



National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security

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Background: Women, Peace and Security

In October 2020, UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) celebrated its 20th anniversary. UNSCR 1325 is the first resolution of the [UN body that promotes the gender-specific impact of armed conflicts](#) and recognizes a women's agenda in international peace and security. UNSCR 1325 aims to advance women's equal rights and creates a peaceful society through four [pillars: participation, conflict prevention, protection, and relief and recovery](#). The resolution outlines five core recommendations to achieve these objectives. These include: 1) increasing women in decision-making roles at the national, regional and international levels in conflict resolution and peace processes, 2) expanding roles for women in UN operations as "military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel," 3) mainstreaming gender into peacekeeping and providing gender sensitivity training to relevant UN bodies, 4) supporting women and girls' "special needs" in "postconflict rehabilitation, reintegration and...reconstruction" for women who are former combatants and backing "local women's peace initiatives," and finally, 5) prioritizing the protection of women and girls in armed conflict, especially in terms from rape and other forms of sexual abuse (S/RES/1325, 2000: articles 1-18). In 2005, the UN Secretary General Special Report called on UN member states to develop national action plans (NAPs) to achieve the aims outlined in 1325 and promote the WPS agenda in conflict-affected contexts. Today, 98 UN member states (51%) have adopted a National Action Plan on WPS.

NAPs and challenges globally

NAPs are national-level strategy documents that help governments outline their priorities, aims, activities, and coordinate the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on the WPS agenda, both at the domestic and international levels. NAPs also provide guidelines to non-governmental actors in regards to the WPS agenda. [NAPs explicitly focus on supporting gender equality and women's empowerment](#) in conflict-affected settings. Even though considerable progress has been made over the past years, several areas of concern have been identified regarding their design and implementation globally. [The first concern is the top-down implementation](#) (donor-recipient relationship) that is enabled through NAPs and that provides little room for global women's organizations to fully take the lead. Second, [NAPs lack an intersectional approach](#) and treat the issues faced by women of the global South as homogenous, including not taking refugee, immigration, and [indigenous and racialized women's issues](#) seriously. Maria Martin de Almagro Iniesta "demonstrates how NAPs function to frame the women participant as a target of



intervention and fabrication, rather than as the agent of societal transformation”¹. She highlights the “need to create new narratives and provide new meanings to participation in post-conflict reconstruction that challenges the sexual, class and racial boundaries of the subject positions assigned to *women participants*”². Third, most NAPs commit to qualitatively quantitatively women’s representation [in the national military and peacekeeping forces, overlooking a lack of \(positive\) peace](#) and human security for women in armed and non-armed conflict countries alike. Finally, a significant ongoing concern is the absence of long-term funding commitments for NAPs implementation from international donors. For example, between 2016-2017, only 0.2 % of total bilateral aid to fragile and conflict-affected situations went directly to women’s organizations.

NAP’s best practices examples

[Paraguay’s NAP \(2016-2018\)](#): considers NAP a fundamental policy tool to eradicate gender injustices and establish sustainable peace in the country.

[Argentina’s NAP \(2015-2018\)](#) provides a holistic approach to the WPS agenda by considering women’s and girls’ issues beyond conflict, such as “socio-natural” and “socio-cultural” disasters.

[Finland’s NAP \(2018-2021\)](#): demonstrates good practice by shedding light on the link between arms proliferation and women’s security.

Canada’s NAP on WPS

Canada is committed to preventing and constructing a peaceful world by championing a global WPS agenda. The country adopted its first NAP in 2011-2016, its second NAP 2017-2022, and its third NAP is currently in progress. [Canada implements its NAP through the leadership of Global Affairs Canada](#), including the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), in partnership with Public Safety Canada (PS), Status of Women Canada (SWC), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Department of Justice. Canada’s NAP (C-NAP) closely aligns with its [Feminist International Assistance Policy \(FIAP\)](#). Civil society, particularly women’s organizations both in Canada and abroad, plays a crucial role in formulating, implementing, and monitoring the NAP on the grassroots levels. For example, while preparing the 2017-2022 Action Plan, the Canadian government consulted the [Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada](#).

¹ Maria Martin de Almagro Iniesta. 2018. “Producing Participants : Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace and Security”. *Global Society* 32 (4): 395-414. Citation p. 399-400

² *Ibid* p. 413



Canada's NAP's challenges

Despite C-NAP's positive gains, there have also been setbacks on issues such as women and Covid-19, decolonizing the WPS agenda, anti-racist and anti-oppression, WPS in non-conflict contexts, and WPS and the climate crisis, all of which received less attention. Civil society also highlights that [Canada's NAPs provide low priority to WPS agenda inside the country](#), such as Indigenous and racialized women's issues and lack [effective measuring tools](#) to assess the NAP's impact. Rebecca Tiessen and Kate Grantham highlight the need to develop a feminist methodology for data collection that focuses on “locally-based knowledge and expertise, participatory and inclusive processes for data collection, emphasis on intersectional realities, and flexible and adaptative tools and strategies”³. Further, [Canada's slow response to the needs of women and girls](#) issues in the recent crisis in Afghanistan, as well as human rights defenders working in crises situation in in Haiti, Lebanon, Tigray, Mali, Myanmar or Ukraine, has raised questions regarding Canada's commitment to the WPS agenda in protecting women and girls' rights in conflict-affected settings.

Somes C-NAP's achievements and other feminist milestones

- Led the call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies-developing a 2021-2025 Road Map.
- Co-Chaired WPS Focal Points Network with Uruguay.
- Launched Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) in June 2017.
- Spearheaded the UN's Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations.
- Launched a New Office of the Ambassador on WPS in June 2019.
- Dedicated a \$5-million envelope to support grassroots women peacebuilders.
- Launched of a global advocacy campaign by Canada's network of diplomatic missions to recognize, support, and protect the important work of women peacebuilders.
- Chaired the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for 2020.
- Led the Generation Equality Forum's (GEF) Feminist Movements and Leadership Action Coalition together with the Netherlands, Malawi, civil society and youth-led organizations.

³ Tiessen, Rebecca and Kate Grantham. 2021. “Tracking Progress on the CNAP: Why we need a Feminist Approach to Data Collection”. In *Reporting on Progress – Reflections on the Latest CNAP Report*, eds. Beth Woroniuk, Katrina Leclerc, and Kristine St-Pierre. P.8



New Frontiers of WPS implementation globally

- **Addressing women’s unpaid carework through NAPs.** Unpaid carework is the biggest barrier to women’s advancement and prevents full participation in the WPS agenda. Research shows that 606 million women provide unpaid care on a full-time basis compared to 41 million men, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened it.
- **Combatting violence against women and girls.** 243 million women aged 15-49 experienced GBV before the pandemic, and the COVID-19 have exacerbated this.
- **Developing concrete NAPs impact measuring tools** to bolster the measurability of WPS outcomes.
- **Applying an intersectional approach while designing, formulating, and monitoring & evaluating NAPs.** Indigenous and racialized women's agendas (poverty, inequality, health crisis, unemployment, unaffordable housing, and childcare) are still underrepresented on NAPs.
- **Making NAPs on WPS bottom-up.** Non-hierarchical relationships between donor and receiving countries and making.

Links to WPS Resources (ctrl + clic)

[Canada’s National Action Plan 2017-2022](#)

[UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years](#)

[Gender, race, class and WPS security](#)

[Women Peace and Security in Action](#)

[Making the WPS Agenda Local](#)

[Feminist Policy](#)

[Feminism and International Feminist Foreign Policy](#)

[National Action Plans and Why do they Matter](#)

[Making War safe for women? National Action Plans and the militarization of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda](#)

[A Guide to Implementing UNSCR 1325](#)

[Reporting progress on Canada’s NAP](#)