

# GA Topic C Update Paper

2025 was the 25th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which firmly placed Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) on the international agenda. While the United Nations and countries have reaffirmed their commitment to WPS, women's security continues to deteriorate and aspects of the WPS agenda have stalled.

Conflicts continue to expand, deepen in severity, and reach stalemates with record numbers of women living near active conflict zones despite not being combatants. In 2025 nearly 676 million women and girls lived within 50km of conflict—the highest level since the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Civilian casualties, particularly among women and children, have quadrupled in recent years, and documented conflict-related sexual violence has increased sharply.<sup>2</sup>

Despite longstanding commitments under UNSCR 1325, women remain largely excluded from formal peace negotiations and decision-making. UN data from 2023 shows that women constituted only 9.6% of peace negotiators and 13.7% of mediators globally—a reflection of enduring structural barriers to meaningful inclusion.<sup>3</sup>

The risks facing women extend far beyond traditional battlefields. Conflict-related sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) have surged in crisis and post-crisis contexts. In 2024, the UN documented over 4,600 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, an 87% increase since 2022.<sup>4</sup> As women and girls flee conflict, they face heightened vulnerability to exploitation, trafficking, and violence in displacement settings, signaling that protecting women's safety must extend into all zones of insecurity, particularly important given the more than 60 million women and girls caught in a surge of force displacement as conflicts intensified.

Efforts to increase the presence and influence of women in peacekeeping operations continue, but challenges remain. For example, NATO has reaffirmed commitments to gender-responsive leadership, accountability, and enhanced participation in peace operations, with new policy frameworks and strategic objectives adopted to guide implementation.<sup>5</sup> While these policy shifts reflect growing recognition of women peacekeepers' contributions, progress in actual deployment and leadership positions remains gradual and requires sustained political will and resourcing.

Amid ongoing violence and exclusion, there has been an observable shift in the WPS agenda toward prevention. International discussions marking the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2025 have emphasized the need for preventative action, financing for women peacebuilders, and integration of gender perspectives across peace, security, humanitarian, and development sectors.<sup>6</sup> For example, women continue to play a vital role in helping reintegrate former combatants into societies post-conflict. If women are excluded from peace processes, their unique contributions to securing peace and preventing conflict can be overlooked.

The WPS Index captures 13 indicators of women's status within three dimensions



<sup>1</sup> "Women exposed to armed conflict, 1990–2024." *Prio Center on Gender Peace and Security*. <https://tinyurl.com/y92fuhhv>.

<sup>2</sup> "UN Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security - Press Conference | United Nations." *United Nations*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MlaVvT5Dbo>.

<sup>3</sup> "Women, peace and security." *United Nations*. <https://tinyurl.com/2wtcxwuc>.

<sup>4</sup> "Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security." *UN Women*. <https://tinyurl.com/3y4m99py>.

<sup>5</sup> "Women, Peace and Security." *NATO*. <https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/wider-activities/women-peace-and-security>.

<sup>6</sup> "25 years of Women, Peace and Security: Turning Commitments to Action." *UNDP*. <https://tinyurl.com/hcejk8k6>.