



**LEADERS AND CHANGEMAKERS  
WOMEN TRANSFORMING PEACE AND SECURITY  
AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Women, Peace and Security Highlights - UN Peacekeeping in 2020



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This report covers progress made on the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Initiative commitments to:

*“Ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of the peace process”*

*“Systematically integrate a gender perspective into all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting”*

Cover photo: UN/MINUSCA - Herve Serefio



Under-Secretary-General  
Jean-Pierre Lacroix meeting  
with women leaders in The Democratic  
Republic of the Congo, December 2020.

20 years have passed since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325(2000), a groundbreaking resolution spearheaded by women's movements. It officially recognized and provided impetus to the role of women as active leaders and agents of peace and security. While the existence of this strong normative framework for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has framed the past two decades, the focus must now be on redoubling our efforts for increased delivery and impact.

The implementation of the WPS agenda has become even more urgent through the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and put at risk the limited gains made on gender equality and WPS. Against these odds, women leaders have been at the frontline responding to the pandemic; and have adapted and continued their peacebuilding efforts. In line with this, our peacekeeping missions have worked extensively to ensure that women's leadership is elevated to the core of political solutions and COVID-19 response strategies. We have invested in strategic partnerships with local women leaders, their networks and organizations and their voices, experiences and priorities have informed our work.

Looking back at our work in 2020, and the challenges posed by the pandemic notwithstanding, I am pleased to say that the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has continued to prioritize women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes as a political imperative to achieve inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes, in line with the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Initiative (A4P). Further, I assure you that WPS commitments will remain a key priority in the next phase of implementing the A4P initiative.

It is time to urgently move towards transformative actions guided by feminist approaches. I echo the Secretary-General's Call to Action to peacekeeping partners to accelerate the implementation of the WPS agenda. DPO will be at the forefront to turn WPS commitments into reality, including through the Generation Equality campaign. This will help us emerge from the pandemic more equal, resilient and on a road to lasting and inclusive peace.



**Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Peace Operations

# WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA 20 YEARS

In lead up to the 20th anniversary of [UN Security Council Resolution 1325\(2000\)](#), DPO organized a series of initiatives to increase the visibility of women’s leadership, voices, roles and contributions to peace and security in peacekeeping contexts. This included investments in strategic communications campaigns, high level political advocacy with member states and the UN Security Council, engagement with women’s organizations to amplify their voices in strategic political spaces and evidence-based analysis to inform peacekeeping policy.

## UN SECRETARY-GENERAL’S CALL TO ACTION - WOMEN TRANSFORMING PEACE AND SECURITY IN PEACEKEEPING CONTEXTS

At a [virtual roundtable](#) discussion on WPS in Peacekeeping Contexts on 8 October 2020 organized by DPO, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres made a [rallying call](#) to peacekeeping partners to summon the political will and recommit to the WPS agenda.

He urged peacekeeping partners *“to prioritize women’s leadership, to invest in community-based women’s networks as equal partners, (...) and to adopt a feminist approach to accelerate women’s full, equal and meaningful participation”*.

While women are in the frontlines brokering peace in local communities, they continue to be “actively sidelined once those processes move to the national and international levels”, noted the Secretary-General. *“Women’s leadership is a cause,” he said. “We must make it a norm. That is how we will transform international peace and security”*.

## ACTIONS TO ACCELERATE THE WOMEN’S FULL, EQUAL AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

The [Call to Action](#) outlines the following actions:



Prioritize and invest in community-based local women’s networks



Harness data and gender analysis for accountable decision-making



Accelerate and leverage women’s mobilization to transform peace and political processes



Systemize women’s leadership to inform conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, and protection



Create dynamic and innovative partnerships to enhance women’s participation



**WATCH:** Call to action for Women, Peace and Security in Peacekeeping

## WOMEN LEADERS INFLUENCING PEACEKEEPING PRIORITIES

DPO created unique opportunities for local women leaders to influence and shape UN peacekeeping policies and priorities. Women leaders from Abyei, the Central African Republic (CAR), Cyprus, Darfur in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mali were invited as key-note speakers in high-level events. They analyzed context specific progress and challenges in implementing peacekeeping priorities and the WPS agenda with the Security Council, member states and UN Senior Leadership.

Women's organizations and leaders from CAR, Cyprus, Darfur and Mali shared communiques that informed the Secretary-General's Call to Action.

### CALLING ON THE UN TO SUPPORT ENSURE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION:

*“Support transparency in the peace process and inclusion of gender-sensitive women effectively in all the processes.”*

Gender Advisory Team and Hands Across the Divide, Cyprus, October 8, 2020

*“Support strong women movements and civil society as a condition for an enabling environment that can influence the direction of politics and development in favor of women.”*

Darfur Women Platform, Sudan, October 8, 2020

### CALLING ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING COMMITMENTS:

*“Continue to contribute to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the national law 052/2015\* including through advocacy and monitoring mechanisms, such as a women's observatory in Mali.”*

Women leaders in Mali, October 8, 2020

### CALLING ON ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO NORMALIZE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION:

*“Women's participation should not be limited to representation in meetings or simple campaign slogans, but it should translate to a strategy that engages them in front line roles in communication, mediation and in strengthening the resilience of communities to positively influence the implementation of the Peace Agreement”*

Women Leaders in the Central African Republic, October 8, 2020

\*Law 052/2015 stipulates a 30% quota for women's representation in elected and appointed positions.



**WATCH:** Strong partnerships key to progress on Women, Peace and Security

## WOMEN LEADERS DISCUSSING WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL



*“The inclusion of women in public service remains a serious challenge”*

**BINTOU FOUNÉ SAMAKÉ**, Minister of Women, Children and Family Affairs in Mali, called for the establishment of formal and informal measures to ensure women’s participation in the implementation of the peace and reconciliation agreement in Mali.



*“The women protection networks [...] have played a critical role as early warning mechanisms and identified protection risks [...] there is a need to ensure that these women-led mechanisms are supported”*

**NAWAL HASSAN OSMAN**, from the Darfur Women’s Platform, underscored the importance of political advocacy by highlighting the platform’s advocacy efforts which resulted in women for the first time being appointed to leadership positions in the local governments in the states of Darfur.



*“Involving more women with gender expertise [...] will change the course of the negotiations and lead to a solution”*

**MAGDA ZENON** from Hands Across the Divide in Cyprus expressed concerns about the continued failure of the local peace negotiations and the absence of women at the highest levels, and the gender perspective at the negotiating table.



*“The more women are involved, the greater and more visible the impact will be on communities”*

**LINA EKOMO**, who leads the Network for Women’s Leadership in Central Africa (RELEFCA), stressed the importance of ensuring that women’s participation in the peace process is truly meaningful and goes beyond numbers.

# ELEVATING WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE LEAD UP TO THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

DPO consistently invested in strategic communications to elevate and make visible the role of women in peace and political processes through political advocacy and data-driven storytelling. By centralizing women leaders and their contributions to peace and security at the heart of communication, the Department contributed to increasing the visibility of their important peacebuilding work.

“

Empowering women is key to success for any society. Their contributions to maintenance of peace and social well-being should never be undervalued in any society. If you empower a woman, you have empowered a society.

SAMAH MUSA MOHAMED  
WOMEN'S UNION IN DIFFRA, ABYEI



CURATED BY @UNPEACEKEEPING

“

There is a glass ceiling – it must be burst. Women must be able to play their role and be seen as citizens and development actors.

MAMA KOITÉ DOUMBIA  
AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK (FEMNET), MALI



@UNPEACEKEEPING



UNMISS / SCPI

Kenya

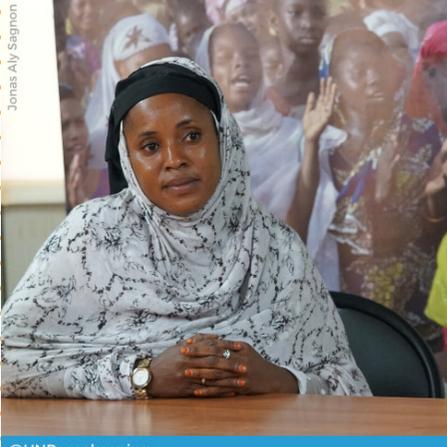
@UNPeacekeeping

“

We collected their weapons and other tools they used for fighting and killing. We have seen an improvement, and they are no longer killing each other and have stopped fighting for now.

”

Kabirize Women's Peace Network,  
South Sudan



Jonas Aly Sagnon

@UNPeacekeeping

“

There was a moment when everyone had left the village. But after sensitization by women, people returned to the community. Today, we are there with our brothers and sisters. We live together and understand each other.

”

MARIAM  
Ex-combatant, Mali



Women play diverse roles in peace and political processes; including as key actors in the implementation of peace agreements, in preventing and resolving conflicts, and they hold key political positions in political transitions and post conflict contexts.

SOUTH SUDAN

**41%** of members of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism **ARE WOMEN**

**THREE WOMEN** appointed to key leadership positions; Vice President, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense

SUDAN

BY 2020: **54 WOMEN'S** protection networks established in Darfur function as early warning mechanisms

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

**46.5% OF THE EARLY WARNING MECHANISMS** supported by MINUSCA comprised at least **30% women**

**46.7%** of the registered voters in the presidential and legislative elections **WERE WOMEN**

**SIX WOMEN SIGNED** the protocols of the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan

KOSOVO

**THE FIRST EVER WOMAN CHAIR OF the Assembly of Kosovo** was appointed

## WOMEN, WAGE, PEACE – VISUALIZING PROGRESS ON ACTION FOR PEACEKEEPING

[The Women, Wage, Peace](#) photo exhibition was organized in February 2020 at UN Headquarters and showcased at the Arab Institute for Women, Lebanese American University, New York. The exhibition showcases women who are transforming peace in peacekeeping contexts. The photographs illustrate women's strength, leadership and invaluable contributions in peacekeeping settings such as Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus,

Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mali, and South Sudan.

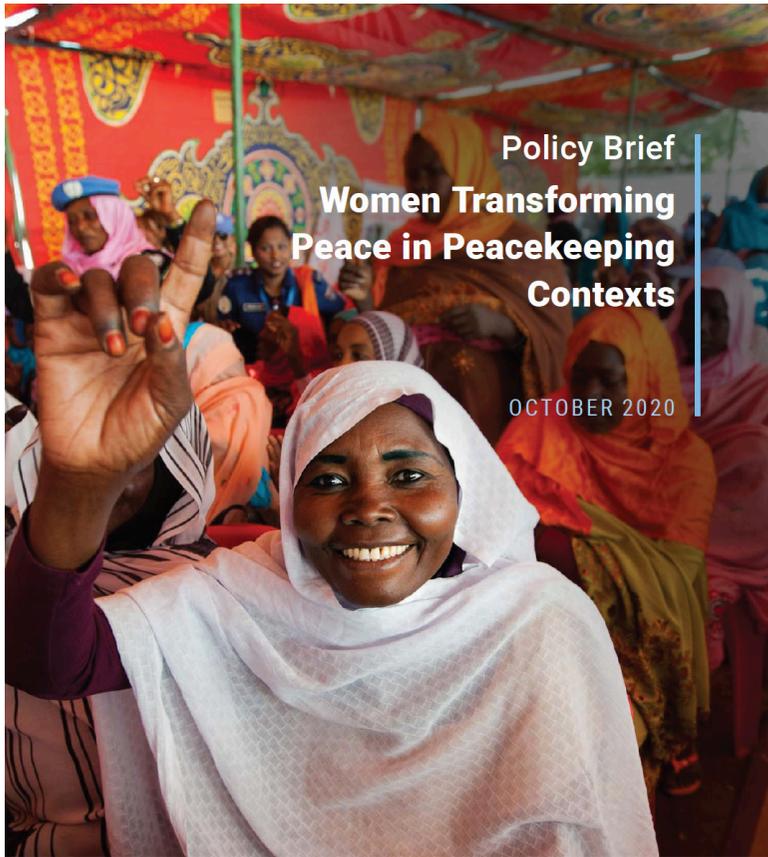
The photographs capture women in their roles as participants, leaders and, most importantly, as agents of change, leading discussions, participating in elections, signing peace agreements and galvanizing support for peace in their communities.





Youth Peace Ambassadors,  
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), 2019.

## UN PEACEKEEPING CONTRIBUTED TO EXPANDING THE POLITICAL SPACE FOR WOMEN



*“The targeted prioritization of women’s participation across peacekeeping functions has contributed to raising the profile of local women leaders and networks in peacekeeping contexts”.*

Policy Brief [“Women Transforming Peace and Security in Peacekeeping Contexts”](#) (2020).

To mark the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325(2000), DPO took stock of the progress made on implementing departmental WPS commitments and the remaining challenges. A policy brief published in October 2020 shows clearly that over the last five years DPO redoubled its efforts to prioritize the implementation of the WPS mandates and agenda. While there has been progress, it is evident that more needs to be done to ensure women’s leadership and participation is truly at the center of peace and security. The WPS agenda therefore is a non-negotiable priority as outlined in [the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping Initiative](#) and further in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In summary, the policy brief highlights that senior leaderships’ commitments, political advocacy and data-driven evidence-generation to inform decision-making are critical enablers in elevating women’s voices to shape political solutions and sustain peace. Evidence shows that peacekeeping missions have contributed to strengthening women’s roles in preventing conflict and transforming crisis into stability. Leveraging on women’s mobilizing power and investing in strategic partnerships with local and community-based women’s organizations has been central to this.

For example, in Mali, the formal participation of women in the implementation mechanisms of the Peace Agreement has been minimal since the signing of the agreement in 2015. Since then, women continued to fight for their political space in the implementation of the agreement. Recently, in November 2020, the representation of women in the Agreement Monitoring Committee was finally increased from three to 31 per cent. Good Offices and technical support from MINUSMA contributed to this historic achievement. The adoption of a more nuanced mission mandate in 2019, which included women’s participation as a critical benchmark to the peace process was also an important enabler that helped push key actors to unblock institutional barriers.



Hundreds of women marched the streets of Bangui in the Central African Republic in December 2020 to call for peaceful and inclusive elections.

## COVID-19 PUTS A SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

*“Women’s networks and organisations are a key partner to UN peacekeeping and their networks lead innovative community approaches to resolve conflicts, wage peace and reconciliation. It is these same networks that are critical vehicles for women’s participation in COVID-19 decision-making, prevention and responses and elevated advocacy for the global ceasefire call.”*

Njoki Kinyanjui, Chief, DPO Gender Unit, NY, on the criticality of women’s participation in COVID-19 responses.

Despite the disruptive force of the COVID-19 pandemic, women leaders have been on the frontlines responding to and preventing the spread of COVID-19 and helping mitigate the political risks associated with the pandemic. Peacekeeping missions have supported these efforts.

## COVID-19 EXACERBATING GENDER INEQUALITIES

*“The restrictions on people’s movement impede survivors’ of sexual violence access to essential services, including security, protection, and sexual and reproductive health services, and hamper their ability to seek justice.”*

Nawal Osman, Darfur Women’s Platform

Gender inequalities have been deepened by the pandemic and have limited women’s participation in decision making. Women have increasingly faced intimate partner violence in their homes, which has further exacerbated a social and domestic pandemic within a global health pandemic. Economic hardships, a shrinking civic space and women’s disproportionate exposure to COVID-19 as front line workers in the health sector, combined with measures put in place to limit the spread of the virus all posed severe challenges to women’s work to build and sustain peace.

## WOMEN LEADERS CONTINUING THEIR PEACEBUILDING WORK

Despite this, women leaders in peacekeeping contexts have risen against all odds and reframed their peacebuilding roles to adapt to the challenges and realities posed by the pandemic. In CAR, Darfur in Sudan and DRC, women leaders worked to advance [the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire](#) by putting pressure on armed groups to respect the [call](#). In South Kivu, DRC, the peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO supported women leaders from five ethnic groups to promote unity and call for the cessation of the conflict. They echoed the Secretary-General’s call, presented solutions for sustainable peace and put pressure on armed groups to stop human rights violations.

Opportunities to advance peace emerged from COVID-19 mitigation efforts and women’s economic empowerment projects supported by peacekeeping missions. In the CAR, MINUSCA supported women from diverse backgrounds and communities to form cooperatives to produce masks. This helped women reconcile and mobilize in large numbers during the electoral period, resulting in 46 per cent of the registered voters being women. Similarly, in the Ngok Dinka Community in Abyei, collaboration and cohesion between women groups was enhanced as women mobilized to raise awareness of the pandemic and produced 30,000 cloth facemasks in collaboration with the peacekeeping missions there, UNISFA. In Kosovo, 55,500 face masks were produced in partnership with local women’s organizations as part of an economic empowerment program. This has played a crucial role in local-level COVID-19 prevention.



Women's walk held in February 2020 in Cyprus. After the outbreak of Covid-19 the women's walk has been organized virtually.

## A VIRTUAL WORLD POSES OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

When most of the work modalities, engagement and outreach moved online, peacekeeping missions put in place innovative measures to guarantee women's participation. Women leaders in Cyprus continued their bi-communal dialogue and trust building work virtually. This also offered a space to address the rise in domestic violence and other protection risks and threats. In Kosovo, the Security and Gender Group, which comprises of international organizations, Kosovo institutions and women's organizations,

continued to meet virtually and issued several joint statements focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls. In contexts with low literacy rates among women, and where a digital divide and economic constraints limit women's access to digital platforms, for example in CAR, DRC, South Sudan and Mali, peacekeeping missions used their respective radio stations to enhance access to women. In Abyei, UNISFA distributed solar-powered radios to women.

# WOMEN SHAPING PEACE AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

Women are leading conflict resolution and often informally brokering peace at community, national and regional levels, but continue to be on the periphery of formal decision-making. In 2020, peacekeeping missions continued to support women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes to address this gap.

## SPOTLIGHT ON DARFUR: DARFUR WOMEN'S VOICES INFLUENCING TRANSFORMATION



Members of the women protection networks in North Darfur.

As the UN and African Union hybrid mission in Darfur, UNAMID, drew down there are important lessons learnt on advancing the WPS agenda and strengthening women's participation.

A review of UNAMID's work on implementing WPS mandates showed that the mission has played a significant role in advancing the agenda in Darfur. Bringing the WPS agenda to the state and federal authorities' limelight, building strategic partnerships with women's organizations and establishing women led WPS mechanisms<sup>1</sup> have been effective and efficient ways to elevate women's meaningful participation in the peace process, create ownership and improve the protective environment. This is demonstrated by the prominent role Darfuri women played in the political transition in 2019.

The 54 women-led protection networks serve as unique examples of how women as first responders have helped preventing conflicts from escalating and thereby contributing to building a protective environment for communities at large. Through these mechanisms for example, women leaders brought the protection risks to the attention of Prime Minister Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, which resulted to the transitional government deploying more joint security forces to Darfur. Furthermore, crucial legal reforms have taken place following women's political advocacy, such as the repeal of the Public Order Act restricting women's movement.

To ensure sustainability beyond UNAMID, the Darfur Women's Platform was established in 2020; as an umbrella body of 34 women's organizations and groups from the five states of Darfur, comprising of 724 women. The platform was instrumental in

elevating Darfuri women's voices to the core of the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan. The women's platform influenced the peace talks through a position paper that was presented at the negotiations. As a result gender provisions were integrated in the Darfur Protocol of the Peace Agreement, signed in October 2020. Commitments to strengthen women's participation at all levels of decision-making were made. Six women leaders from Darfur were signatories to the protocols of the Agreement, which was instrumental and a culmination of the mobilization of women by UNAMID through the years.



Women calling for peace, Darfur, Sudan, 2018.

1. These include UNSCR 1325 State Committees, the Darfur Women Legislative Caucus, the State Committee for Combating Violence Against Women, Women Protection Networks, Women Mediation Networks, the University Youth Network and Darfur Women Platform.



UN - Isaac Billy

## LOCAL WOMEN LEADERS IN DRC INFLUENCE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

*“Today I can see the improvement, but we still have a long way to go. With the sensitization of community leaders on women’s role in decision making and our involvement in women organizations we have the space to express our opinions. We are also seeing women nominated to certain leadership posts.”* Woman affected by the Kamwina Nsapu conflict in Ituri.

With the support from the peacekeeping mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), MONUSCO, women networks and organizations in Ituri engaged in security arrangement

initiatives and shaping peaceful communities. They supported the identification and profiling of women ex-combatants and dependents, raised awareness for the return of peace and the importance of women’s participation, and actively participated in sensitization sessions of “Force de Resistance Patriotique de l’Ituri” (FRPI) militia in Kamatsi to end hostilities. Women’s active engagement resulted in more than 900 FRPI militia joining the pre-cantonment in South Irumu (Ituri).

## WOMEN HOLD KEY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN SOUTH SUDAN

In South Sudan, the Vice President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defense, as well the Secretary-Generals of two of the main political parties are women. Despite this and contrary to the 35 per cent quota in the Revitalized Agreement, only 25 per cent of the ministerial positions in the Transitional Government are held by women, and only 10 per cent of the deputy ministers are women. At state level only one woman occupies a gubernatorial position, in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal. In July 2020, women leaders issued a communiqué addressed to the President calling on the parties to adhere to the 35 per cent quota. To expand the civic and political space for women, the peacekeeping mission in the country, UNMISS, in collaboration with UNDP, UN Women and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, brought together women leaders from South Sudan to learn from experiences of women political leaders from Gambia, Kenya and Uganda on Constitution drafting. Entry points and strategies for women’s participation in South Sudan Constitution making process were identified, and a Women’s Position Paper was adopted and submitted to the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.



## WOMEN LEADERS IN ABYEI CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

In Abyei, local women leaders promoted conflict prevention and resolution at local level through building strong grassroot coalitions to facilitate dialogue and engagement with the men dominated traditional chieftaincies and local administrative structures. This enabled women to influence decision making, security arrangements and gender-responsive conflict resolution processes. Women have continued to demand for more space to raise their voices and lead change, with the support of UNISFA through its engagement in advocacy with community leaders and administrators to expand the space for women in these local structures to effectively participate in community level decision-making roles.

## WOMEN LEADERS IN CYPRUS BUILD TRUST ACROSS THE DIVIDE

In Cyprus, women organizations have been essential in driving many of the intercommunal trust building efforts on the island and continued to advocate for the meaningful participation of women in the peace process. In 2020, 42 bicomunal initiatives, events and meetings were held with the support of the peacekeeping mission in Cyprus, UNFICYP. The annual Women's Walk that brings together women across the divide had the highest turnout ever. This shows an increased interest in trust building efforts. When the pandemic broke out, women leaders used technology and virtual platforms to continue their trust building efforts, amplify efforts to engage women in the peace process, and bridge the physical divide amongst women's groups.



Women leaders attending the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Kidal, February 2021.

## MALI WOMEN LEADERS DRIVING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS

MINUSMA worked to enhance women's participation through political advocacy and technical support. In the political crisis in 2020, women leaders and women's organizations played an active role in mediating between the Malian authorities and other key actors to find peaceful solutions. Women across political and regional lines participated in decision-making roles in the national consultations in developing the Transition Roadmap and Charter. Despite these prominent roles, only four out of 25 ministers in the Transitional Government are women, falling short of the 30 percent target (only 16%, against 23.6% in 2019 and 34% in 2018). The Transition National Council follows the same trend with 31 women members, (25.6 per cent of its members).

2. Kosovo is to be understood as under UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

## FOR THE FIRST TIME, A WOMAN CHAIR OF THE ASSEMBLY OF KOSOVO

For the first time, a woman, Vjosa Osmani, was appointed chair of the Assembly of Kosovo<sup>2</sup> in February 2020. In November, following the President Hashim Thaçi's resignation to face charges of war crimes, Osmani became the Acting President. However, women remain severely underrepresented in decision-making processes in Kosovo. Women's representation at ministerial positions stands at 19 per cent, which is up from five per cent in 2019, but down from 33 per cent in the short-lived Government formed in early 2020. The peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, UNMIK, in partnership with the European Union and UN Women engaged women leaders from all Kosovo communities in leadership training to enhance their ability to influence political and peace processes.



UN/MINUSCA - Hervé Sereho

## WOMEN ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS IN CAR

In the Central African Republic (CAR), women mobilized massively during the electoral period to call for inclusive and non-violent elections and peace. Joint communiques were issued, awareness raising efforts and political engagements were conducted by women leaders. In Bangui, hundreds of women marched the streets to push for peaceful elections. Women leaders jointly condemned the violation of the Political Agreement by armed groups. In the end, 46 per cent of the registered voters were women. MINUSCA's support included radio and media efforts to encourage women to register as voters, the establishment of 16 women's situation rooms and a hotline to strengthen women's protection through tracking and reporting risks, threats and incidents, as well as political advocacy and technical support to remove structural barriers in the electoral code, including the introduction of a 35 per cent women quota on nomination lists. None of the political parties however adhered to the quota requirement, which was a serious drawback to women's participation as candidates. This was approved by the Constitutional Court, which further cemented the violation of the electoral code. Only 15.59 per cent of the approved candidates were women, which is far below the quota but an increase of five per cent compared to 2015.

## FIRST WOMAN DEFENSE MINISTER IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

In Lebanon, women's representation in Diab's Government (January 2020) reached 30 per cent with the appointment of six women ministers, including, for the first time, as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defense as well as Minister for Justice. Although Diab resigned in the aftermath of Beirut Port explosion, his cabinet continues as a caretaker government. Women also played a leading role in de-escalating tensions and ensuring non-violent protests. The prominent role of women in the protest movement amplified demands for improved women's rights, including increased political participation. UNIFIL contributed to this change by providing support to the implementation of the country's first National Action Plan to implement UNSCR resolution 1325(2000).

# KEY ENABLERS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE PEACEKEEPING



*“Gender is not only about numbers. It is about the meaningful consideration of the gender-differentiated impacts of our work and what we hope to achieve”.*

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations

## DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP PIVOTAL TO PROGRESS

Senior leadership’s commitment in enhancing accountability has been crucial in advancing the WPS agenda. The Under-Secretary-General’s WPS taskforce has continued to systematically assess progress and gaps in the implementation of WPS mandates. Similar taskforces are operational at mission level, for example in UNMIK and UNMISS. Across peacekeeping missions, senior leadership continue to advocate for women’s participation. In addition, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General from UNAMID and MONUSCO and the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General from MINUSMA and MINUSCA briefed the Security Council’s Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security.

## STRENGTHENED WPS MANDATES AND PRIORITIZATION

The WPS language in the mandates of peacekeeping missions has been strengthened with strong focus on women’s participation, including in non-traditional security fields. For example, MINUSMA was mandated *“to assist the Malian authorities in ensuring the full, effective and meaningful participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels in the implementation of the Agreement, including the security sector reform”* (UNSCR 2531/2020). UNIFIL’s mandate was also strengthened giving the Mission more scope to implement WPS priorities. The centralization of the WPS agenda in peacekeeping through the A4P initiative, stronger data driven WPS analysis and enhanced partnerships with member states are key factors contributing to more nuanced mandates.

## EVIDENCE GENERATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS ENHANCED

Through the 15 WPS core indicators rolled out in nine peacekeeping missions, there has been more systemized monitoring and tracking of progress, and trends and gaps identified to inform decision-making. Currently, the WPS Dashboard, a platform for collecting and collating data is being updated to enable access and interoperability with other departmental performance and accountability platforms, such as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System and A4P reporting platforms.

## DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIPS BUILT

The DPO continued investing in building partnerships internally and externally. To enhance the systemwide integration of gender equality and WPS, DPO engaged in the UN System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNSWAP) Steering Committee, the UN WPS Standing Committee, the Taskforce on WPS Indicators and the UN Working Group on Integration. DPO is also a board member of the Generation Equality Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. In addition, the Department continues to partner with the regional organizations. For example, worked with the European Union to advance the WPS agenda in Mali and CAR through the EU-UN Steering Committee on Crisis Management, shared best practices and experiences on WPS data collection with NATO and joint work with the EU and African Union was strengthened through a joint conflict and peace analysis in CAR.

## GENDER-RESPONSIVE CONFLICT ANALYSIS ENHANCED

WPS and gender priorities have been integrated into strategic planning processes. Technical support was provided to MINUSMA and MONUSCO to implement gender-responsive conflict analysis to inform transition planning, as per the Secretary-General's planning directive on transitions, and in UNMISS's Independent Strategic Review of UNMISS. UNFICYP supported the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Cyprus and the World Bank in conducting a gender-sensitive socio-economic impact assessment of a settlement in Cyprus. UNISFA supported women leaders in conducting a local gender and conflict analysis that identified specific gender related conflict triggers and impacts that have potentially fueled the local conflict. DPO further partnered with UN Women, the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) and the United Nations System Staff College to conduct system wide capacity building on gender-responsive conflict analysis.

## CAPACITIES STRENGTHENED

To further enhance coherence on capacity strengthening efforts on WPS across the Department, the DPO Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Resource Package ([English](#); [French](#)) was widely disseminated to peacekeeping contexts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity building initiatives have been reoriented to virtual platforms. A series of webinars were conducted targeting peacekeeping personnel to share lessons and best practices.

3. Webinars on WPS Implementation in Central African Republic in context of COVID 19; Women's Participation in Inclusive Peace and Political Process in Mali; [Women's Participation in Integrated DDR and CVR Processes](#); and [Women's Participation in the Peace and Political Process in South Sudan](#).

## GLOSSARY

<b>MINUSCA</b>	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic
<b>MINUSMA</b>	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
<b>MONUSCO</b>	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>UNAMID</b>	African Union/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur
<b>UNFICYP</b>	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
<b>UNIFIL</b>	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
<b>UNISFA</b>	United Nations Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
<b>UNMISS</b>	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan



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