



WOMEN AT THE FRONTLINES OF PEACE:

25 Years of the WPS Agenda
in UN Peacekeeping



This report presents a reflection on 25 years of the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in UN Peacekeeping operations, focusing on women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace and political processes, and women's meaningful participation in UN Peacekeeping.

COVER PHOTO

Guettel Moiba Esther Adrienne,
Central African Republic, February 2019

For the first time in the history of the Central African Republic, four women served as delegates in the formal peace talks in neighbouring Sudan between the government and armed groups to end the conflict in the country. Guettel Moiba Esther Adrienne, representing an armed group, participated in the negotiations and was signatory to the Political Accord for Peace and Reconciliation. Three other women also participated in the peace negotiations as government representatives.

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FOREWORD

For over 75 years, UN Peacekeeping has operated in some of the world's most complex and fragile environments, where gender inequality is most acute, yet where the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda holds transformative potential. As we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on WPS, it remains a political and strategic imperative, central to the success of peacekeeping operations and the pursuit of inclusive, sustainable peace.

Across missions, peacekeepers have engaged local women and girls, partnered with women's organizations and networks, protected civilians, addressed conflict-related sexual violence, upheld human rights, and promoted women's meaningful participation in peace and political processes, and transitions. Efforts to increase women's representation in peacekeeping have strengthened trust, community engagement, and threat response. From disarmament and reintegration to civilian protection and security sector reform, gender-responsive leadership and strategies are now embedded across all mandates.

The WPS agenda's four pillars, participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery, are mutually reinforcing. Women's leadership enhances conflict prevention and protection efforts, while protecting their rights enables full, equal, and meaningful participation.

Women peacekeepers, civilian and uniformed—play a vital role in fulfilling these mandates. Yet, challenges persist: a global backlash against gender equality, intensifying armed conflicts, entrenched patriarchal norms, humanitarian crises, geopolitical divisions, and a culture of impunity that undermines international law and human rights.

Despite these obstacles, UN Peacekeeping remains resolute. Personnel across missions continue to promote women's participation in political processes, protect them from violations, and support gender-responsive institutions and policies. Strategic partnerships with civil society, women's networks, and national actors are essential to these efforts.



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Central African Republic, Bambari (Ouaka prefecture), 18 December 2024: Women involved in politics have held talks with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix. According to the President of the platform, Marie-Francine Banninga, the actions of the Mission and those of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have made a major contribution to the return of security and social cohesion in the region.



This report highlights progress, acknowledges persistent challenges, and calls for renewed commitment, focusing on women's participation in peace and political processes, and in UN Peacekeeping efforts. Across our areas of operation, we have seen meaningful gains. In the Central African Republic, peacekeepers have supported electoral processes and increased women's participation as voters and candidates. In Lebanon, missions have engaged women peacebuilders and supported gender mainstreaming within the Lebanese Armed Forces. In Cyprus, Kosovo, and Abyei, initiatives have helped women bridge divides, build trust, and lead peace efforts. In South Sudan, peacekeepers have supported women's involvement in the transitional process. In Mali, prior to drawdown, our efforts contributed to increased representation in peace monitoring mechanisms. In Liberia, where the mission closed in 2018, peacekeeping facilitated elections that led to the historic election of Africa's first female president.

To fulfil the promise of Resolution 1325, we must scale up our efforts, mobilize political will, allocate adequate resources, and ensure that women lead the way in shaping peace and security. Only then can we build a more just, inclusive, and peaceful world.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix

Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peace Operations

And let us not forget the ones
who have carried peace quietly through the fire.

The women
whose hands mend what war has torn.
Who rebuild homes from memory,
raise children between checkpoints,
and hold their families like nations.

Because peace has always known a woman's name
spoken in the way she chooses courage
over collapse,
again and again.

So today, I speak peace into the bones of this world
into the rubble,
into the rage,
into the ruins.

Because if war teaches us how to shatter,
then peace must teach us how to stay.

To stay soft.
To stay human.
To stay.



*From 'Peace is a Verb'.
A poem by Maryam Bukar Hassan—
UN Global Advocate for Peace*

INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the Security Council recognized for the first time the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls, laying down the foundation for a transformative vision: one in which women's leadership is a cornerstone of peace, and where women are safe, empowered, and equal. This vision, embedded in UNSCR 1325 and nine subsequent resolutions, formed the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, providing a path for UN Peacekeeping to advance gender equality and women's rights, thereby shaping a landscape that prevents conflict and sustains peace. From monitoring ceasefires and peace agreements to demining, protecting civilians, and supporting inclusive political processes, peacekeeping mandates have evolved to be more integrated and gender-responsive. This evolution has been central to advancing the WPS agenda.

Today, escalating geopolitical divisions challenge the global commitment to multilateralism and gender equality. A concerning push-back against gender equality and women's rights threatens to erode hard-won gains. Conflicts have evolved into more multifaceted and destructive forms, disproportionately impacting women and girls. Amid these challenges, global efforts persist with renewed urgency. The commitment to gender equality remains vital, recognizing that women and girls are not peripheral to peace and security, but essential. Their inclusion is not optional, but fundamental to building lasting solutions in increasingly complex and violent conflicts.

For UN Peacekeeping, the last decade marked an increase in the prioritization of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This includes supporting the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in peace and political processes, strengthening prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence, promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls, and increasing the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping. Yet, how far have we truly come? And what remains needed to move forward?

Twenty-five years on, these questions continue to echo within UN corridors, among Member States, across practitioner networks, and in the lived experiences of women and girls worldwide. This report offers a focused reflection that answers one part of the question: How has UN Peacekeeping supported WPS implementation in the contexts where it operates, particularly in promoting women's participation in peace and political processes, and why was the role of women peacekeepers integral?

Based on interviews conducted in 2025, this report builds on research with reflections and insights of UN personnel, women leaders, and civil society actors across various conflict and post-conflict settings where peacekeeping has a footprint. Limitations include gaps in data availability and restricted access to historical information, including the evolving positions of Member States.

This report focuses on advances in women's participation and the role of women peacekeepers in UN peacekeeping operations over the past 25 years, and it is important to situate this focus within the broader Women, Peace, and Security agenda. The WPS agenda is grounded in four interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars - participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery - which collectively shape how peacekeeping missions deliver on their mandates and support the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and gender equality. This report does not examine all aspects of that agenda, including critical areas such as conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), gender-based violence (GBV) more broadly, or sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), which may be addressed by DPO in future reports. The choice to focus here on participation and women in peacekeeping should be understood as a scoping decision rather than a reflection of hierarchy or relative importance. At the same time, it is important to recognise that participation and protection are deeply interconnected: meaningful participation in peace and political processes contributes to improved protection outcomes, while protection from violence is essential to enabling participation. Recognising these linkages is critical to understanding how peacekeeping advances the WPS agenda.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first UN peacekeeping missions, starting with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East in 1948, were primarily designed as neutral monitoring forces to maintain ceasefires and peace agreements. These early missions were overwhelmingly male-dominated, reflecting global military structures and societal gender norms of the mid-20th century. Early peacekeeping efforts generally did not examine the differing impacts of conflict on women and men. Women's roles were often invisible or relegated to civilian spheres, and peacekeepers seldom engaged with local women or incorporated gender-sensitive approaches. Missions like the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Suez Crisis (1956) and the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960) illustrate early peacekeeping operations where gender considerations were largely absent. However, in many peacekeeping settings, women still engaged in informal peacebuilding efforts, such as negotiating ceasefires at local levels, rebuilding communities, and advocating for reconciliation. These roles, though crucial, were rarely formalized, recognized or supported by international mechanisms.

The emergence of gender perspectives in international peace and security started to take shape a few decades later, triggered by influential global events and instruments. Among these was the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna that emphasized women's rights as human rights and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, further with the Platform for Action that recognized the need for women's participation in peace and security, laying groundwork for future WPS development.

In the year 2000, the WPS agenda emerged from decades of feminist mobilization, peacebuilding practice, and normative advancement shaped by the armed conflicts of the 1990s.¹ Its formal inception was

marked by the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, a significant moment that recognized the differentiated and disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, and underscored their full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace processes, the prevention and protection from gender-based violence (including conflict-related sexual violence), the protection of women's rights, and post-conflict recovery and relief.² Subsequent UNSCR resolutions have progressively expanded the scope of WPS and reinforced normative commitments. Additionally, in a momentous decision on 2 July 2010, the General Assembly in resolution A/64/289 decided to establish, as a composite entity, a United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, to be known as UN Women. Since its early adoption, the WPS agenda has transformed UN Peacekeeping mandates, from a complete absence of gender provisions prior to 2000, to generic references in the early 2000s, and ultimately to the integration of comprehensive gender language and dedicated paragraphs in mission mandates. As of 2025, the WPS agenda continues to gain both normative and operational significance, with gender provisions included in 55 percent of UN Peace Operations mandates. This means that 6 out of the 11 active missions explicitly incorporate gender-specific mandated tasks and have implemented these mandates across their areas of operation.

This evolution reflects a growing political and strategic commitment to the WPS agenda, particularly in peacekeeping contexts. Key initiatives such as the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P); the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan and its Clarion Call to UN leadership; the Gender-Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations Policy; the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (UGPS); the Policy on United Nations Field Missions: Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and the Women Peace and Security Humanitarian Compact all reinforce this commitment. The Call to Action on Women Transforming Peace and Security, launched on the 20th anniversary of the WPS agenda, underscores women's leadership and agency in peace and security.



On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, urging an enhanced role for women in preventing conflict, promoting peace and assisting in post-conflict reconstruction within the UN operations.

II. THE EVOLUTION OF WPS IN PEACEKEEPING MANDATES

a. 2000 – 2004: Laying the Groundwork: Adoption and Early Development of the WPS Agenda

This period begins with the adoption of the landmark UNSCR 1325, which laid the foundation for WPS Agenda. Following its adoption, UN peace operations began gradually incorporating WPS priorities into their mandates. One of the earliest examples occurred in 2000 with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) under UNSCR 1332, which introduced gender-sensitive language acknowledging the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls in the region. Another example came in 2003 with UNSCR 1509 on the United Nations Mission in

Liberia (UNMIL), requesting the adoption of a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation (DDRR) programme that considered the special needs of child combatants and women.

By the end of 2004, only 4 out of 17 active UN missions (24 per cent) had incorporated minor mentions of WPS language in their mandates (MINUSTAH in Haiti, MONUC in DRC, ONUB in Burundi and UNOCI in Ivory Coast). These references were generally brief, often limited to one or two paragraphs, and focused narrowly on specific elements of the WPS agenda, such as women's participation in peace and political processes, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), and support for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). This limited and generic integration made it difficult to translate commitments into concrete actions, as mandates lacked clear guidance and accountability mechanisms³. This trend reflects the early efforts to incorporate UNSCR 1325 into the operational framework of UN Peace Operations.

b. 2005 – 2010: Growing Commitments: Institutionalizing WPS in UN Peace Operation Mandates

2005 marks a leap in the increase in integration of the WPS agenda in mission mandates. By that year, eight out of the 17 active missions had incorporated WPS priorities in their mandates (47 per cent of the mission). This includes United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) which for the first time since its institution in 1964 included WPS language in its UNSCR 1604 (2005), particularly related to Sexual exploitation and Abuse. Another example occurs in the United Nations Operations in Côte D'Ivoire (UNOCI) through its UNSCR 1609 (2005), underlining the importance of expertise for gender and WPS integration.

This period also saw a pivotal expansion of the WPS agenda, with the adoption of three landmark resolutions that were built on the foundation of UNSCR 1325. UNSCR 1820 (2008) recognized sexual violence as a tactic of war, demanding protection for women and girls and accountability for perpetrators. A year later, UNSCR 1888 (2009) reinforced



24 September 2009: Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, speaks at an event on "Peace and Security through Women's Leadership: Acting on 1325 and Climate Change".

this commitment by establishing a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and deploying expert teams to support prevention and response efforts. The resolution also requested the deployment of Women Protection Advisors to Peace Operations. Meanwhile, UNSCR 1889 (2009) shifted the focus toward post-conflict recovery, emphasizing the need for women's active participation and calling for measurable indicators to track progress on WPS commitments and UNSCR 1960 (2010) introduced mechanisms to monitor and report conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), including listing parties credibly suspected of committing it.

c. 2011 – 2016: Advancing WPS Implementation: Normative Consolidation and Operational Peak

During this period, the WPS agenda saw significant advancement through the adoption of several key UN Security Council Resolutions. UNSCR 2106 (2013) reinforced accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence, and engagement of men and boys in the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). UNSCR 2122 (2013) addressed persistent barriers to women's participation in peace processes and called for more robust gender analysis. UNSCR 2242 (2015) catalysed institutional reform by mandating the integration of gender mainstreaming across UN entities. It also established the Informal Expert Group to support implementation of the WPS agenda and specifically called for a doubling of the number of women in peacekeeping operations, with a particular focus on promoting women's access to leadership positions.

These normative developments coincided with the growing integration of WPS language into peacekeeping mandates, particularly during a period when several UN peacekeeping operations—many still active in 2025—were being established. As a result, many missions incorporated WPS provisions from the outset. This peaked in 2016, when 69 per cent of active missions (11 out of 16) included gender and WPS components addressing various thematic areas across the four WPS pillars. For instance, UNSCR 2155 (2014), which extended the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), was among the first to explicitly encourage troop and police contributing countries to take concrete measures to increase the participation of women in military, police, and civilian components of peace operations. This progress, along with subsequent advancements, was directly influenced by the calls made to troop- and police-contributing countries in UNSCRs 2122, 2106, and 2242, marking a significant step forward toward achieving gender parity in UN Peace Operations.



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A women representative speaks during a one-day outreach event organized by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on 4 March 2013, in the county's Jalle district, to talk about the role of UNMISS and the Jonglei peace agreement signed in 2012.

d. 2017 – 2025: Navigating Challenges: WPS in a Changing Peacekeeping Landscape

The current phase of UN peace operations is characterized by a gradual reduction in the number of active missions, with only eleven remaining as of 2025. Despite this contraction, the integration of WPS language remains significant. Six of the eleven missions, representing 55%, include explicit WPS provisions in their mandates. The remaining five missions (UNMOGIP, UNTSO, UNDOF, MINURSO, and UNMIK) while lacking specific WPS language, still adhere to UN-wide policies and strategies, including the United Nations Zero-Tolerance Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the 2020 United Nations Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and the UN Gender Parity Strategy (as mandated in UNSCR 2538). Missions like UNMIK, although not mandated with explicit gender or WPS language, nevertheless implement gender-related functions through dedicated structures such as gender units.



Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, briefs the Security Council meeting on the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 7 July 2021.

One notable example of comprehensive WPS integration is the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). UNSCR 2765 (2024) calls for the mainstreaming of gender considerations throughout MONUSCO's mandate and directs the mission to support the Government of the DRC in creating conditions conducive to women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and security processes. The resolution also emphasizes the need for enhanced gender expertise to support the implementation of mandated tasks, positioning MONUSCO as one of the most robust missions in terms of WPS integration.

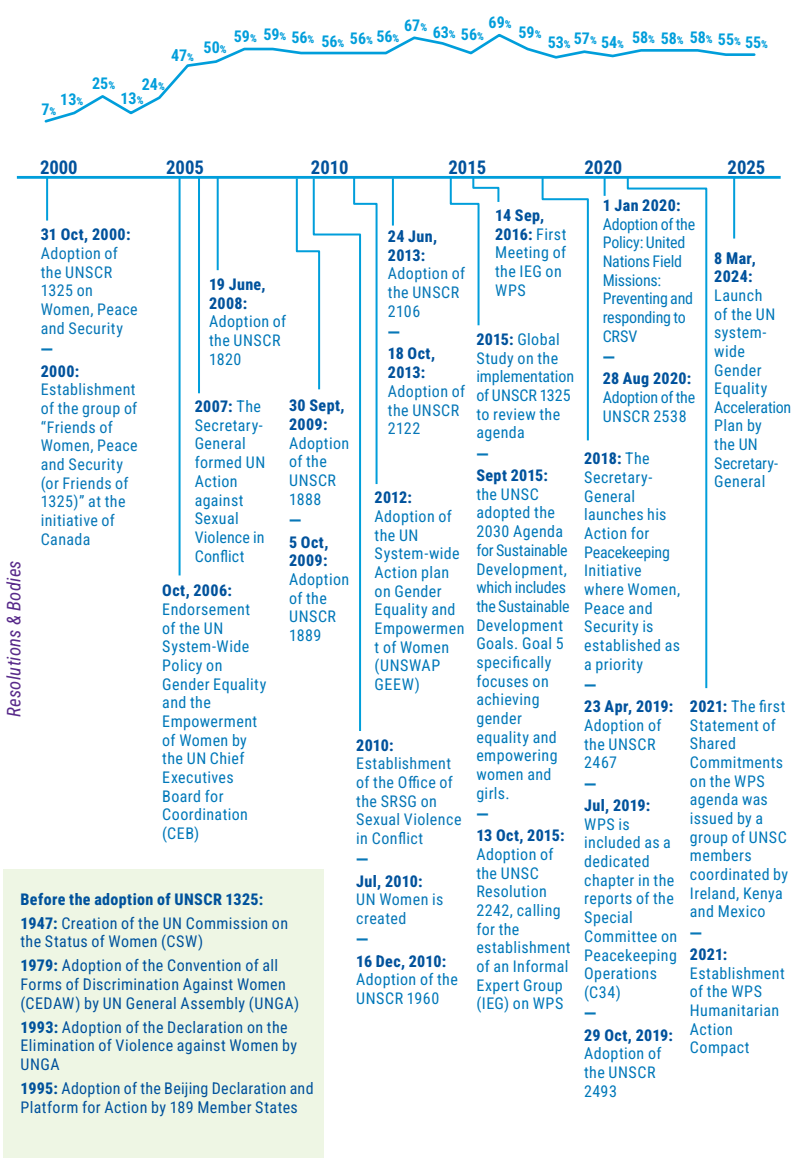
This timeline analyses how the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has been integrated into UN Security Council mandates for peacekeeping operations since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, focusing on the evolution of gender provisions across the four WPS pillars: Participation, Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery, including Gender Parity and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.¹

At this pivotal moment, it is crucial to evaluate how WPS language translates into tangible impact on the ground—and to recognize that its absence could jeopardize hard-won progress. The following section explores key areas where UN Peace Operations mandates have contributed to the meaningful implementation of the WPS agenda across diverse mission contexts.

¹ The analysis covered 32 active missions between 2000 and 2025, spanning 16 missions in Africa, 5 in the Middle East and West Asia, 5 in Europe, 4 in Asia and the Pacific, and 2 in the Americas. This effort aims to reflect on progress made, highlight good practices, and examine the implications of both the inclusion and absence of WPS language in peace operations. This analysis uses the data from the UN Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs' Security Council Affairs Division (UN DPPA SCAD) here, as well as internal interviews and information from the UN Department of Peace Operations' Gender Unit (UNDPO GU).

Timeline: 25 Years of Women, Peace, and Security in UN Security Council Resolutions

Percentage of UN Peace Operations' Mandates that include Gender Provisions





©UNFICYP/Peter Šulgan

On 5 March 2024, as part of UNFICYP's 'Peacebuilding in Divided Societies' programme, this International Women's Day workshop brought together young women and men from across the divide to engage in dialogue on gender equality and women's rights, contributing to efforts to strengthen the participation of women and youth in peace and security.

“Cyprus is a long-standing mission, and there has often been a tendency to engage with the same actors. Over the past several years, we have deliberately shifted toward a more decentralized approach, prioritizing issues of shared concern and moving beyond traditional peacekeeping narratives. This has enabled us to broaden our engagement, amplify a wider range of women’s voices, and create inclusive spaces where their perspectives on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) are heard and valued.”

—Lauren McAlister, Gender Affairs Officer in UNFICYP.

III. TURNING WORDS INTO ACTION: THE UN PEACEKEEPING ROLE IN ADVANCING THE WPS AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION IN THEIR AREAS OF OPERATION

1. Cyprus – United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), 1964–present

On an island long divided by decades of conflict between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, UNFICYP was established in 1964 to supervise ceasefire lines, maintain a buffer zone, carry out humanitarian activities, and support the Secretary-General's good offices mission. Over time, the mandate gradually evolved to integrate the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. A pivotal moment came in 2018 with UNSCR 2398, which introduced comprehensive, context-specific language. This shift moved gender from the margins to the centre of the mission's work.

UNFICYP plays a vital role in bridging divides and fostering inter-communal initiatives with women's groups from both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities—efforts that build trust, promote dialogue and understanding, and advocate for women's meaningful participation in the peace process. UNFICYP has also deepened its outreach, fostering dialogue and cooperation across broader demographics of the population. For many participants, these initiatives marked their first meaningful interaction with individuals from the other community. The mission's engagement expanded to include women involved in local production, youth development, and cultural activities—with a strong focus on empowering young women and men through mentorship and leadership programs, particularly those promoting gender-inclusive peacebuilding.

Cypriot-owned and leader-led, the Cyprus settlement talks initially lacked a formal mechanism for women's participation or civil society engagement. However, with support from the Secretary-General's mission of good offices and UNFICYP, WPS initiatives gained traction. Women's groups and activists were vocal in highlighting the disconnect between their grassroots peacebuilding efforts and the official track 1 negotiations. In response, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality, established in 2015 with facilitation from the UN good offices mission and UNFICYP—developed and presented an action plan to the leaders. This plan, requested by the Security Council through its resolutions on UNFICYP, outlined concrete steps to ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in the settlement process. The action plan marked a significant milestone, offering a framework to integrate women's voices, include civil society, and embed gender perspectives into political dialogue.

UNFICYP has also been at the forefront of advancing the UN's system wide strategy on gender parity. In 2019, it became the first peacekeeping mission led by a woman, with female leadership across both its police and military components—including the Force Commander. While women had previously held leadership roles within all mission components, this milestone marked a powerful demonstration of the impact of an all-female leadership dynamic. Beyond promoting women in leadership, UNFICYP continues to cultivate a mission environment that supports the effective and substantive participation of its female peacekeepers.

2. Lebanon - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), 1978–present

Established in 1978, UNIFIL's mandate originally focused on confirming Israeli withdrawal and supporting the Lebanese authority in the south of Lebanon. Over time, it expanded to include monitoring the implementation of UNSCR 1701 (2006). After four decades of operation and following the gradual inclusion of gender related language



25 March 2025: Hanan Saleh (left) and Louba Ezzedine, at Sour Beach near their offices in southern Lebanon where they both work as mediators in their communities.

in UNIFIL's mandate, a major milestone was reached with the adoption of UNSCR 2433 (2018), which introduced a standalone WPS paragraph, calling for gender integration across operations and support to the Lebanese authorities in ensuring women's participation in peace and security. The resolution also welcomed Lebanon's first National Action Plan on WPS, adopted in 2019 with support from UNIFIL, civil society, and the National Commission for Lebanese Women, following extensive consultations with women's groups in the south.

The inclusion of WPS language in UNIFIL's mandate enabled formal engagement with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) on WPS issues, contributing to supporting the Gender Department within the LAF, developing a LAF Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, and the deployment and training of gender focal point officers across LAF units in UNIFIL's Area of Operation. Despite the recent escalation of hostilities in 2023-2024 and Israel's continued military presence in some areas in southern Lebanon, UNIFIL continued protecting women and girls by facilitating movement and shelter and maintaining dialogue with local women. UNIFIL also expanded its outreach through

the Female Assessment/Analysis and Support Team (FAST), within UNIFIL's Gender Affairs Office, which is composed of trained uniformed and civilian personnel who are on call to provide a female presence in culturally sensitive settings.

“The moment the ceasefire was announced and we returned, I called everyone to find out what their needs were. Many wanted to talk. They wanted to share what happened during the war - their displacement, how they waited in line, how they argued and made up. They have so many stories inside them that they want to let out.”

**Lubna Ezzedine, local peacebuilder based in Tyre, Lebanon.
From Through Her Lens: Women Rising for Peace exhibit, 2025.**

UNIFIL also advanced the WPS agenda through platforms such as the Gender Working Groups, which brings diverse Lebanese women's organizations together, and the Women's Mediation Network, launched with UN Women to foster civic engagement. Campaigns such as “Women Can Do It” used storytelling and theater to promote leadership by linking cultural narratives with strategic problem-solving. These efforts strengthened women's political literacy, supported their participation in decision-making, and were reinforced by training in mediation, trauma recovery, and leadership[3]. Additionally, partly as a result of these efforts, municipalities started establishing women's committees in municipal boards.

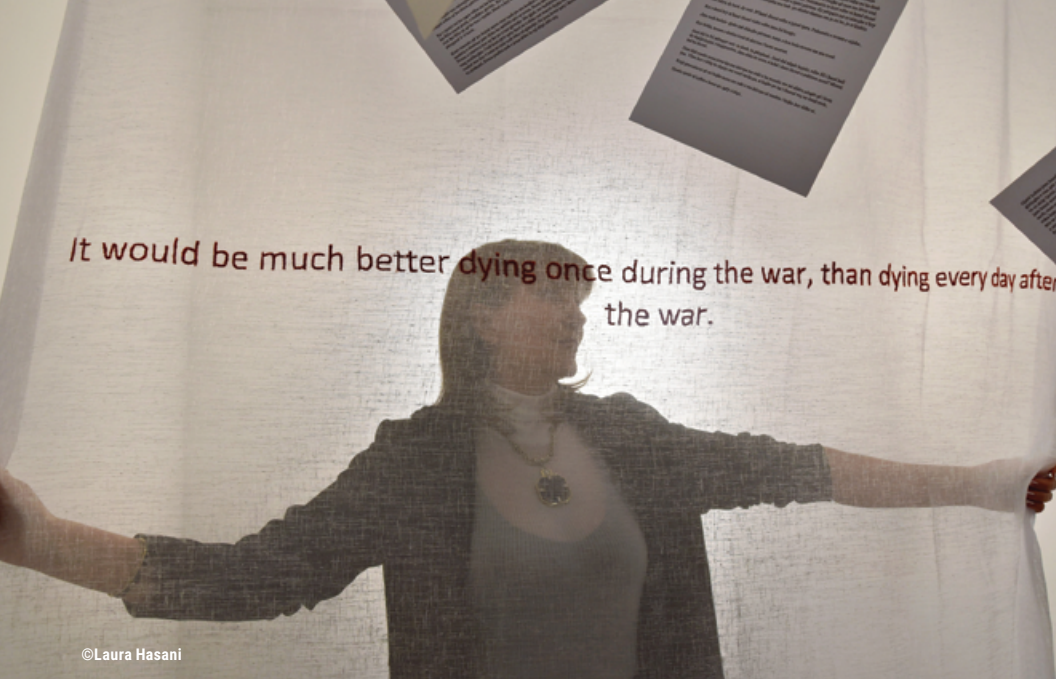
UNIFIL's mandate has been renewed until December 2026, after which the mission will start its drawdown. In that context, the mission is intensifying its collaboration and coordination with the LAF Gender Department to build the capacity of LAF personnel. It is also actively engaging with the National Commission for Lebanese Women and local municipalities to promote women's participation. In the context of the forthcoming UNIFIL drawdown, it is crucial to ensure a gender-responsive transition that keeps the WPS agenda at the forefront, safeguarding the progress achieved and protecting the human rights of women and girls in southern Lebanon.

3. Kosovo² - United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), 1999–present

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 in June 1999. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the Mission is mandated to support the overall objective of ensuring conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo. Since its establishment, the Mission's role has evolved in response to changes on the ground and has adapted its profile, capacities, and resources to ensure positive impact with strengthened focus on the promotion of security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo, and intercommunity trust-building. Although UNMIK's mandate does not explicitly reference the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, its broad provisions, reinforced by UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, support the Mission's engagement in advancing the WPS agenda. Despite operating in an environment marked by inter-ethnic tensions, the Mission has consistently used advocacy, trust-building, and strategic partnerships to help advance gender equality and embed WPS principles across its operations.

To address the persistent exclusion of women from peace processes, UNMIK has prioritized strengthening their visibility, agency, and influence in governance through targeted capacity-building, strategic advisory support, and inclusive engagement with a broad range of stakeholders. This approach seeks to expand participation and ensure that gender perspectives are integrated across decision-making and peace dialogue platforms. Central to these efforts are partnerships with women's organizations, civil society local institutions, and strategic actors such as UN Women, the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the European Union Office in Kosovo and the European Union Special Representative in Kosovo, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo, and the Council of Europe.

² All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



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“Long before the Women, Peace and Security agenda existed, women were making and maintaining peace. Had the world embraced the values of this agenda earlier, how many wars, conflicts, and genocides might have been prevented?”

—Atifete Jahjaga, served as the first woman President of Kosovo from 2011 to 2016.

From Through Her Lens: Women Rising for Peace exhibit, 2025.

Through these collaborations, UNMIK supports women's leadership and advocacy efforts, contributing to representation that goes beyond quota compliance and ensuring women's sustained presence in public discourse. In parallel, recognizing the persistence of gender-based violence as a barrier to equality and participation, the Mission has provided technical assistance to strengthen legislation, policy, and institutional responses to gender-based violence.

4. The Democratic Republic of the Congo United Nations Organization - the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), 2010–present

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has endured deep-rooted conflict fueled by political instability and ethnic tensions, resulting in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. In response, the United Nations established the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in 1999. Following the country's first democratic elections in 2006, on 1 July 2010, MONUC was renamed MONUSCO to reflect the new phase reached in the country, with a mandate for protection of civilians, stabilization and peace consolidation.

Although the mission—originally established as MONUC—predates UN Security Council Resolution 1325, its structured engagement with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda began around 2006, coinciding with support for the DRC's first democratic elections. Early UN resolutions referencing local engagement gave the mission the ability to support grassroots initiatives, including the DRC's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and women's electoral participation. During this period, the mission played a pivotal role in promoting women's participation as voters and candidates, offering capacity-building programs and civic education to amplify women's voices in the political transition. MONUSCO's initial mandate incorporated the WPS agenda under its protection pillar, as a

response to widespread conflict-related sexual violence. Over time, WPS became more deeply integrated into the mission's operations, shaping its approach to peacebuilding and community engagement.

Since 2018, MONUSCO has helped establish networks of women mediators, now active across multiple provinces, supporting local conflict resolution and early warning systems. More recently, MONUSCO has embraced themes like positive masculinity and male allyship, working with the security sector and other national actors—including former combatants—to promote gender equality and challenge harmful norms. In partnership with the corrections system, MONUSCO supported efforts to respond to sexual violence in detention centers, by facilitating sensitization campaigns, staff training, and survivor-centered support mechanisms.

During the December 2023 general elections, MONUSCO collaborated with UN agencies and national partners to promote women's political participation, including through training programs for women candidates, advocacy for gender quotas, and public awareness campaigns. To combat hate speech and misinformation—often targeting women candidates—MONUSCO engaged and trained women leaders, journalists, influencers, and young academics, while also leveraging community radio stations to strengthen inclusive and informed communication. The appointment of Ms. Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the first female Prime Minister in the DRC, marked a historic achievement. Following the latest government reshuffle on 8 August, women's representation increased to 33% (18 women of the 54 ministers) from 27% in the previous administration. Similarly, women's representation in the National Assembly increased to 13.2 % of the seats from 10.3 % during the 2018-2023 term.

In response to the recent escalation of violence in eastern DRC, MONUSCO adopted an agile and inclusive approach that elevated women's voices in peace efforts. The mission helped launch a Women's Advocacy Task Force in January 2025, bringing together



©MONUSCO Myriam Asmani

Walikale women dance during the inauguration of MONUSCO in North Kivu, the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 9 March 2011.

over 80 women leaders and civil society actors from across the eastern provinces. The taskforce drafted and submitted an advocacy note to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DRC, with recommendations for the African Union, regional organizations, the United Nations, and neighboring states, including Rwanda. The note called for the effective inclusion of women in ongoing peace processes. This initiative highlights MONUSCO's commitment to empowering women as key contributors to peace, amid crises.

Overall, the mission has evolved from supporting isolated gender initiatives to becoming a key partner in implementing UNSCR 1325, working across sectors, institutions, and communities to ensure women are not only protected but empowered as agents of peace and change.

5. Abyei - United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), 2011–present

The Abyei Area is a disputed region between Sudan and South Sudan. On 27 June 2011, the Security Council authorized the deployment of a peacekeeping force under UNSCR 1990 (2011) to provide security and protect civilians. Over time, the mandate expanded to include, *inter alia*, border monitoring and support for verification mechanisms. Due to its unique nature as a military peacekeeping mission, UNISFA was not initially structured to include a gender advisor or substantive civilian components. However, the mandate's gradual inclusion of WPS was instrumental in shifting priorities and allowed the mission to progressively introduce gender advisory capacity. The mission also gradually established a Community Liaison Office to facilitate inclusive engagement at the local level.

Initially, gender-related activities were limited to soft interventions, with minimal attention to women's meaningful participation in political processes. Over time, both mandates and mission activities began to emphasize the political significance of the WPS agenda, presenting women as powerful agents of change. Resolution 2550 (2020), for example, called on the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan “to take steps to implement and facilitate confidence-building measures among the respective communities in the Abyei Area, providing for the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women [...]”.

Across its activities, UNISFA has actively worked to elevate women as changemakers in local peacebuilding processes. With its support, one of the most notable outcomes has been the sharp increase in women's participation at the biannual migration conference between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities—from 19 per cent in 2023 to 41 per cent as of June 2025. This shift toward inclusive dialogue and gender-responsive peacebuilding did not happen organically; it was the result of sustained advocacy and capacity-building efforts aimed at deepening understanding of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) principles among both men and women. UNISFA also supports the



©UNISFA/Susanna Mehtonen

3 June, 2025: Woman leader participating on the first day of the first ever Joint Ngok Dinka– Misseriya Women's Conference in Abyei organized by the United Nations Interim Force in Abyei (UNISFA).

growth of women's organizations through structural and financial assistance, including the construction of dedicated office spaces for women-led groups to enhance visibility, legitimacy, and economic sustainability. These organizations have emerged as vital civil society actors, amplifying women's voices and influence in the peace-building landscape.

UNISFA also works to dispel misconceptions about women's educational qualifications as a barrier to participation in peace processes.

“People often say, ‘We will bring women forward once they are educated,’ but no one asks whether the men have formal education or have been trained. That double standard is unacceptable. I always tell women, don’t let men question your credentials; ask them to show their papers instead. Peace negotiations often focus on practical issues, such as personal security and cattle movement, things that don’t require degrees, but rather lived experience. Women know these things because they live them. They should speak up, participate meaningfully, and never let lack of education be used as a reason to silence them.”

**Susanna Mehtonen, Gender Affairs Officer,
United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)**

While notable progress has been made—particularly in raising community awareness and promoting inclusion—the implementation of UNSCR 1325 remains a persistent challenge in Abyei's complex and politically sensitive environment. Furthermore, additional resources and efforts are needed to strengthen civilian-military coordination within the mission, ensuring that gender considerations and activities are fully operationalized. Despite these challenges, UNISFA continues to drive structural change through strategic partnerships, grassroots engagement, and advocacy rooted in the principles of the WPS agenda.

6. South Sudan - United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), 2011–present

The Republic of South Sudan gained independence on 9 July 2011, following a six-year peace process initiated by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. To support peaceful transitions and state-building, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) through Resolution 1996. This resolution called for, *inter alia*, support for peace consolidation to foster long-term state-building and economic development, and assistance to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan in fulfilling its responsibilities for conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution, as well as the protection of civilians. It also emphasized the development of national capacity to provide security, establish the rule of law, and strengthen the security and justice sectors.

Despite these efforts, renewed conflict erupted within the security sector in 2013, prompting further peace processes facilitated by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to bring parties together. In response, UN Security Council Resolution 2155 (2014) authorized UNMISS to use all necessary means to protect civilians, monitor and investigate human rights violations, support humanitarian assistance, and promote the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement—while reaffirming the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to protect its own civilians.

Throughout the conflict, women and girls in South Sudan have borne disproportionate impacts—including the loss of family members, assets, and civilian livelihoods; displacement both within and beyond national borders; exclusion from peace and political processes; and widespread sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. These challenges, compounded by pre-existing gender inequality and discrimination rooted in socio-cultural norms, have further deepened their vulnerability.

In South Sudan, women have emerged as credible and powerful agents of change in shaping South Sudan's peace processes. Their visibility



22 September 2025: Torit celebrate International Peace Day with civil society calling for insecurity to be addressed. An event organized by Eastern Equatoria State, UNMISS and its broadcaster Radio Miraya in South Sudan.

is evident throughout periods of conflict from the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) in 2015 to the Revitalized ARCSS in 2018. The active involvement of women leaders as observers, negotiators, and ultimately as signatories to the R-ARCSS successfully culminated into the incorporating of aspirational language aimed at accelerating women's participation by prescribing 35% representation quota in the pre-and transitional governance structures (i.e. mechanisms, institutions, and protection frameworks). Through High-Level Revitalization Forums women from civil society, community-based organizations, and elected offices—mobilized across all levels to advocate for calm, reconciliation, and peace. As at 2021, women's representation in i) Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMV) was (41%); ii) the Reconstituted

Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) (35 %) and occupied strategic leadership positions in government including (Vice president, Minister of Defense and Minister Foreign Affairs). This has since changed following ongoing politico security complexities in South Sudan.

Exercising its good offices, UNMISS has played a pivotal role in amplifying women's voices by facilitating dialogue processes for women from Protection of Civilians sites—initially in Juba, Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBEG), and Unity, and continuing in Upper Nile to this day. These efforts have helped ensure that the disproportionate suffering of women informs political processes and peace-building efforts.

In support of R-ARCSS implementation, subsequent UNMISS mandates—including the current one, UNSCR 2779 (2025)—include strong provisions for women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation across all aspects of the mission. These mandates reflect a mission-wide commitment to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, supporting women in both civil society and national institutions.

With support from UNMISS and the UN Country Team, South Sudanese women have played a central role in raising awareness, advocating for the enforcement of the 35 percent quota for women's representation across all chapters of the R-ARCSS, and holding leaders accountable. UNMISS has facilitated connections between local women leaders and national decision-makers, amplifying their voices in peace processes and advocacy, particularly in the current phase of constitution-making and electoral processes—while continuing to support the protection of civilians' mandate.

7. Central African Republic – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), 2014–present

In response to the security and political crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) and its regional implications, the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of MINUSCA—a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, on 10 April 2014. The protection of civilians was established as its highest priority, alongside support for the political transition, humanitarian assistance, human rights promotion, justice sector reform, and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation efforts.

The integration of the WPS agenda into MINUSCA's mandate was pivotal in integrating gender perspectives across mission activities. This mandate opened pathways for engagement with government institutions, civil society, and women's groups, enabling the creation of platforms for meaningful female participation in peace and political processes. Among these was the Women's Advisory Committee, which met monthly with the mission to provide input on political and security developments. Its members became influential advocates, lobbying national and regional bodies, including the African Union, to ensure women at the grassroots level were represented in peace negotiations.

Their efforts, supported by MINUSCA and other partners, led to the inclusion of eight women in the 2019 Khartoum dialogue. In a historic milestone, a woman representing an armed group signed the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine* (APPR-RCA) for the first time, alongside 14 armed groups. Women comprised 10 per cent of the delegates, including three government representatives, three observers, and one armed group member. Their advocacy resulted in a more gender-inclusive agreement, setting the APPR-RCA apart from previous accords.

Another key grassroots initiative led by MINUSCA is the establishment of Women's Peace Circles in 2024, community-based platforms that equip women with skills in mediation, conflict resolution, and

civic leadership. These circles foster both capacity-building and economic support, allowing women to balance community leadership roles with household responsibilities. Over the past year, MINUSCA supported the creation of Peace Circles in 16 regions, strengthening local conflict mediation and advancing inclusive, community-driven peace efforts.

In elevating women's political participation, and following extensive advocacy by women leaders, the 2019 electoral code introduced a requirement for political parties to include at least 35% women candidates on their electoral lists (Article 281), laying the groundwork for durable gender inclusion in political processes. For local elections, this quota is clearly defined and enforceable, ensuring that women are not merely symbolic participants but active representatives. In response to early claims of insufficient “qualified” women to meet the quota, the Zebra List provision was introduced—mandating gender-alternating candidate rosters to guarantee equal placement of women and men on party lists. The new provision came into force in July 2024.

Following the 2020-2021 elections, the level of representation of women in Parliament increased from 8.6 per cent to 12.9 per cent. In preparation for the 2025 elections, MINUSCA has supported several initiatives to enhance women's participation. In February 2024, after years of civil society advocacy, MINUSCA and UN Women supported the Government in issuing a decree to establish and operationalize the National Parity Observatory. The Issuance of a decree (2024) and establishment of the National Parity Observatory (2025) with 11-member committee (6 women and 5 men) is a critical mechanism to ensure implementation of the parity law and mainstreaming of the WPS agenda across the Government. Currently, political momentum for its establishment has emerged, reflected in its inclusion in the new constitution. A reference to the Observatory is included in the new constitution. MINUSCA also facilitated women's voter registration. It further built the capacity of 1,020 women political candidates across 17 regional cities as of June 2025.



*“We believe in the strength of unity.
‘Nothing about us without us’, meaning
we are fully involved in the peace process
before, during and after so that we can
achieve peace in our country.”*

Miryam Djangala-Fall is a Central African activist and survivor of conflict-related sexual violence. In 2018, she founded the Movement of Survivors of Sexual Violence to support and empower other survivors. Under her leadership, the organisation has grown to over 700 members, providing care, raising awareness and advocating for justice. Miryam received the 2024 Simone Veil Prize for her dedication to survivor advocacy.

*From Through Her Lens: Women Rising for Peace
exhibit, 2025.*

IV. PROGRESS ON ADVANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

Over the past 25 years, UN Peacekeeping missions have steadily expanded their efforts to promote women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace and political processes. These efforts have included political advocacy, the strategic use of good offices, capacity building, awareness raising, and partnerships with women-led organizations and networks. Across diverse contexts, missions have worked to foster inclusive engagement and amplify the voices of women in decision-making arenas. In countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, missions have supported women's participation in ongoing political and electoral processes at the local and national level, including through legislative reforms; in implementation mechanisms on constitution making, ceasefire and transitional security arrangements monitoring and verification mechanisms, transitional governments, and other decision-making processes. In Abyei and Kosovo, they have helped local women leverage their roles to bridge divides and foster trust across communities. In Lebanon and Cyprus, community engagement initiatives have amplified women's voices in protection efforts and local governance. In missions that have closed, such as Liberia, UN peacekeeping supported the political transition and facilitated the electoral process, leading to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first female president. In Mali, peacekeeping supported legal reform and the increase in women's representation in the Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (CSA) to 38 per cent by 2022. Taken together, these examples highlight the diverse ways in which peacekeeping missions have advanced women's participation in political and peace processes. The following sections illustrate some key steps that have enabled such progress.



A woman casts her vote at a polling station in Bamako, Mali, during the presidential elections that took place on 29 July 2018.

Across its operations, UN Peacekeeping has been able to provide such support through **robust and specific WPS language in peace-keeping mandates**, including on women's participation, which is critical to leading missions' efforts in this regard. Mandate language not only strengthens cross-mission gender integration with strategic approach, planning, and dedicated capacities and resourcing, but also strengthens political positioning and engagement with host countries and national and international actors, including civil society.

Similarly, **high-level advocacy and the strategic use of good offices** have been instrumental in opening space for women's meaningful engagement in peace and political processes. Coordinated efforts with UN partners, Member States, and local and regional organizations are vital to accelerating the Women, Peace and Security agenda and increasing women's participation where it matters most. Advocacy efforts continued to be combined with **strategic communications** campaigns to contribute to the implementation of the WPS agenda, elevate the voices of women, and address misinformation and disinformation.

Partnerships and engagement with women-led organizations, grassroots movements, and civil society actors have been key drivers of progress, enabling localized and sustainable outcomes. Through **partnerships and localization** of the agenda, UN Peacekeeping has co-designed initiatives with civil society to strengthen local ownership, enhance protection and early warning mechanisms, advocate for common objectives, and embed WPS principles within national and local structures essential for long-term impact. Partnerships with women-led organizations and civil society actors have also helped build trust with communities and connect grassroots action to policy-level impact through training, funding, advisory roles, and dialogue platforms. Yet, to be effective, a locally anchored UN–civil society collaboration and partnerships must be consistent, strategic, and inclusive.

As emphasized by Maria Victoria Cabrera Balleza, Founder and CEO of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, “One of the most effective strategies has been ensuring that the resolution does not remain an abstract framework rooted in New York, but is instead meaningfully adapted and applied on the ground.”

“Reflecting on the 25 years since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, we have observed a meaningful evolution in how civil society, particularly women-led organizations, engage with UN peacekeeping operations. Women-led civil society groups are prepared to play a bridging role, helping to reframe issues that divide us and emphasize those that unify. Peacekeeping missions must intentionally foster these partnerships, not just through consultations, but by co-designing policies and platforms that elevate local perspectives. The transformative potential of civil society lies not just in its proximity to communities but in its ability to innovate, connect across borders, and reimagine peace.”

Alongside these partnerships, formal frameworks such as the **National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325** have also been a vital framework for institutionalizing women's participation in peace and security. UN missions have supported their development and implementation through consultations and technical assistance, including for national institutions. However, despite global momentum in NAP adoption, implementation remains uneven—often hindered by limited funding and lack of local ownership.

Capacity-building and technical support offered by UN Peacekeeping, including training and mentorship programs, have played a vital role in equipping women with skills in mediation, leadership, and strengthening their economic independence. Promoting positive masculinities has also contributed to creating gender champions and shifting deep-rooted narratives towards gender equality. Similarly, support for legal reforms, including embedding quotas in electoral codes, has helped facilitate women's entry into political and electoral processes. These individual and institutional gains have also been reinforced not through training but by broader community-level initiatives that expand women's participation beyond politics.

The **UN's convening power and UN Peacekeeping's ability to access remote areas** have enabled broader local-level engagement across countries. This includes creating platforms for women's participation, establishing peace circles, and activating early warning mechanisms essential for prevention, protection, and inclusion. In these areas, UN Peacekeeping has also supported women-led initiatives—such as economic empowerment projects—and amplified the voices of women from diverse and marginalized communities, strengthening their role in peacebuilding.

Additionally, UN Peacekeeping plays a critical role in **protecting civilians and promoting human rights**, which is essential to enabling women's participation. It fosters protective environments through legal frameworks, enforcement, and physical security measures, while enhancing accountability. Initiatives such as Mixed Engagement Teams

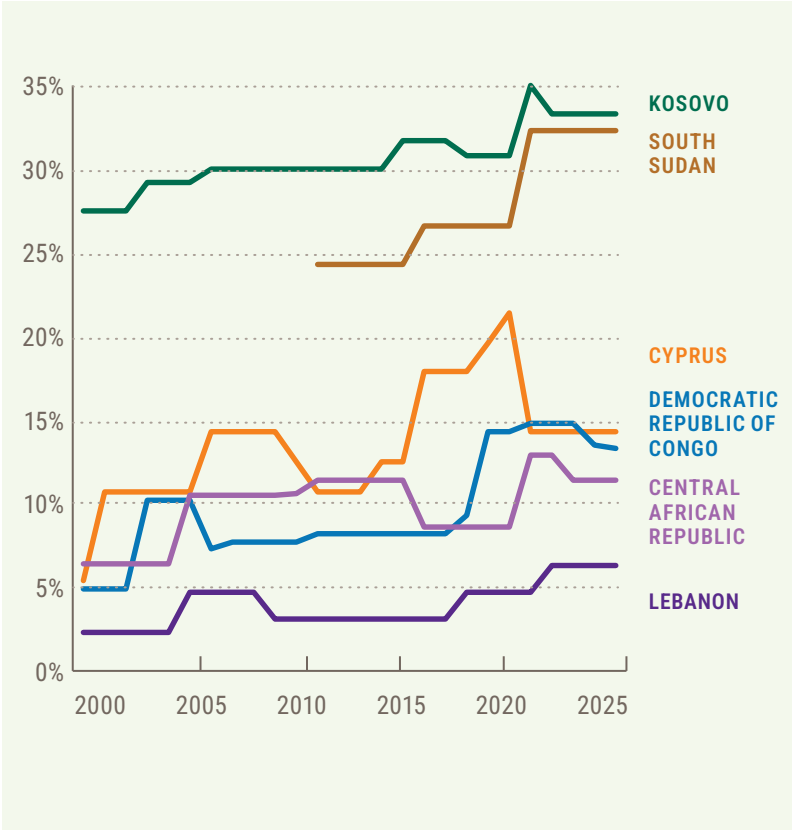
and Female Engagement Teams have built trust with communities, strengthened gender-responsive protection, and created space for women's meaningful engagement in peace dialogues, political processes, and civic life, particularly in the DRC, CAR, and Abyei.

The success of these efforts depends on the **mission's gender-responsive approach**. Key enablers include effective cross-mission coordination, the integration of gender considerations into planning and activities, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and committed gender-responsive leadership. Dedicated funding, empowered gender experts with the authority and capacity to act, and strategic engagement with stakeholders are all critical to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and enhancing women's meaningful participation.

Equally important is the use of **evidence-based approaches and gender-disaggregated data**. Data collected from various sources demonstrates steady progress in the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in peace and political processes. According to data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) Parline open database (Figure I), in UN Peace Operations contexts where missions have gender units, overall women's representation in parliamentary positions increased from 7 per cent in 2000 to 22.4 per cent in 2025, reflecting significant advancement in elected roles. Figure I also provide a breakdown by operational area, showing that progress varies across different contexts.

Additionally, data from UN Women and the UN Department of Peace Operations (Figures II and III) for 2024 and 2025 indicate that women's participation in ministries and peace implementation mechanisms remains substantial. For example, during the Post-Migration Conference in Abyei held in May 2025, which aimed to promote peaceful coexistence and improve inter-communal relations, women accounted for 41 per cent of participants. This reflects meaningful progress in women's participation in peace and political processes. However, in many cases, representation still stands below one-third of total participants.

Figure I: Women’s Parliamentary Representation in UN Peace Operations Contexts with Gender Units (2000- Jun 2025)³



³ Data from IPU: data.ipu.org/parliament. Data was compiled for the following institutions: South Sudan – Transitional National Legislative Assembly and Council of States (Since 2011); Central African Republic – National Assembly; Democratic Republic of the Congo – National Assembly and Council of States; Kosovo – National Assembly; Cyprus – House of Representatives; Lebanon – National Assembly

Figure II: Percentage of Women in Ministerial Positions in UN Peace Operations Contexts with Gender Units (Dec 2024)⁴

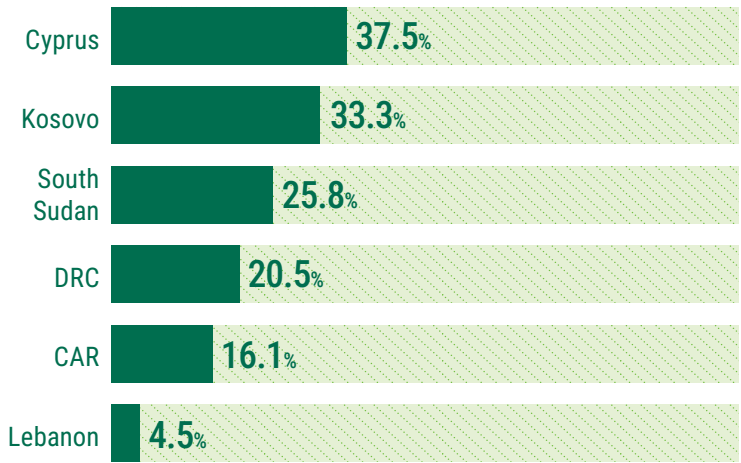
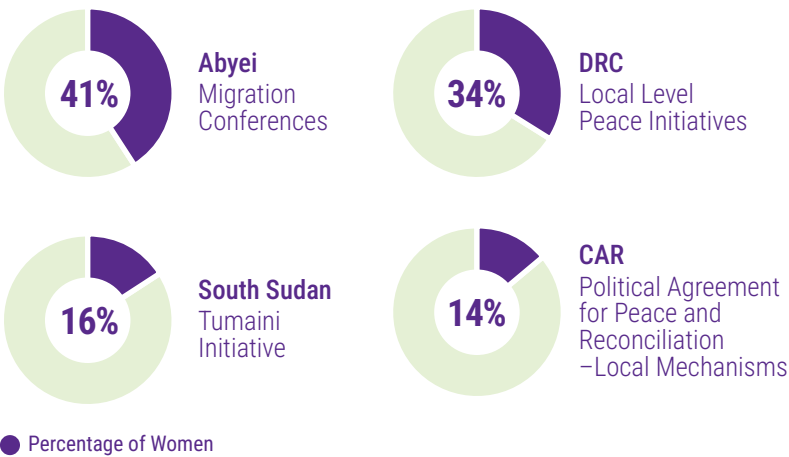


Figure III: Percentage of Women Participating in Peace Implementation Mechanisms in UN Peace Operations Contexts with Gender Units (Jun 2025)



⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Poster-Women-political-leaders-2024-en.pdf> and <https://www.equalfuture-eurasia.org/womens-representation-in-politics-and-public-administration/kosovo> latest data is Dec 2024

Despite this progress, persistent and deep-rooted barriers continue to hinder women's access to political spaces and peace tables. Entrenched gender norms, economic exclusion, and a lack of political will often result in limited and tokenistic participation, where women are either excluded from formal negotiation tables or are present but lack influence over formal decision-making processes. Many also face significant risks, such as gender-based violence and harassment. The support provided by UN Peacekeeping has also been limited at times, due to institutional challenges, including insufficient prioritization, financial restrictions, and limited gender expertise capacity.

Nonetheless, UN Peacekeeping has remained a consistent and central force in advancing women's participation in peace processes. Missions have worked to create enabling environments, advocate for inclusion, and strengthen institutional frameworks. While challenges persist, lasting progress hinges on sustained efforts to overcome barriers to ensure women not only participate but also meaningfully shape peace and political outcomes.

Ultimately, UN Peacekeeping continues to play a vital role in driving the WPS agenda forward. Its ability to deliver stronger results depends on clear mandates, host country cooperation, and sustained support from Member States. Achieving gender-responsive peacekeeping requires strategic, inclusive, and locally grounded engagement that empowers women as agents of change within their communities and beyond.

V. PROGRESS ON INCREASING WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING

Greater gender balance among peacekeepers has had a positive impact on mandate delivery. Women and men peacekeepers working side by side brings a greater diversity of perspectives. For example, women and men peacekeepers tend to pick up on different security threats and may have access to different segments of the host country population to gather information. In missions such as MONUSCO, UNFICYP and UNISFA, this has led to adapted patrol routes, better mapping of CRSV hotspots and improved early warning and prevention measures. Women peacekeepers have also been instrumental in advancing gender-responsive security interventions, for example by establishing the first all-female rapid intervention team of the CAR prison service, an area typically dominated by men.

In 2018, DPO launched its Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (UGPS) 2018-2028 in response to numerous Security Council resolutions requesting an increase in the deployment of women peacekeepers. The Strategy places equal focus on numerical targets for the deployment of women, and on enabling their meaningful participation—including in decision-making and leadership, as well as roles typically associated with men, such as operational security roles—to catalyse change. As a result of strong partnerships with troop- and police contributing countries, the share of deployed women doubled from 5 percent to 10 percent between 2018 and 2024. Progress has been particularly noticeable for individually deployed military, police, justice, and corrections personnel as well as Formed Police Units. Progress for military contingents, while steady, has been slow and will require ongoing efforts in partnership with contributing countries. The uniformed leadership in peacekeeping operations is also more gender-balanced; for example, parity among police

leadership was first achieved in 2021, supported by initiatives such as the UNPOL Women Command Cadre Courses, which have benefited more than 200 senior women to date. The capacity of DPO to increase the number of deployed women also depends on the capacity of Member States to nominate qualified women candidates for service with peacekeeping operations.

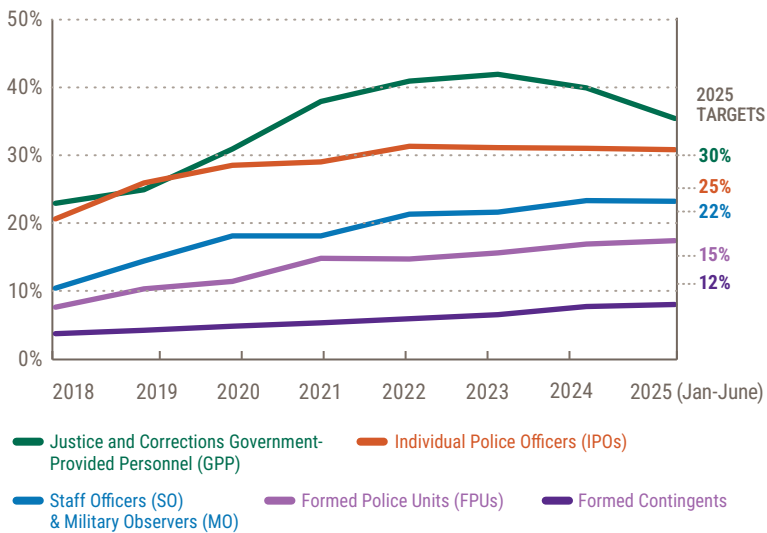
Targeted recruitment and training initiatives have driven progress in increasing the pool of women ready for deployment, including the Women in Military Peace Operations Courses (WMPOC), preparatory courses for police assessments (pre-SAAT), and Corrections Officers Recruitment Exercises (CORE).

Ensuring the meaningful participation of all peacekeepers requires work environments that are free from bias and harassment, and that support the needs of both male and female personnel. Notable progress has been made, particularly through improved camp designs and facilities that enhance security, hygiene, and privacy – currently, 43% of facilities fully meet the minimum essential standards – and through better healthcare for women peacekeepers, driven notably through online training of over 900 medical personnel.

The most significant gains in fostering inclusive environments are achieved when leaders intentionally embed gender-responsive approaches into policy and practice, guided by regular feedback from uniformed women. Sustained support for gender-responsive leadership remains a key priority for the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). The Network for Uniformed Women Peacekeepers, currently active in the UN Missions in South Sudan (UNMISS), Abyei (UNISFA) and Western Sahara (MINURSO), has provided a platform for peer support, learning and exchanges with leadership and experts, for example on sexual harassment.

Since 2000—when only one woman held a Deputy Head of Mission role in a peace operation—there has been marked progress in advancing women’s representation in senior mission leadership, including uniformed roles. In 2021, gender parity was achieved for the first

AVERAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN UNIFORMED PEACEKEEPING PERSONNEL 2018-2025



time among Heads and Deputy Heads of UN Field Missions, in line with the Secretary-General’s pledge. However, women’s representation has since declined and fluctuated below parity levels, including within peacekeeping missions.

As of 2025, five peacekeeping missions are led by uniformed personnel—a role that has historically been almost exclusively held by men and for which Member States have predominantly nominated men. In a landmark development, a woman was appointed as the uniformed Head of Mission in UNDOF, marking only the second time a peacekeeping operation has seen such an appointment. As the gender gap in power and leadership globally widens, making consistent progress remains challenging and easily reversible, despite the United Nations’ ongoing efforts to identify, appoint, and retain more women in leadership positions. To reach gender parity at the highest levels in field missions, the United Nations will continue to implement the strategies outlined in the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, including through outreach and advocacy efforts. Persistence is required, and the Secretary-General continues to prioritize achieving gender parity.



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*“Leadership is not about rank.
It’s about using your voice,
protecting others and setting
an example every day.”*

**Police Commissioner Christine Fossen
leads the UN Police component in the
United Nations Mission in South Sudan.**

***From Through Her Lens: Women Rising
for Peace exhibit, 2025.***

CONCLUSION

Twenty-five years since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has evolved from a normative aspiration into an operational imperative within United Nations peacekeeping. The integration of gender perspectives into mandates, planning, and implementation has become increasingly visible, with missions taking deliberate steps to advance women's participation across peace and political processes. This evolution reflects both institutional progress and enduring challenges that continue to shape the trajectory of gender-responsive peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping mandates have increasingly recognized the centrality of women's participation in peace and political processes, and missions have taken deliberate steps to support this transition from principle to practice. Field-level evidence suggests that when mandates incorporate clear and actionable gender language, peacekeeping missions are better equipped to support national authorities and civil society in promoting women's participation and influence. Gender-responsive strategies have elevated women's roles in peace and electoral processes, as well as mediation platforms.

Internally, UN peacekeeping has strengthened its gender architecture by, inter alia, embedding gender advisory roles and reinforcing accountability frameworks, gender-responsive leadership, and cross-mission coordination. The participation of women as uniformed peacekeepers has been strengthened, although more work remains to be done to achieve full, equal and meaningful participation. In addition, disparities in staffing, resourcing, and access to decision-making persist. Member States and host governments bear the primary responsibility for sustaining gains through the adoption of National Action Plans, inclusive governance reforms, and predictable financing. Without national ownership and political will, progress remains vulnerable, particularly during mission transitions and drawdowns.

The evolution of Security Council resolutions on peacekeeping operations mandates since 2000 reflects a gradual yet meaningful integration of the WPS agenda into operational settings. The challenge ahead lies not in defining what should be done, but in ensuring that frameworks are translated into action, that commitments are honoured, and that women—who have always led in their communities—are institutionally recognized and supported at every level of peace and politics.

The full realization of the WPS agenda cannot rest solely on the shoulders of peacekeeping missions. The strategic obligation lies with Member States and host governments, who bear the primary responsibility for establishing enabling frameworks, strengthening national institutions, adopting and implementing National Action Plans, and ensuring inclusive leadership across political, security, and governance structures. Without strong political will, dedicated financing, and institutional expertise at the national level, gains supported by peacekeeping operations remain vulnerable, especially during mission transitions and drawdowns.

Looking ahead, the WPS agenda should remain central to peacekeeping operations. Translating global frameworks into community-driven action requires sustained investment, institutional support, and context-specific solutions that reinforce both gender parity and meaningful participation. Strong mandates, deliberate engagement, strategic partnerships, and the use of technology and digital tools will shape the pathway to gender-inclusive peace. This would also allow a better response to new global threats disproportionately affecting women, such as cyber conflict, climate change, and pandemics. The challenge is not in defining the agenda, but in ensuring its implementation, and that women, leading change in their communities throughout history, are recognized, resourced, and empowered to shape peace at every level.



4 March 2013: During an outreach event organized by UNMISS in the county's Jalle district, to talk about the role of UNMISS and the Jonglei peace agreement signed in 2012.

“I’ve always said, after violence, there is life. There is life, because I lived through it. I fought to become who I am today. So I believe that after every act of violence, if you continue to believe in your strength, in your potential, you never truly lose. After violence, there is life. And if there is life, there is hope.”

Nelly Mbangi, a Congolese human rights defender and lawyer from North Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite facing threats and displacement, she campaigns for the rights of Congolese women and children, provides legal aid to and empowers victims/survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Quote from Through Her Lens: Women Rising for Peace exhibit, 2025.

ANNEX

Table I: First reference to Gender and WPS in Mission Mandates

NAME OF MISSION	MISSION ACRONYM	DURATION	FIRST REFERENCE TO GENDER AND WPS IN MANDATES	YEAR MISSION STARTED
UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION	UNTSO	1948–PRESENT	NONE	1948
UNITED NATIONS MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN	UNMOGIP	1949–PRESENT	NONE	1949
UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS AND PAKISTAN	UNFICYP	1964–PRESENT	S/RES/1604 (2005) - Reference to prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	1964
UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE	UNDOF	1974–PRESENT	S/RES/2330 (2016) - Reference to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	1974
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON	UNIFIL	1978–PRESENT	S/RES/1614 (2005) - Reference to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. First dedicated WPS mention in S/RES/2433 (2018) Requests UNIFIL to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue	1978
UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA	MINURSO	1991–PRESENT	S/RES/1675 (2006) - Reference to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	1991

Table I (continued)

NAME OF MISSION	MISSION ACRONYM	DURATION	FIRST REFERENCE TO GENDER AND WPS IN MANDATES	YEAR MISSION STARTED
UNITED NATIONS IRAQ - KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION	UNIKOM	APR 1991 – OCT 2003	NONE	1991
UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN GEORGIA	UNOMIG	AUG 1993 – JUN 2009	S/RES/1615 (2005) - Reference to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	1993
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	UNMIBH	DEC 1995 – DEC 2002	S/RES/2384 (2017) - Mentioning the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan	1995
UNITED NATIONS MISSION OF OBSERVERS IN PREVLAKA	UNMOP	FEB 1996 – DEC 2002	NONE	1996
UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION MISSION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	MONUC	NOV 1999 – JUN 2010	S/RES/1332 (2000) - Making reference to HIV/AIDS infection rates, particularly amongst women and girls	1999
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE	UNAMSIL	OCT 1999 – DEC 2005	S/RES/1370 (2001) - making reference to the Mano River Women's Peace Network	1999
UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN EAST TIMOR	UNTAET	OCT 1999 – MAY 2002	NONE	1999

Table I (continued)

NAME OF MISSION	MISSION ACRONYM	DURATION	FIRST REFERENCE TO GENDER AND WPS IN MANDATES	YEAR MISSION STARTED
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM ADMINISTRATION MISSION IN KOSOVO	UNMIK	1999–PRESENT	NONE	1999
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA	UNMEE	JUL 2000–JUL 2008	S/RES/1622 (2005) - on prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	2000
UNITED NATIONS MISSION OF SUPPORT IN EAST TIMOR	UNMISET	MAY 2002–MAY 2005	S/RES/1410 (2002) - requesting having gender focal points under the office of the SRSG	2002
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN LIBERIA	UNMIL	SEP 2003–MAR 2018	S/RES/1509 (2003) - On gender-responsive DDRR and IDPs strategies	2003
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE	MINUCI	MAY 2003–APR 2004	NONE	2003
UNITED NATIONS OPERATIONS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE	UNOCI	APR 2004–JUN 2017	S/RES/1528 (2004) - Direct reference to UNSCR 1325	2004
UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN BURUNDI	ONUB	MAY 2004–DEC 2006	S/RES/1545 (2004) - Making a direct reference to UNSCR 1325	2004
UNITED NATIONS STABILIZATION MISSION IN HAITI	MINUSTAH	JUN 2004–OCT 2017	S/RES/1542 (2004) - Making a reference to UNSCR 1325 and mandating the mission to integrate gender in their support to SSR, DDR and elections	2004

Table I (continued)

NAME OF MISSION	MISSION ACRONYM	DURATION	FIRST REFERENCE TO GENDER AND WPS IN MANDATES	YEAR MISSION STARTED
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE SUDAN	UNMIS	MAR 2005–JUL 2011	S/RES/1706 (2006) - Mandating the mission to guarantee expertise within the mission support to human rights, protection of civilians and monitoring of activities	2005
UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED MISSION IN TIMOR- LESTE	UNMIT	AUG 2006–DEC 2012	S/RES/1704 (2006) - Making mentions to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	2006
AFRICAN UNION–UNITED NATIONS HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR	UNAMID	JUL 2007–DEC 2020	S/RES/1769 (2007) - Making reference to the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and mandating to integrate the needs of women and girls into protection of civilians	2007
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND CHAD	MINURCAT	SEP 2007–DEC 2010	S/PRST/2000/1 - Requesting the mission to support the prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence	2007
UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION STABILIZATION MISSION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	MONUSCO	2010–PRESENT	S/RES/1925 (2010) - Requesting the inclusion of Women's Protection Advisor in the mission. Referencing prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Requesting the mission to give information on the situation of women with the Group of Expert	2010

Table I (continued)

NAME OF MISSION	MISSION ACRONYM	DURATION	FIRST REFERENCE TO GENDER AND WPS IN MANDATES	YEAR MISSION STARTED
UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN	UNMISS	2011–PRESENT	S/RES/1996 (2011) – Encouraging South Sudan to ratify and implement key human rights treaties, including those related to women and children, with UNMISS providing support. Referencing prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Requesting the inclusion of Women's Protection Advisors and gender expertise, and establishing monitoring and reporting mechanisms on conflict-related sexual violence	2011
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM SECURITY FORCE FOR ABYEI	UNISFA	2011–PRESENT	S/RES/1990 (2011) – Referencing prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	2011
UNITED NATIONS SUPERVISION MISSION IN SYRIA	UNSMIS	APR 2012–AUG 2012	NONE	2012

Table I (continued)

NAME OF MISSION	MISSION ACRONYM	DURATION	FIRST REFERENCE TO GENDER AND WPS IN MANDATES	YEAR MISSION STARTED
UNITED NATIONS MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED STABILIZATION MISSION IN MALI	MINUSMA	APR 2013– DEC 2023	S/RES/2100 (2013) - Reiterating Mali's responsibility to protect civilians and calls on MINUSMA to uphold international law and integrate gender and WPS considerations. Requests support for women's participation in stabilization and political processes, including DDR and SSR. References prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and calls for full compliance with the UN zero-tolerance policy.	2013
UNITED NATIONS MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED STABILIZATION MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	MINUSCA	2014– PRESENT	S/RES/2149 (2014) - Requests MINUSCA to support women's participation across all sectors and integrate gender throughout its mandate. Calls for compliance with the UN zero-tolerance policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.	2014
UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR JUSTICE SUPPORT IN HAITI	MINUJUSTH	OCT 2017– OCT 2019	S/RES/2350 (2017) - Requests MINUJUSTH to support women's participation and integrate gender throughout its mandate. Calls for full compliance with the UN zero-tolerance policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.	2017

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