



## **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP PROGRAM FOR “LEADERSHIP ACADEMY” ALUMNI**

### **Empowering Women for Peace: The Armenian Perspective on UNSCR 1325**

**Greta Gevorgyan**

#### **Abstract**

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 highlights the importance of engaging women in peacebuilding and security-related processes. While progress has been made in many countries, still many nations, including Armenia, face obstacles in fully implementing their National Action Plans (NAPs). This article examines the two NAPs developed by Armenia, analyzing women’s roles in peace processes locally and globally. It also contextualizes UNSCR 1325 within broader international frameworks on women’s rights and anti-violence initiatives. Finally, recommendations are offered to enhance Armenia’s alignment with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, ensuring women have the opportunity to play a critical role in preventing violence and promoting sustainable peace.

#### **Introduction**

Conflicts devastate communities, leading to loss of lives, destruction of property, displacement, and significant emotional trauma. Women and children are often among the most affected, bearing the effects of violence, displacement, and systematic exploitation. In many cases, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is used as a deliberate tactic during conflicts, with minority and impoverished women being particularly vulnerable. Despite making up half of the world’s population, women are significantly underrepresented in peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery processes.

Globally, 70% of women experience different types of violence at some point in their lives, and only 20% of lawmakers are women (UN Women: I know Gender Training: Women, Peace, Security). In Armenia and worldwide, women also face wage inequality, earning approximately 30% less than men for the same work (The Armenian Mirror-Spectator). Incorporating a gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding not only ensures justice but also promotes inclusive and sustainable outcomes. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent international frameworks calls for integrating women’s perspectives into peace and security policies as a matter of international obligation and necessity.

### **Women, Peace, and Security: Expanding the Global Framework**

Women are disproportionately affected by conflict, yet they remain grossly underrepresented in peacebuilding and decision-making processes. The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on October 31, 2000, marked a historic moment in global affairs by recognizing the critical role women play in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This landmark resolution builds upon foundational international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted in 1993, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995. These frameworks highlight the importance of women's rights and gender equality as essential to achieving long-term peace and security.

UNSCR 1325 was the first resolution to explicitly link women’s experiences in conflict with international peace and security. UNSCR 1325 is based on four main pillars that guide the WPS agenda:

1. Participation: Advocating for women’s engagement in decision-making and peace negotiations.
2. Protection: Addressing SGBV and ensuring women’s safety in conflict zones.
3. Prevention: Reducing violence against women through systemic reforms.
4. Relief and Recovery: Ensuring gender-responsive aid and reconstruction efforts.

Despite some progress has been made as a result of the adoption of 1325 resolution, significant challenges persist in relation to women’s rights and representation. Globally,

women remain significantly underrepresented in peace processes. From 1992 to 2022, women made up only 13% of negotiators, 6% of signatories, and 3% of mediators in formal peace negotiations (UN Women). Research shows that women’s engagement in peace processes leads to more sustainable agreements. However, as we see, there are still lots of systemic barriers to women’s full participation.

Over the past years, the Women, Peace, and Security agenda expanded. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 laid a foundation for a broader Women, Peace and Security agenda. New resolutions that stem from the 1325 agenda, have addressed emerging challenges and reinforced the framework:

- UNSCR 1820 (2008): Addressed sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, emphasizing prevention and accountability.
- UNSCR 1888 (2009): Strengthened efforts to end sexual violence against women and children in armed conflict.
- UNSCR 1889 (2009): Emphasized the need for women’s inclusion in post-conflict reconstruction and governance.
- UNSCR 1960 (2010): Established a monitoring, analysis and reporting mechanism on conflict-related sexual violence.
- UNSCR 2106 (2013): Called for greater accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict and stressed women’s political and economic empowerment.
- UNSCR 2122 (2013): Addressed persistent gaps in the implementation of WPS agenda. (UN Women).

Together, these resolutions create a comprehensive framework to address the diverse roles of women in conflict and peacebuilding. They emphasize the need to prevent violence, protect rights, and ensure women’s active inclusion in all peace and security processes.

To contextualize the WPS agenda in different countries, National Action Plans (NAPs) were developed, which are essential tools for implementing the WPS agenda. As of early 2024, 108 countries (56%) have adopted 1325 NAPs. Fifty-six countries have developed one NAP on WPS, 27 have developed two, 15 have developed three, 6 countries are on their fourth; and 2 countries are on their fifth NAP. However, only 43% of these plans are

fully funded, significantly limiting their effectiveness (1325 NAPs). Funded NAPs, such as those in Norway and Sweden, have stronger outcomes thanks to comprehensive monitoring mechanisms and greater community engagement. In contrast, underfunded NAPs often lack measurable and realistic outcomes and rely heavily on international funding.

Armenia adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) in 2019 for the period 2019-2021. The development of NAP was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it does not indicate civil society inclusion in the development of the NAP. Armenia’s NAP focuses heavily on increasing women’s participation and awareness of the protection of women’s rights within the defense system (military, police, and peacekeeping missions). The NAP also highlights the relevance of creating comprehensive and targeted programs to address the needs of women and girls impacted by or displaced because of conflicts. The NAP includes components on the international implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, especially in light of the ongoing Artsakh conflict. The first NAP of Armenia identifies 18 objectives that are grouped under the primary pillars of Resolution 1325: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. Each objective has respective actions, indicators, and responsible parties. The first NAP was primarily funded by external sources, including international organizations and non-governmental organizations, there is no allocated funding by the government. (Armenian Government NAP, 2019-2021).

Armenia adopted its second NAP in June 2022 for the period of 2022-2024. The second NAP builds upon the first by strengthening women's roles not only in peace processes but also in post-conflict governance and community rebuilding efforts. An important new emphasis is put on the displacement of women and girls caused by the 2020 Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which posed urgent challenges in terms of their protection and reintegration. Unlike the first NAP, the second one along with the state institutions was developed in cooperation with CSOs and forcibly displaced women from Artsakh.

Moreover, the second NAP introduces a new cooperation pillar, focusing on enhanced partnerships between national institutions, civil society, and international organizations to ensure the effective application of WPS principles. This NAP includes more detailed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. A significant novelty in the second NAP is its focus on forcibly displaced women, particularly those affected by the Artsakh conflict. The

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plan recognizes the need for tailored support for these women and girls, including reintegration programs and the strengthening of local support systems. (Armenia National Action Plans, 2022–2024).

It is worthy to note that both National Action plans face the ongoing challenge of securing sustainable state funding. As Armenia continues to navigate post-conflict recovery, these plans provide a critical roadmap for empowering women and ensuring their voices are heard in peacebuilding efforts. Currently, the third NAP is being developed for the period of 2024-2028.

Empowering women to participate fully in peace and security processes is not just a way to restore justice but a strategic necessity. Evidence shows that peace agreements are 35% more likely to last 15 years or more when women are involved (A Global Study on the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325).

The WPS agenda aligns with other international frameworks, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, which emphasizes women's leadership in peace and security, and UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, which prioritizes gender equality. It also addresses intersecting vulnerabilities, particularly for women from marginalized communities or living in poverty, who face compounded risks during and after conflicts. By localizing the WPS framework—such as addressing sexual violence in conflict, ensuring women’s active participation in peace processes, and incorporating gender perspectives into post-conflict governance—Armenia will make tangible progress toward gender equality and long-lasting peace. The lessons learnt from global practices, particularly the necessity of dedicated resources and political will, are essential for turning these commitments into actionable outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

Many states across the world began to recognize the importance of women in the spheres of peace and conflict resolution, thanks to the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions. In light of recent global developments, one notable example of this would be the approval of two National Action Plans by Armenia under the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Nonetheless, these plans also

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underscore significant challenges that remain, particularly in terms of underfunding and the limited representation of women in key decision-making positions.

For Armenia to fully implement the WPS agenda, women’s participation must be prioritized not just as a policy goal, but as a central component of its peacebuilding and security strategies. This priority is closely linked to the political representation of women. In Armenia, women currently account for approximately 37% of the Parliament (RA National Assembly), but their representation in government leadership roles has traditionally been low. Recently, however, some progress has been made. For the first time, four out of twelve ministers are women (RA Government). This is a step in the right direction, a positive step, however more steps should be undertaken to ensure that women are equally represented and actively engaged in the shaping of the nation’s security and peace policies.

The political leadership of Armenia should have enough political will to further invest in women’s representation and empowerment thus improving political and socio-economic landscape for women in Armenia. Building on this momentum will help strengthen Armenia’s commitment to the WPS agenda and lead to more sustainable, inclusive peacebuilding outcomes.

## **Recommendations**

To ensure Armenia effectively implements the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda while empowering women to play a transformative role in achieving sustainable peace, the following strategies are recommended:

1. **Enhance Women’s Leadership and the Role of Women Moving Forward**

The involvement of women in the processes of peace and security is critical for peace to be realized. For this goal, Armenia should work to increase the number of women involved in the peace talks as well as reconstruction processes after the conflict. This can be done by establishing gender quotas for the upper leadership and decision-making structures.

2. **Allocate Sustainable Resources for WPS Goals and Strengthen Accountability**

As discussed above, the implementation of Armenia’s National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325 is still dependent on foreign funding. In order to enhance the results of these plans over time, the government of Armenia should provide a national allocation which will be used to implement the WPS program. Clear financial mechanisms are important in order to limit reliance on international aid. It can be stated that they can enhance the effectiveness of the objectives more readily. At the same time, evaluation and monitoring system need to be established that are based on both the process and output aspects of the work. Women, and especially women's rights NGOs are the most important for the assessment of these outputs.

3. Start More Collaborations with Local and Global Partners

For the WPS agenda to be realized, it is essential that local communities, civil society organizations, international organizations and the government work together. The partnership must be based on shared responsibility in which all parties are committed to the advancement of women’s rights and roles in peace and security processes. Therefore, the best practices of those who have succeeded in domesticating the principles of WPS in their countries’ frameworks, would be a good lesson for Armenia.

4. Campaign to Raise Public Awareness

Women’s leadership in Armenia is also limited by traditional perceptions of gender roles and prevailing attitudes. In order to eliminate these stereotypes and barriers, well coordinated public awareness raising activities are needed highlighting the critical role that women play in governance, peace processes and handling conflicts. Such campaigns should aim to change the perception of society, promote women’s participation in governance as active leaders.

Through these approaches, it can be envisaged that Armenia would enhance its commitment to the WPS agenda and guarantee that women’s voices will be heard during the peacebuilding processes and the country would strive to create a more just and advanced society.

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