliances have been formed by different UN bodies, UN member states, non-state actors and the civil society. There is a common impression that out of all UN resolutions, the Resolution 1325 on WPS is most known. The resolution and the agenda have been supplemented by other nine UNSC resolutions, sometimes referred as WPS UNSCRs. UN and its many partners on different levels are continuously pushing forward the agenda, insisting on inclusion of women in the matters of peace and security. Besides that, UN and its partners are fully committed to preventing and protecting women and girls in any conflict. A tremendous great deal of job in moving the WPS agenda forward is done by the civil society. And it looks like we have learned the lesson: the civil society has been one of the key actors in negotiating the UN SDGs 2030. However, not only the UN and civil society, but also other international organizations have put the WPS agenda high on their priority list. NATO has responded with creating mechanisms aimed at implementing resolutions on WPS. One such mechanism are National Action Plans on implementing UNSCR 1325 and other documents which are part of the WPS agenda. OSCE and EU are also providing huge support to moving forward.

**Keywords:** Women, Peace, Security, Agenda, Normative, Resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the humankind history, there have always been wars. And during those wars, man, women, boys, and girls are all affected in a different manner. Almost always, men were fighting wars, and women were doing everything else. Looking at the history, we learn that ever since the Ancient Greece (even long before that), women were far than equal with men. It was in the last two centuries that women got some of the basic rights, among them the right to vote. Nevertheless, there were not only wars, and not only certain periods. Even today, in many regions and many countries, women are deprived from the basic human rights. There are many examples in the most recent Report of the UNSC to the Secretary-General (SG), among them Afghanistan being most remarkable. Women and girls are oppressed, there are no women in the Cabinet, girls are forbidden from going to school and college, compulsory covering the face when going out, if allowed. (UNSC, 2022).

Women's fight and campaigning for rights started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but largely intensified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among many of the rights women were fighting for are the right to vote, the use of gender-sensitive terminology, right to abortion, as well as right to possession (Messer-Davidow, 2002).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, among many other turbulent events, there were two world wars. Again, history showed us the disproportionate effect the war could have on man and women, boys, and girls. Women had to do the entire work at home, bring up the kids, take care of the elderly. Many years after the world wars, there were turbulent years and bloody wars again, bringing once again the awareness of the gender equality. Or inequality. Once again, now Rwanda and Yugoslavia in the late 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century showed to the world the ugly face of the war. It was around that time, at the beginning of the new millennium that UN finally stepped in and took concrete steps and actions toward gender issues. This time, expectedly, aiming at the peace and security.

The UNSCR 1325 is adopted in 2000, after the turbulent periods affecting women the most, among others. The resolution stems from UN charter and other documents, such as the CEDAW, the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985) and the Beijing Conference (1995) (NCGM, 2020).

After the resolution, UNSC adopted nine other resolutions, seven of them having training in their focus. Since gender training of the peacekeepers is usually conducted before the deployment, the idea behind is to organize the

gender training in institutionalized manner (DCAF, 2016). The logic behind this insisting on training is raising awareness of the future peacekeepers. Another institutionalized mechanism for moving forward the WPS agenda are National Action Plans (NAP) in which the states elaborate on their planned actions in implementation of the commitments from the normative frame of WPS.

## 2. THE PATH TO WPS AGENDA

The WPS agenda has a long history of international peace activism. It evolved out of several decades of smaller scale organizing on local and national level (Cockburn, 2007). Feminism, as an ideology based on equality of the sexes, is largely and primarily associated with the West, although it has been manifested worldwide, by various entities. There are different views and opinions on what is considered feminist movements; however, feminist history can be conditionally split into three phases or “waves”:

- First-wave feminism (19-20 centuries) – addressing inequalities in the legal sphere, among them, the right to vote.
- Second-wave feminism (1960s–1980s) – moving forward and provoking debate on issues like culture, as well as evaluating the existing gender norms.
- Third-wave feminism (1990s–2000s) – focuses on vast array of feminist’s efforts, follow-on to the previous efforts and possible reason for not advancing. (Krolokke, C. & Sorensen).

Additionally, some authors argue that there is a fourth-wave feminism, beginning around 2012, characterized and focused on the empowerment of women (Abrahams, 2017), as well as use of internet tools (Grady, 2018) and intersectionality.

Aside from the feminist social movements mentioned, there have also been institutional efforts lead by UN. Finally, after many years advocating and activism, UN managed to develop a normative framework focusing on the rights of girls and women in conflict.

When we speak about WPS, it must be mentioned that Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) provides the foundation upon which other critical human rights frameworks developed, including the WPS agenda within the UN Security Council (Suthanthiraraj, 2019). UDHR is the first document of its kind, explicitly setting out the basic human rights that need to be protected. In that sense, the credit goes to Eleanor Roosevelt and Hansa Mehta from India for changing the phrase “All men are born free and equal” to All human beings are born free and equal”.

It was during the Cold War period that civil society, as one of the key actors for moving forward WPS agenda, started thinking and acting toward international human rights standards. It was in that period that many conventions and treaties related to gender equality were adopted. Among these conventions was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979). CEDAW focuses and elaborates on different forms of discrimination on women, asking for the states that are signatories to actively engage in ending it. CEDAW is sometimes referred as an international bill of rights for women, made up of 30 articles, including an optional protocol. States who accept the convention are committed to ending all forms of discrimination against women. Additionally, they are obliged to implement the gender-equality principle in their judicial systems and prohibiting all kinds of discriminatory practices against women (CEDAW, 1979). Together with UNSCR 1325, CEDAW is primary mechanism for pushing forward WPS agenda, whenever there is conflict or post-conflict environments (UNIFEM, 2006).

The UN World Conferences on Women (1975-1995) are another turning points in the international efforts of advancing WPS agenda, reiterating that women are most affected participants in each conflict. Accordingly, their perspective must be considered if the world is to achieve sustainable development and peace. There were total of four World Conferences on Women:

- *Mexico City (1975)*. It was the first-time world conference to be organized and it convened in Mexico. It was convened in such way to coincide with the International Women’s Year, 1975. The reason is to remind the entire world that discrimination against women is persisting, throughout the globe. The conference managed to promote the awareness on the existing issues with the gender inequality.
- *Copenhagen (1980)*. This was the second conference, this time convened in Denmark, five years after the first one, gathering 145 countries. Its main aim was to bring to the surface the gap between women’s rights and the women’s ability to make others respect their rights. The conference focuses primarily on education, employment opportunities of women, and health care issues. Other issues include the right to property and right of inheritance.
- *Nairobi (1985)*. The Third World Conference was the first international women’s conference to be convened in Africa. The main idea was to evaluate the achievements during the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985). Approximately 1500 delegates coming from 150 countries took part in the conference. What is important is that during the conference, a parallel NGO Forum was held with 12,000 participants. A series of activities and debates

led to adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Those strategies call for promotion of the participation of women at each level.

- *Beijing (1995)*. The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, is the most important one out of the four. It perfectly makes sense, since this conference built on the conclusions of the previous conferences, their bases of wisdom on the issues of gender equality. The conference attracted more than 1,700 participants, among them 6,000 government officials, and around 4,000 NGO representatives. As usually, there was a parallel NGO Forum attended by around 30,000 people. Its conclusions, it touches upon 12 areas in which advancement of women's rights need to be focused on.

### **3. UN RESOLUTION 1325 ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY**

At the beginning of the new millennium, the final steps toward promotion of the WPS agenda are made. UN has been leading the entire process, and its entities, member States, and civil society at all levels have formed partnerships and alliances with a goal of promoting and moving forward this agenda. Throughout the process, UN managed to create and raise awareness of the normative framework of the WPS agenda. The civil society and women organizations played a huge role, and as a result, UNSCR 1325 is the only Security Council resolution “for which the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and redrafting was almost entirely the work of civil society (UN, 2015). Since its existence, UNSC have adopted more than 2000 resolutions, but there is a common impression that the UNSCR 1325 is the most known resolution out of all.

UNSCR 1325 was the first landmark Security Council resolution on women, peace, and security. It focuses and addresses effects of conflict on women and asks for increasing women's participation in all the stages of conflicts.

UNSCR 1325 is a result of many decades of activities of many actors, UN, and civil society. Maybe the main idea behind is that the world needs wide recognition that certain categories, primarily women, experience conflict much different than men. As a result, there is an obvious need to address those special needs of women during all stages of conflict. It also recognizes that women have a critical role to play in the ending of wars and the sustainability of peace (Peacewoman, 2022).

As the most recent reports indicate, even after so many decades hard work, the world is far away from getting close to the envisioned gender equality. As the global security situation gets complicated, it seems that the women's rights are also declining. Military spending has reached an all-time high of USD 2.1 trillion; at the same time, funding for women's organizations in conflict-affected countries is shrinking (UN Women, 2022).

By 2022, a total of ten WPS resolutions have been adopted by the UNSC. They constitute a comprehensive WPS framework aimed at integrating a gender perspective in any operation and any organization.

The following are the UNSC Resolutions related to the WPS agenda.

*UNSCR 1325 (2000)*: This is the first and the most important UNSC resolution, the basis for the WPS agenda. It was a kind of revolution in a sense that it was a first time that it is institutionally recognized that there is a disproportion in the way the armed conflict affects different categories: man and women, boys and girls. It calls for recognition of the special needs of women during all stages of conflict. The resolution formally admits that nature of warfare is such that civilians are the main victims. The resolution recognizes that women on the other side, are generally excluded from most of the activities during the peace process.

*UNSCR 1820 (2008)*: The resolution is mainly focused and condemns the use of sexual violence as a tool of war. This resolution reinforces the landmark WPS resolution, 1325. It calls for parties in conflicts to take appropriate steps and actions and protect women and men, boys and girls from sexual violence. These steps should include peacekeepers training on gender issues, including on sexual violence.

*UNSCR 1888 (2009)*: The resolution has been introduced by Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State at that time, being one of the most prominent advocates for gender equality. It focuses once again on sexual violence during armed conflicts and calls for impunity for those kinds of war crimes. Among other provisions is the call for extensive monitoring on cases of sexual violence, and once again, calls for training of the future peacekeepers on gender issues.

*UNSCR 1889 (2009)*: Aims at addressing problems and issues affecting women's participating in the peace process. It calls for monitoring and tracking on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and once again asks for gender mainstreaming throughout all the conflict as well as peace processes. It calls on the Secretary General to make report on the participation and inclusion on women during and after the conflict.

*UNSCR 1960 (2010)*: The resolution is aimed once again at sexual violence during armed conflict, recognizing that this issue remains systematic and widespread. It calls for a fierce fight against impunity, proposing different mechanisms, such as “naming and shaming”. It also provides some policy recommendations.

*UNSCR 2106 (2013)*: The resolution sends a signal to everyone that there will be no tolerance on sexual violence during conflict. It is a fourth UNSC resolution addressing sexual violence. Reinforces the previous resolutions.

*UNSCR 2122 (2013)*: Calls again for inclusion of women in the peace process, setting out specific methods for increasing the number of women included. The resolution makes a link between gender equality and disarmament. It asks for regular reporting on different WPS issues throughout the UN system.

*UNSCR 2242 (2015)*: The resolution addresses integration of WPS issues at each level and in each conflict. It calls SG and UN entities to implement and integrate gender perspectives into their organizations. It follows the recommendations of the Global Study 2015, report to the SG. Calls for thorough investigations when sexual violence occurs during conflict.

*UNSCR 2272 (2016)*: The resolution addresses once again sexual exploitation and calls for combating sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers.

*UNSCR 2467 (2019)*: Sexual violence in conflict.

*UNSCR 2493 (2019)*: Requests UN to develop appropriate ways so to enable women's participation in peace process. It also calls the countries to support this process on national level.

#### **4. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS**

As usually with normative frameworks: it might be easier to establish it, than to implement it. It is especially true if one wants to implement and monitor something globally, as our WPS agenda. In the multilateral world, states bear the responsibility of implementing gender perspectives in their national legislative system. For that purpose, the mechanism of National Action Plans (NAP) has been envisioned.

NAPs are strategic documents on national level, explaining what is done and what is planned to be done to implement the principle of gender equality in their society. The first NAP was published in 2005 by Denmark. The primary purpose of the policy documents is each country to translate the duties and responsibilities stemming from the WPS agenda, protecting the women, and increasing their engagement in the peace and security sphere.

The resolutions are important not only within the UN, but also outside. Established normative framework of the WPS agenda and National Action Plans, inspire many other international organizations, such as NATO, AU, EU, OSCE, as well as individual countries, to take decisive steps toward implementing the WPS agenda. It means that regional and multi-lateral organizations, including NATO (NATO, 2021) and the EU, have also adopted their own versions of such plans. As for NATO, member states are reporting annually on the level of implementation of the gender perspective within their respective militaries.

NAPs continue to be a key mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the obligations coming from WPS normative framework.

NAPs elaborate on the way the society intends to implement the WPS agenda, on each level and in each institution. They are one of the mechanisms to ensure rights of women and girls are met during conflict. They present to the public and to the other countries what is their vision and how they plan to continue with the implementation of increased participation of women in peace and security.

However, according to the same source, only 104 UN member states (54%) have adopted 1325 NAP, and among them, 33% are currently outdated, having expired in 2021 or before (Peacewoman/NAP, 2022).

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

Gender equality is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is one of 17 SDGs that UN has envisioned for the humanity to achieve until 2030, if we want to live in peace and prosperity. It is a clear indicator on the importance of the gender equality for UN.

20<sup>th</sup> century appears to be the turning point in the promotion of the gender equality globally. It is no surprise, if we think of the events that happened within short period of time. Humanity for the first-time experienced World war. Not one, but two. We had the Cold War, and then we witnessed many regional and local wars. However, no matter the circumstances, the fight for the women's rights and equality never stopped.

As a result, the world has seen very comprehensive normative framework for implementing the women, peace, and security agenda. UN, its entities, civil society, many international organizations such as NATO, EU, African Union, OSCE and many more are actively involved in moving forward the WPS agenda.

In the current global political and security situation, when bloody conflict is going on between Russia and Ukraine and when we witness on the first hand (thanks to the internet) the devastating impacts on the war to the most vulnerable, moving forward the WPS agenda is more than necessary.

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