

WILPF OVERVIEW:
2019 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY
Compiled by Senem Kaptan

BACKGROUND

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's (SG) 2019 Report on Women and Peace and Security (WPS) tracks the progress made on the implementation of the [WPS Agenda](#). As part of our work for feminist peace and holistic accountability on the WPS Agenda, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has developed this overview of the 2019 UNSG WPS Report.

This year, UN Women commissioned an independent assessment of the WPS recommendations and commitments made at the three peace and security reviews in 2015 -- the review of [WPS](#) ("the Global Study"), [peacebuilding](#) ("the AGE Report"), and [peace operations](#) ("the HIPPO Report"). The 2019 UNSG WPS Report builds on this assessment and compiles data provided by United Nations offices, civil society and regional organizations, and Member States.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

I. Context

Nineteen years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the UN Secretary-General's report recognizes that "there remains a stark contrast between rhetoric and reality, where previously agreed commitments have not been matched by action" (para. 5). It affirms that "the correlation between gender inequality and a society's propensity for civil or interstate conflict is now well established" (para. 2). The report acknowledges that women's meaningful participation is critical to the UN system's operational effectiveness. It calls for an approach that prioritizes root cause analysis, conflict prevention, and a holistic implementation of the WPS Agenda.

According to the report, three factors are essential to successful implementation:

- consistent prioritization and resourcing for gender equality and WPS,
- mechanisms for tracking, monitoring, and overall accountability, and
- presence and influence of gender expertise at senior levels and across political and technical components of peacekeeping and special political missions and other United Nations entities (para. 6).

II. Highlights

The report takes stock of progress on the implementation of WPS commitments and highlights key findings as persistent barriers to progress on the WPS Agenda:

- Between 1990 and the end of 2018, less than 20 percent of peace agreements included provisions addressing women, girls or gender.
- In 2018, only 7.7 percent of peace agreements included gender-related provisions, showing a drastic decrease from 39 percent in 2015.
- Of the 30 recommendations put forth by the three 2015 peace and security reviews (on peacebuilding, peace operations, and WPS), only “50 percent were found to have been implemented or progressing;
 - 40 percent of recommendations were inconsistent in implementation or needing further progress;
 - 10 percent of recommendations had either gone backwards or were not progressing at all;
 - Only two recommendations were assessed as fully implemented: the formation of the Security Council’s Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security (IEG) and the integration of gender perspectives and commitments at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit” (para. 7).
- Fewer than 20 percent of all Security Council resolutions in 2018 contained references to the importance of and the need to ensure fundamental rights and freedoms for civil society, women’s groups and women human rights defenders.
- In 2018, total world military expenditure reached \$1.8 trillion.
- Political violence targeting women has reached record levels.
- Findings by the Special Rapporteur on the situations of human rights defenders show that the rise of misogynistic, sexist and homophobic speech by political leaders in recent years has contributed to increased violence against women, LGBTQI individuals, and women human rights defenders.

III. Delivering results in the lead-up to 2020 and beyond

The Secretary-General calls upon all actors to utilize the multiple anniversaries of 2020 to take stock of their progress on their WPS commitments, and calls for “increased political leadership, resourcing, and accountability” for tangible results.

A. Taking action and monitoring results at the national and regional levels

In terms of mainstreaming the WPS Agenda at the national and regional level, the Secretary-General highlights the [Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network](#), UNDP’s Global Project on the Role of Parliaments as Partners in Women, Peace and Security, and women mediator networks such as FemWise, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Nordic Women Mediators Network, and Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks. The

Secretary-General also highlights National Action Plans (NAPs) as well as regional, state, zonal, local and country action plans as key initiatives to accelerate WPS implementation and integrate the WPS Agenda into national frameworks. As of August 2019, 81 countries have adopted a NAP, and while this is a 50 percent increase since 2015, it still constitutes only 41 percent of all UN Member and Observer States.

Suggested action steps to address persisting barriers are identified as follows:

- Urge all stakeholders to ensure the full implementation of specific WPS commitments made in April 2019 upon the call of the UK and Germany, and take new transformative steps that can close commitment gaps and make an impact by 2020 and beyond (para 76);
- Encourage additional Member States and regional organizations to join the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network in accelerating WPS efforts (para 77);
- Encourage coherence between the initiatives of regional and sub-regional organizations and those at the national level on conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding (para 80);
- Harness the leadership role of Special Envoys, Ambassadors and high-level advisers on gender equality and women, peace and security with strengthened financial and human resource capacity (para 81);
- Urge more parliaments to further identify ways they can support the localization of the WPS Agenda (para 82).

B. Positioning of women, peace and security within United Nations reforms: opportunities and challenges

In terms of UN reform, the Secretary-General highlights the UN Gender Parity Plan, the UN Plan of Action and Strategy on Hate Speech, and the UN's Zero Tolerance on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. He also brings attention to the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, the new Equality Fund to support women's organizations, and pooled funds, such as the Peacebuilding Fund, to support gender equality in peace and security programming.

- **Gender parity in peace and security**

As of December 2018, women made up 35 percent of heads and 48 percent of deputy heads of UN peacekeeping and special political missions, which is a 35 and 37 percent increase, respectively, compared to 2017. Additionally, gender parity has been achieved among resident coordinators at the global level. However, as of June 2019, only 49 out of 193 (25 percent) permanent representatives of Member States to the United Nations in New York were women, although this is a 23 percent increase compared to 2018. In 2018 and 2019, out of the 15 Security Council seats, only three (Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States) were filled by women ambassadors.

The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of Member States to model commitments to gender parity.

- **Increasing accountability and expertise for integration of gender perspectives in peace and security**

In 2018, of the 19 full-time gender advisors deployed to 16 field missions or offices of special envoys, only four (21 percent) were at the senior level. In a similar manner, ten out of the 15 peacekeeping missions active in 2018 within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had gender units with dedicated staff, but only three out of 61 gender advisors within these missions were at the senior level. The Secretary-General underscores the importance of making gender analysis of the impact of conflicts on women's and girls' human rights standard practice in order to effectively respond to women's human rights and development challenges on the ground (para. 96).

Suggested action steps to address persisting barriers are identified as follows:

- Urge Member States to support the United Nations to tackle the need to improve dedicated gender advisory capacity in mission settings and headquarters with access to influence decision-making by dedicating the necessary political and financial support (para. 94).
- **Financing the women and peace and security agenda**

According to the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality's 2018 review of UN budgets and spending, insufficient resourcing of gender units impeded efforts of gender mainstreaming and executing gender-related mandates, including those established by the Security Council (para. 102). While the overall share of bilateral aid promoting gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected contexts increased to 42.6 percent, only 4.6 percent of this aid supported dedicated programs or projects with the primary objective to improve gender equality and women's empowerment (para. 98). In a similar manner, during the period of 2016-2017, only 0.2 percent (USD 82 million) of total bilateral aid was provided directly to women's organizations.

Suggested action steps to address persisting barriers are identified as follows:

- Call on all actors to back their political commitments by demonstrated and scaled up investment in gender equality and the WPS Agenda (para. 97);
- Urge the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network to put forward recommendations to ensure adequately resourced action plans and that allocations and expenditures can be tracked (para. 99);
- Encourage participating organizations in the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office to integrate gender equality throughout planning, implementation and reporting (para. 105);

- Encourage the documenting of synergies across the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and the Peacebuilding Fund recognizing the peace, humanitarian, development linkages (para. 107).

IV. The Work of the Security Council

The Secretary-General highlights the following points in his overview of the work of the Security-Council:

Gaps:

- In 2018, fewer than 20 percent of all Security Council resolutions reference the rights of civil society, women's groups, and women human rights defenders -- an overall decrease;
- Civil society representatives and briefers continue to face threats -- Member States should condemn such threats;
- Gender-sensitive measures continue to be needed in order to enable the work of civil society, particularly women human rights defenders and peacebuilders.

Progress:

- Invitation of civil society briefers to Security Council meetings, as called for in UNSCR 2242 (2015);
- The work of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in selecting and facilitating the speakers for these briefings as well as the critical insights and recommendations provided by women civil society representatives on local contexts in Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, South Sudan, and Yemen;
- The slight increase in the representation of women speakers invited to the Council, from 24 percent in 2017 to 30 percent in 2018;
- The integration of WPS elements and inclusion of meetings with local women's groups in all four missions undertaken by the Security Council to Afghanistan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Bangladesh and Myanmar in 2018;
- The strengthening of peace operations mandates with an infusion of WPS priorities;
- An increase in the number of explicit references to WPS issues in decisions adopted by the Security Council (72 percent, which is a higher percentage than any other year except 2013);
- The increase in the number of sanctions regimes that include direct or indirect references to sexual and gender-based violence (currently, 9 out of 14 sanctions regimes);
- 100 percent of Secretary General reports on the work of special political missions and 90 percent of reports by peacekeeping missions included information on WPS or the violation of women's and girls' human rights.

Recommendations:

- Encourage Security Council members to consider how they can assist in implementing strategic recommendations put forward by civil society representatives (para. 112);
- Urge Security Council members to explicitly condemn all forms of intimidation and reprisals against civil society representatives and briefers, and to work with the individual briefers to determine case specific appropriate responses (para. 113);
- Urge all Security Council members to draw on the information and analysis that is discussed at the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security meetings and actively participate in this important platform (para. 114);
- Ensure that Expert Groups who are the primary source of information and recommendations for designations to Sanctions Committees have adequate resources and dedicated expertise on gender and conflict-related sexual violence (para. 115).

V. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Secretary-General urges UN entities, Member States, regional organizations, and other actors to join him in elevating implementation of the WPS Agenda through the following actions (para. 119):

- Make leadership accountable for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, through targeted data collection, joined-up analysis, strategic planning and raised visibility.
- Enable, facilitate and ensure women's meaningful participation in peace processes, the implementation of peace agreements, and across all peace and security decision-making processes.
- Publicly condemn human rights violations and discrimination and prevent all forms of gender-based violence, including against women human rights defenders.
- Increase the number and influence of women in uniformed services in peacekeeping missions and national security services.
- Guarantee women's economic security and access to resources.
- Finance the women, peace and security agenda and invest in women peacebuilders.