

2019-2020



# WOMEN, PEACE AND, SECURITY

IN ACTION



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**WOMEN,**  
PEACE **AND,**  
**SECURITY**  
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# WELCOME MESSAGES

## 1.1

### A Message from the Executive Director

In 2020, UN Women celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday and a decade of contributing to the global agenda that puts women and girls at the centre of peace and security. As the only United Nations entity on the ground with a mandate from the UN Security Council, UN Women has substantially contributed to the United Nations' efforts to build peace and prevent conflicts. We have supported women peacebuilders, assisted survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in their demands for justice, successfully pushed for women's meaningful participation in peace processes, and helped women and girls affected by conflict rebuild their lives and communities.

The year 2020 also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. These are moments to celebrate the progress we have made. Yet as the COVID-19 pandemic sweeps across the world with devastating force, bringing particularly dire consequences for women and girls in places suffering from conflict, our ability to accelerate the pace

of change has never been more urgent.

It is a moment to choose to rebuild better. We can address the inequalities and imbalances in the world today, and advance on the strength of many gains already made. This report demonstrates the possibilities, showcasing the breadth of UN Women's work on women, peace and security in 2019, and our growing capacity to bridge immediate crises with interventions and strategies for prevention and peacebuilding that last for the long term. With comprehensive partnerships across the UN, Member States and civil society, we are well-positioned to respond, both during the pandemic and beyond.

Always looking forward, UN Women today is leading the movement that aspires to make feminist peace a dominant shaper of global affairs in the twenty-first century. We are committed to engaging all UN Member States, and our allies across the UN system and civil society, in accelerating implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Our vision is a world that emerges from the current crisis on a path to lasting peace, justice, equality and inclusion for all.



**Phumzile  
Mlambo-Ngcuka**

**“STRENGTH COMES FROM COLLECTIVE ACTION. IT WILL CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN US IN SURMOUNTING THE CHALLENGES WE FACE.”**

2020 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the women, peace and security agenda. The year was expected to be about celebrating achievements, as well as addressing gaps and identifying future needs. Instead, the world is in the middle of a pandemic that has impacted the feeling of safety and security everywhere. Less than two weeks after the crisis was declared a global pandemic, the UN Secretary-General made a call for a global ceasefire. The



**Paivi Kannisto**

## 1.2 A Message from the Chief

call was welcomed by women, peace and security actors everywhere around the world.

UN Women serves the Security Council on the women, peace and security agenda. We support UN Member States in implementing the agenda, catalyse and coordinate the UN entities' various WPS efforts and facilitate the work civil society is undertaking at both local and international levels. WPS specialists yielding from 88 offices around the world are meeting urgent needs in conflict-affected countries and places engaged in recovery or prevention efforts. Their expertise allows us to connect local, regional and global work being done on peace and security, from peace activists in villages in conflict areas to the Security Council decision-makers in New York. It is an incredible honour to work at UN Women, where I am surrounded by the world's leading experts on women, peace and security—a passionate group of individuals who are deeply dedicated to contributing to transformational change that serves all the people of the world.

On behalf of UN Women, we feel privileged to work with our Member State partners, and we thank them for their commitment and support to the agenda. Every single day we appreciate the work women's civil society does both in and out of conflict-affected and fragile

settings. Women peacebuilders and women's human rights defenders deserve our deepest respect and we must continue to work to support them. None of this work would be possible without collaborating with our partners in the UN system, at headquarters in New York and in the field. As you read through this report, you will see how UN Women has supported the UN Secretary General in analyzing trends and presenting the status of the implementation of UNSCR1325. Based on this analysis and information, the Secretary General gave clear directives to UN leaders and concrete recommendations to Member States in his report on women, peace and security in 2019. These recommendations provided a solid basis to work towards creating strong, resilient and peaceful societies. Of critical importance here is the United Nations' recognition and emphasis on the importance of women's participation and leadership in decision-making processes, especially in times of crisis. We can, and should, build on this foundational framework as we look towards transformation during the next decade.

One thing remains tried and true: strength comes from collective action. This unified strength will continue to sustain us in surmounting the many challenges we face globally and in achieving peaceful, just, equal societies one day.

*War, violent conflict, terrorism and violent extremism have different and devastating consequences for women and girls. In the face of these, women all over the world lead movements to prevent conflict, restore peace and rebuild communities.*

# SHAPING THE GLOBAL AGENDA

**88**

Number of countries and territories covered in 2019

**\$13 million**

Total revenue in 2019 for global programming

**2**

New Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security

**23**

Security Council briefings on countries by women from civil society

**85**

Number of United Nations Member States and Observers with national action plans on women, peace and security

**548**

Number of civil society organizations and networks supported to influence peace processes

**27 (up from 16 in 2018)**

UN Women offices receiving funds from SG's Peacebuilding Fund

**100 across 12 countries**

Number of women's organizations supported by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

**6**

Number of regional women mediator networks supported

Women's leadership is more urgently needed than ever before as conflicts and humanitarian crises become more complex, violent and protracted, and combine with new threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet women remain largely excluded from many processes to achieve peace and justice. Most peace agreements lack provisions on the priorities of women and girls, and fail to reflect women's unique perspectives on their lives and communities.

The world has made a powerful set of global commitments framing an agenda for women, peace and security. They include the Beijing Platform for Action, 10 UN Security Council resolutions starting with the landmark resolution 1325 in 2000, and the more recent 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Women is a longstanding leader in shaping and acting on these commitments.

Through them, we drive change from the local to the global, and the global to the local.

We partner with UN Member States to support them in reaching the standards and principles that they have set for themselves. We uphold accountability by tracking progress, and maintain momentum by constantly reminding people of their promises. The Security Council has reaffirmed UN Women's critical role in leading, coordinating and supporting this agenda.

UN Women also leads and coordinates the UN system so it remains on track and accountable for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in places of conflict and instability. In all parts of the world, we collaborate with governments and institutions as well as with local, women-led civil society groups to accelerate inclusion and champion women's rights, from peace tables to the front lines of crisis.

In marking the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325, with implementation still lagging rhetoric, UN Women remains unrelenting in our call to do more, with more resources and more urgency.



Through these commitments,  
we drive change **from the  
local to the global, and the  
global to the local.**

## FILL THE GAPS

# SIX PRIORITIES OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

In 2018, the Secretary-General called on UN **Member States** to accelerate actions on six critical gap areas in the agenda for women, peace and security.

Faster progress will make communities and societies more resilient and better prepared to withstand crisis, in whatever form.



**ENSURE WOMEN ARE  
DECISION-MAKERS IN ECONOMIC  
RECOVERY PROCESSES**



**PROTECT WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS  
DEFENDERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN  
CONFLICT SITUATIONS**



**BOOST FINANCING  
FOR WOMEN, PEACE  
AND SECURITY**



**PUT MORE WOMEN IN  
UNIFORM IN UN POLICE AND  
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**



**GUARANTEE WOMEN'S  
MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION  
IN PEACE PROCESSES**



**GENERATE AND MAKE AVAILABLE  
MORE DATA, EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS  
ON WOMEN, CONFLICT AND PEACE**

# STEADY ADVANCES IN NORMS

## 1915

The global agenda for women, peace and security emerged at the 1915 Women's Congress at the Hague, kicking off a century of international women's peace activism.



## 1995

The Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Platform for Action as a road map for achieving peaceful and inclusive societies, with gender equality as a central priority. Women in armed conflict is one of the Platform's strategic objectives.

# 1915



# 2000

The United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1325, the most sweeping international commitment ever to women, peace and security. As of 2020, the Security Council has passed a total of 10 WPS resolutions.



# 2015

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development endorsed the inherent ties between gender equality, sustainable development and peace. UN Security Council resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security stressed that young women and men should be actively engaged in shaping lasting peace, and contributing to justice and reconciliation.



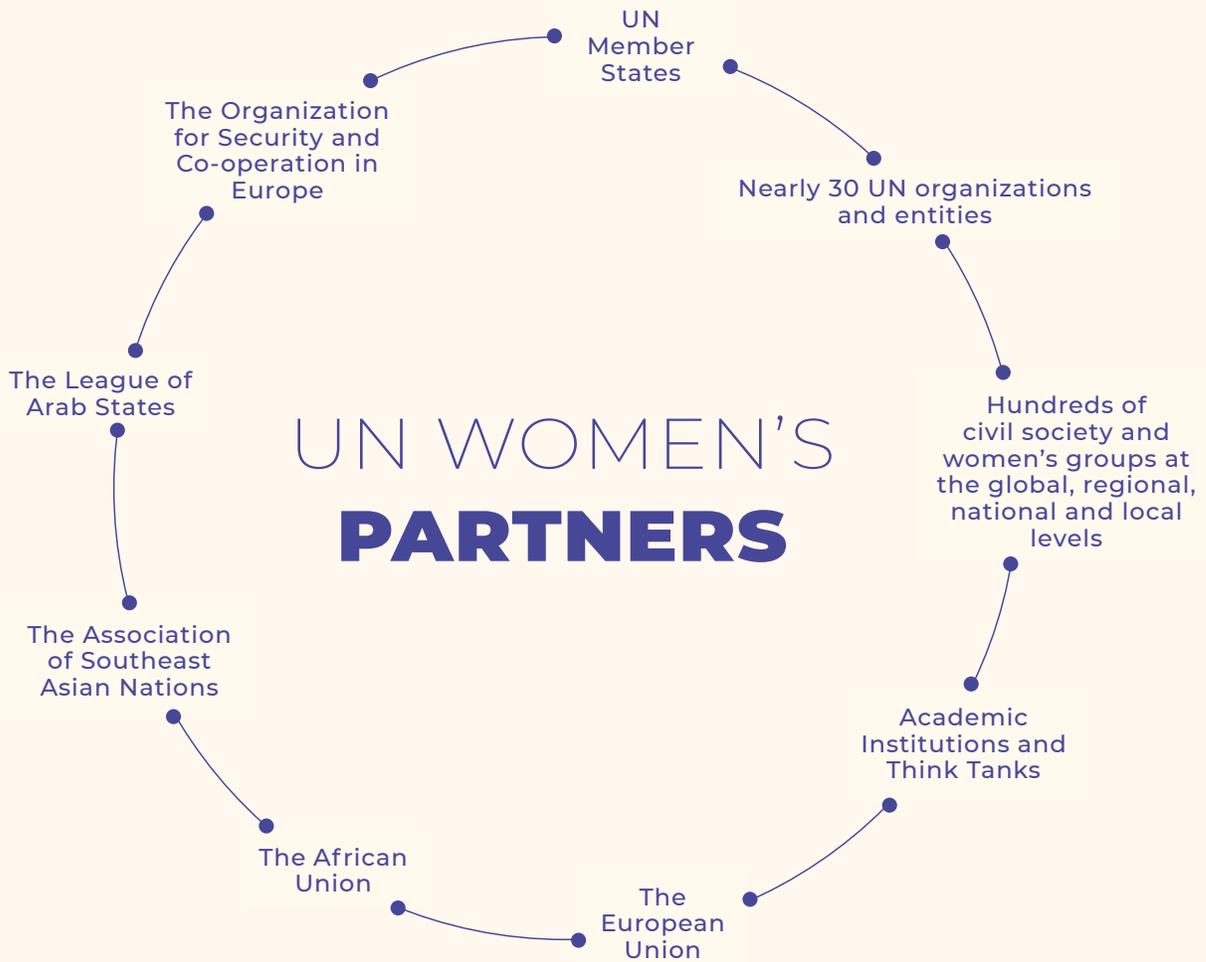
# 2016

Parallel Sustaining Peace resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council on the “Review of Peacebuilding Architecture” recognized the critical roles of women and young people in building and sustaining peace.



# COORDINATION ACCELERATES PROGRESS

UN Women plays an essential convening and coordinating role, providing leadership and expertise that benefits our partners, women and societies all over the world.

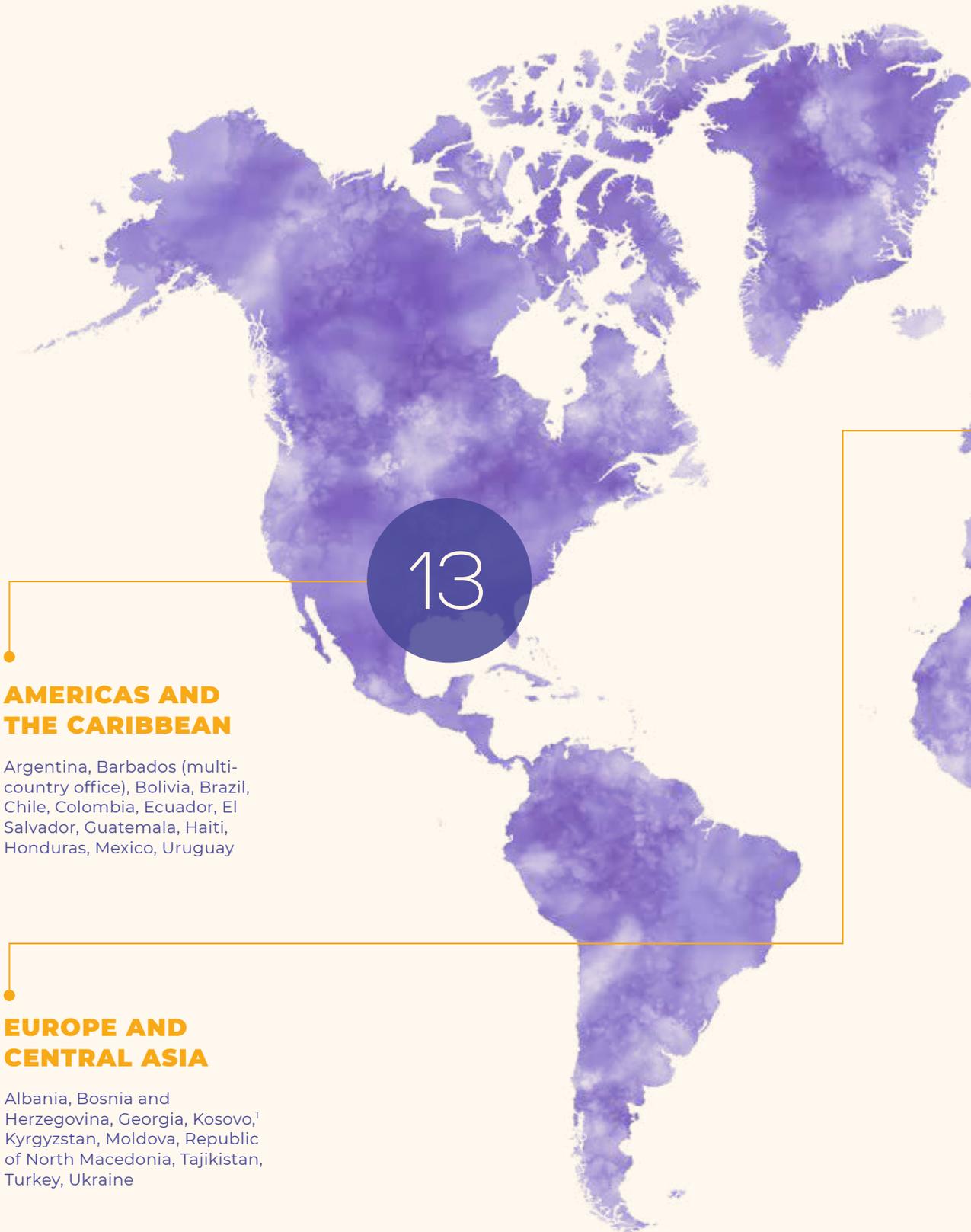


## Sharing knowledge, unleashing innovation

UN Women hosts a globally unique community of practice on women, peace and security. By 2020, it linked over 280 members from every part of the world. They create a global pool of experience and expertise that has quickly become a vital resource for ideas and insights to work better, faster and smarter.

In 2019, the community brought together internal and external experts for 15 online webinars to learn from each other. Topics included engagement with the Security Council, supporting effective national action plans, lessons from investigators deployed by UN Women and strengthening partnerships with young women. All told, **329** expert colleagues participated, with many more accessing recordings of the events in an internal community of practice hub.





13

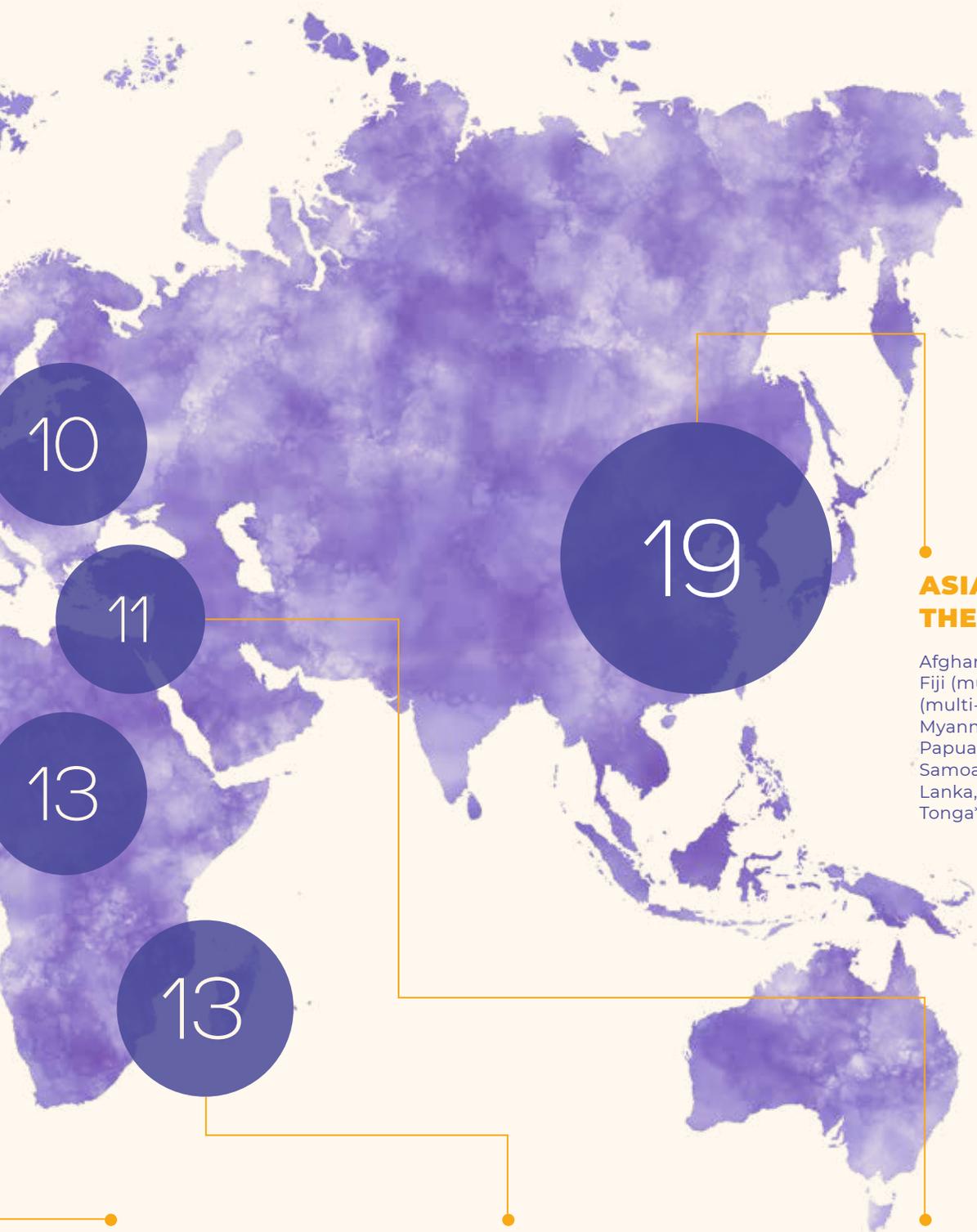
**AMERICAS AND  
THE CARIBBEAN**

Argentina, Barbados (multi-country office), Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Uruguay

**EUROPE AND  
CENTRAL ASIA**

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo,<sup>1</sup> Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Republic of North Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine

WHERE  
**UN WOMEN WORKS**



10

11

13

13

19

## ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Fiji (multi-country office)\*, India (multi-country office), Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palau\*, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa\*, Solomon Islands\*, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga\*, Vanuatu\*, Viet Nam

## WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

## EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa (multi-country office), South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe

## ARAB STATES AND NORTH AFRICA

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, State of Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

1. All references to Kosovo in this report should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

# OUR SOLUTIONS

## SHAPING THE COURSE OF POLICY

Since the passage of Security Council resolution 1325, policy advocacy on the women, peace and security agenda at the UN Security Council has made significant progress. For the last 10 years, UN Women has led these efforts, engaging directly with Council members to include women's rights and gender equality on its agenda. The Council has the power to push the international community for progress, and regional bodies

and Member States have in turn adopted regional and national action plans to bring women into leadership and decision-making around peace and conflict, recovery and development.

UN Women draws on local and global expertise to influence the course of policy at all of these levels, in line with the commitments that have been made and in response to new issues as they emerge.



## At the Security Council: advocating for progress

In 2019, the percentage of Security Council decisions with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls declined from 2018. But nearly double the number of civil society representatives briefed the Council on specific countries and issues on its agenda. The Security Council passed two new resolutions – resolution 2467, with a focus on conflict-related sexual violence, and resolution 2493, which underscores fully implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

The Informal Experts Group has been effective in highlighting gender equality and women's rights to Security Council deliberations on specific countries, including some of the world's leading flashpoints for conflict in 2019, namely Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Myanmar, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen. Important Security Council decisions subsequently amplified the advocacy of women peacebuilders in these countries.



Women, Peace and Security: Security Council Open Debate, October 2019. Alaa Salah, Civil Society Activist and Community Leader from Sudan, addresses the Security Council meeting on Women and peace and security. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown.

## Urging equality in peace processes

- **Afghanistan:** The Council affirmed that any political settlement must protect the rights of Afghan women, and urged the government to include women in its negotiating team for the peace talks.
- **South Sudan:** The Council called on all parties to reach the 35 per cent quota for women in the implementation bodies of the Revitalized Agreement, and requested the United Nations mission to assist in these efforts.
- **Sudan:** The Council encouraged the completion and full implementation of a new National Action Plan on 1325; called on the Government to meet the 40 per cent quota for women in the Transitional Legislative Council; and integrated women, peace and security extensively into the mandate and strategic objectives of the new United Nations political mission.
- **Yemen:** The Council called on the parties to increase the participation of women in their delegations to 30 percent, if necessary by adding additional delegation members.

# NIG

“There is no excuse for us not to have an equal seat at every single table...,” she reminded delegates. “Unless the political process reflects and embraces the diversity of our society, women groups, civil society, resistance groups, ethnic and religious minorities, those who have been displaced, and people with disabilities—no agreement will reflect our collective aspirations.”

Sudanese activist Alaa Salah at UN Headquarters in New York on 30 October 2019.  
Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown



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## Advancing national action plans

By the end of 2019, 85 countries and territories had adopted national action plans on women, peace and security in line with resolution 1325; 10 were new or updated. The plans translate global commitments into national measures to achieve them. Three quarters now include robust monitoring frameworks to keep progress on track.

UN Women has supported development of a majority of the plans, as in **Nigeria**, which can claim the world's highest number of localized action plans, 11 in total. Two states, Bauchi and Benue, initiated new plans in 2019 by conducting an initial survey and situational analysis. State legislators, security agencies, community and religious leaders, civil society organizations and the media took part in a comprehensive and inclusive

process. It built consensus around findings now defining the scope of the plans and the programmes under them.

In preparing to mark the 20-year anniversary of resolution 1325, UN Women joined the governments of Germany and the United Kingdom to host a commitment event where 47 Member States and 2 regional organizations committed to adopting new national action plans or strengthening existing ones. In 2019, the European Union adopted its first regional action plan.

UN Women supported the **League of Arab States** in drafting regional guidelines for developing, costing and implementing national action plans. The Government of Iraq has already applied the guidelines for its second national action plan.

# ERIA

# LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

# EXTENDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

For years, conflict-related sexual violence was the least condemned war crime, buried in silence and invisibility. This is no longer the case. With transitional justice increasingly understood as critical for overcoming past violence and moving towards sustaining peace, UN Women has supported a global movement for such processes to encompass all human rights violations and drivers of gender inequality, including sexual violence. And it has advocated

for women to take part at all stages and levels of related decision-making.

For the last decade, UN Women, Justice Rapid Response (JRR), has fielded an average of 20 experts a year to help international courts and national transitional justice mechanisms investigate and document conflict-related sexual violence. Training and mentorship have developed skills among national prosecutors and investigators, rendering them better equipped to investigate these horrific crimes, and deliver justice. Investigators keep skills well-honed through a dedicated community of practice launched with JRR and OHCHR in 2019.



Artwork created by survivors of conflict-related sexual violence during the conflict in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) for the exhibition "Colours of Our Souls," organized by UN Women. Photo credits: UN Women, Date created: November/December 2018.

## KOSOVO

”

**“It is never too late to report a case... it [is] a human responsibility, as well as a legal obligation to deal with these cases until they are fully resolved.”**

Drita Hajdari, prosecutor for the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo, where she investigates and prosecutes war crimes.

In **Kosovo**,<sup>2</sup> systematic sexual violence was a mainstay in the conflict between ethnic Albanians and Serbian forces in 1998-1999. But it took 18 years for survivors to receive legal recognition and have any hope for reparations for the crimes committed against them. UN Women played a key role in advocacy that led to a 2017 shift in the law. In 2019, UN Women continued to support the justice process by training members of a national commission established to respond to the needs of survivors and provide them with reparations, in collaboration with Justice Rapid Response. Trainees learned techniques to evaluate evidence based on international standards. This new skill and understanding marks an important step towards ensuring survivors can seek legal protections while avoiding revictimization.

UN Women also worked with the commission to draft its first workplan, and strengthen the process of recognizing and verifying the status of people suffering violations. Two interview rooms specifically designed to support women survivors were established at the Special Prosecution Office and Kosovo Police War Crimes Unit. UN Women also partners with legal experts to provide case-based mentoring for prosecutors and police as well as victims' advocates and the Kosovo Chamber of Lawyers.



Caption: Drita Hajdari.  
Photo: UN Women

2. All references to Kosovo in this report should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

**FOR 34 YEARS,  
WOMEN FORCED  
INTO SEXUAL  
SLAVERY BY  
THE MILITARY  
IN GUATEMALA  
WAITED FOR  
JUSTICE.**



Artist Delia Cumez paints scenes of indigenous cultural life on one of the murals adorning the "Center for the Historical Memory of Women". San Juan Comalapa, Guatemala.

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

## Ending longstanding impunity

For 34 years, women forced into sexual slavery by the military in **Guatemala** waited for justice. In 2017, after 22 hearings, a Guatemalan court convicted two former military officers of crimes against humanity on counts of rape, murder and slavery, and stipulated reparations for 11 women survivors. The Sepur Zarco case was the first case of conflict-related sexual violence challenged under Guatemala's penal code. The final verdict came about in part through relentless advocacy by UN Women and an alliance of civil society organizations, women's human rights defenders, the Public Prosecutor and other UN organizations, who never backed down from supporting survivors in their pursuit of truth, justice and reparations.

UN Women today continues supporting diverse efforts to build on the progress made. Work with the judiciary in 2019, for example, led the Supreme Court to establish a policy on dignified and transformative reparations that upholds international standards on the rights of women in cases of sexual violence.

Steps towards ending longstanding impunity included affirming, based on analysis conducted by UN Women, that the Specialized Courts of Femicide are complying with international human rights standards in 100 per cent of their cases. A gender-specialized public prosecutors' network continued adapting the Latin American Model Protocol for the Investigation of gender-based killings against women, while the Women's Secretariat of the Judiciary developed monitoring to deepen compliance with institutional policies on gender equality and the promotion of women's human rights.

Work with ancestral justice bodies enhanced their knowledge and abilities to apply women's human rights and gender equality standards, and led the national Judicial School to institute a specific course to certify ancestral authorities on these issues, extending the reach of justice among women in Guatemala's diverse indigenous communities.

# OPENING DOORS FOR WOMEN IN UNIFORM

Participants and Instructors  
from Female Military Officers  
Course in Kenya April 2019.  
Photo Credit: UN Women  
FMOIC Instructors

Gender is at the centre of United Nations peacekeeping more than ever before. All multidimensional peacekeeping missions<sup>3</sup> have gender units and women's protection advisers. Almost every mandate for peacekeeping now includes

specific provisions on women, peace and security. Most directives for military and police on missions feature specific instructions to address women's security. And more women serve in uniform, although participation remains low.



3. Multidimensional peacekeeping operations not only maintain peace and security, but also facilitate the political process; protect civilians; assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections; protect and promote human rights; and assist in restoring the rule of law.

UN Women advocates for systemic increases in the share of uniformed women in international peacekeeping as well as across security forces in general. Women have a right to serve, and they also enhance operational effectiveness and improve support for women civilians. Less likely to use excessive force and more likely to build trust with communities, they make lasting contributions to dispute resolution, stability and the rule of law.

In 2019, UN Women supported training for 120 uniformed women to join international peacekeeping operations through the Female Military Officers' Course. A 10-day residential course, it helps

prepare female military officers for deploying. Since it began in 2014, it has made a tangible contribution to quadrupling the share of female military experts and staff officers in peacekeeping missions, which reached 16 percent in 2019.

Captain Anaseini Navua Vuniwaqa of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces is one graduate. With new experience from her deployment to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, operating in an area between Israeli and Syrian forces, she emphasizes how much she learned about supporting women in conflict-affected communities who have been raped or sexually harassed.



“Survivors tend to gravitate towards the female officers, they are able to open up to them,” she says. **“It’s important for us to inform the women officers that they have an important role in peacekeeping; there is a need for female peacekeepers.”**

Captain Anaseini Navua Vuniwaqa of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, participant in the 2019 FMOC.

## Making national forces more responsive to gender

UN Women works with national police forces around the world so that they too can increase the number of women in uniform. In **Bangladesh**, UN Women-sponsored training for 165 police officials has begun to make policing more responsive to women, including through better management of cases of gender-based violence. Scenario-based exercises stressed expanded use of gender-responsive risk assessments and survivor-centred policing techniques. In Cox's Bazaar, the site of camps for the mass influx of refugees from Myanmar, 10 policewomen now staff special

help desks for women and children, handling cases of gender-based violence and trafficking. The Government committed to bringing more women into the security sector in the first National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, launched in 2019.

In **Timor-Leste**, UN Women has helped improve monitoring of women's situation in security institutions, and provided transformative leadership training for the National Police. This has increased women's participation as well as gender-equitable practices on the force, such as more inclusive leadership styles.

### Innovation: The Elsie Initiative Fund

UN Women proudly became the host of the Secretariat for the newly launched Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations in 2019. It is an innovative fund designed and established with the support of the broader Canadian Elsie Initiative, Member States, the UN system and peacekeeping experts. The fund finances initiatives to increase the numbers of trained and qualified uniformed women – military and police – who deploy to UN peace operations, in line with the 2015 agreed Security Council target to double the number of women in military and police contingents in five years, and the targets of the 2018-2028 United Nations Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy.

A first request for grant proposals was overwhelmingly positive, with expressions of interest from 18 troop and police-contributing countries, and four United Nations organizations. They plan to address issues such as understanding barriers to women's participation in peace operations, as a step towards understanding how best to address them and achieve long-term positive and transformational change.

# CLAIMING THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN FORMAL PEACE PROCESSES

Parties to formal peace talks remain particularly resistant to including more women, but slowly the doors are opening. Women globally are mobilizing to claim their right to participate at all stages of peace processes, and to prevent conflict and bring peace to their communities. UN Women is a staunch ally and advocate, providing knowledge and technical expertise, and

working in close partnership with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations.

In 2019, UN Women supported women's calls for inclusion in building peace in over 15 countries, and in regional organizations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States.



Chulani Kodikara, Participant, UN Women Conference on Peacemaking, Tunis, November 2019.  
Photo: UN Women

# SYRIA

## Steering the future of their country

As the **Syrian** conflict passes its first decade, a political solution remains elusive, and civilians continue to suffer. But hope comes from the 150 member-Constitutional Committee, established after intense negotiations under the auspices of the UN-led political process in late 2019. Women hold close to 30 per cent of seats in the committee and its smaller drafting body, providing women the opportunity to influence the highest levels of decision-making for the future of their country. The achievement stemmed from the collective efforts of Syrian women, with support from UN Women, the Office of the Special Envoy for

Syria, the broader Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs and many other dedicated partners.

UN Women has been bolstering Syrian women's leadership in peacemaking since 2013, including through sustained support to the Syrian Women's Advisory Board (WAB), a unique mechanism involving 17 women leaders serving as independent advisors to the peace process. Two members of the WAB and a former member are members of the Constitutional Committee. The WAB complements the direct participation of women on the Constitutional Committee.

## Entering the upper echelons

In **South Sudan**, UN Women supported young women advocates in developing gender-responsive proposals on security and governance during national peace processes. Their efforts were key to achieving a 35 per cent quota for women's inclusion in governance, and the creation of special funds to finance enterprises led by women and youth. Some national institutions now include representatives of women and youth on key committees, such as the Strategic Defense and Security Review Board.

About 100 young women gained skills and mentorship through the Young Women Leaders' Incubator Programme, the result of a partnership between UN Women and the EVE Organization. In "under the tree dialogues", parents and young people hold intergenerational conversations. It is a traditional space for community talks, but not one where women often appear. Now that young women take part, they can question longstanding norms while advocating for women's participation.

# SOUTH SUDAN

## Women's Mediator Networks: A new global alliance

UN Women has supported regional networks of women mediators in Africa, the Arab States and the Mediterranean. In 2019, a Global Alliance of mediators debuted to offer a unique pool of resources and expertise to support peace processes around the world.

UN Women produced a documentary on the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, in collaboration with the Istituto Affari Internazionali and Women in International Security Italy. The film told a compelling story of women's critical contributions to mediation, showcasing achievements in Cyprus and Libya. It boosts the network's visibility and makes a case for women's roles in peace.

## Voicing priorities for peace

2019 was a crucial year for Afghan women as momentum built behind a peace process. UN Women supported a growing network of women civil society peacebuilders in building conflict resolution and advocacy skills. UN Women enhanced assistance to the Afghan Women's Network, the largest of its kind in the country, so it could sustain vital work despite increasing threats. High-impact advocacy took off from a number of platforms, with women calling for peace through the "My Voice Matters" campaign. In the "My Red Line Campaign", people from all walks of life described the

lines they would not cross in upholding human rights.

At #code4peace, the country's largest-ever hackathon and the first dedicated to women, peace and security, 12 teams worked round the clock to find innovative ways for Afghan women to engage in the peace process. The winning idea was a national platform using new and traditional communications tools to capture the perspectives of rural and urban women from all 34 provinces. The strategic plan of the newly established State Ministry of Peace now includes provincial outreach and a dedicated civil society liaison as prominent priorities.

# BUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE

/ 2019-2020

For countries and communities to build back better, whether from conflict or the COVID-19 crisis, they must be able to pursue inclusive peace, security and development. Rooted in human rights,

sustainable peace and recovery require the participation of women activists on the ground as an essential condition for communities to become resilient to crisis and prevent future resurgences of conflict.



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (third from right) speaks with deminers at a UN demining site in the province of Bamyan, Afghanistan. With her is Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (centre), Executive Director of UN Women. July, 2019. Photo: UN Photo/Fardin Waezi

## Working across the peacebuilding and sustaining peace spectrum

UN Women has longstanding partnerships with United Nations entities that shape global peacebuilding, actively backing ongoing revisions to the UN Secretary-General's Seven Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding. First adopted in 2011, it is a central reference point for peacebuilding across the United Nations.

It now includes a target to allocate at least 15 per cent of funding for UN peacebuilding projects to those promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective. UN Women's close engagement with the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund helped raise the share to 40 per cent in 2019.

UN Women worked closely with the Department of Peace Operations to develop a

gender-responsive conflict analysis tool that informed peacekeeping transitions in Haiti and Sudan. In Haiti, gender analysis resulted in the integration of a strong gender perspective in innovative new peacebuilding projects on the rule of law, access to justice and prevention of electoral violence.

With climate change looming as a significant security threat, UN Women has joined the Peacebuilding Support Office UNEP and other United Nations development entities in pioneering gender-responsive approaches to natural resource management for peace. An active push for a gender perspective in linking climate change and security in Sudan has resulted in the Peacebuilding Fund supporting similar work along the border between Mali and Niger.

### Building peace through justice in Liberia

Starting in 2006, Liberia's Peace Huts have played a notable part in promoting peace and resolving conflicts in communities. They have been lauded within the country and by neighbouring States, and at the highest levels of the

United Nations. UN Women helped pioneer this novel, gender-responsive take on a traditional local justice system, where people come together to resolve problems. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund in 2019, four new Peace Huts



LIBERIA

began operating, bringing the total to 12, with some now sustained by funding from local governments. Women members of the Peace Huts not only promote peace and resolve conflicts, but also report signs of insecurity to early warning and response systems.

The huts have been widely praised for forging unprecedented links between women at the grass-roots and

security officials, and providing a much clearer picture of the specific issues women and girls face in a country with a recent history of violent conflict. Returns on a national scale were apparent in 2019 when experience with the Peace Huts led the Liberia National Fire Service and Ministry of Justice to develop gender policies. The Ministry also established a dedicated Gender Unit.

“My involvement in Peace Hut changed my life forever. **Now I know my rights and I am no longer afraid to stand up for myself and other women in the community.** I may not have got an opportunity to go to school but that does not prevent my sense of empowerment,”



Mama Tarnue, chair of the Konia Peace Hut.

## Tapping the power of young people

Since the 2015 adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, UN Women has become a strong advocate for linking agendas on women and youth, and increasing the visibility of young women in peace and security forums. At the 2019 Security Council Open Debate

on women, peace and security, Security Council members and senior UN leaders met 14 young peacebuilders, mainly young women, to hear about their efforts to build peace despite persistent exclusion from major decision-making platforms, limited funding and a lack of protection.

# PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND COUNTERING TERRORISM

Peace Village Youth Camp initiative in Malang (East Java, Indonesia) where youth participated in a workshop at Shanaya Resort. The workshop included interactive sessions on the threat of violent extremism on social media platforms and the participants undertook communication and social media trainings.

Photo cred: UN Women/Eric Gourlan

In 2019, the global trend of securitized responses to violent extremism continued. Militarized actions are not likely to completely eliminate violent extremism and terrorism, however. Such approaches often fail to address root drivers, including inequalities that aggravate vulnerabilities and grievances, and keep a just and violence-

free society perpetually out of reach. Gender transformative approaches to preventing violent extremism continue to be extremely limited, even though many inequalities impact women disproportionately, putting them in the path of acts perpetrated by violent extremist organizations as well as State responses.



Within the women, peace and security framework and the sustaining peace resolutions, UN Women partners with regional and national actors to integrate gender in efforts to prevent violent extremism, and promote women's participation

in security sector decisions and peacebuilding. Close work with the UN counter-terrorism architecture helps develop gender-sensitive policies and strategies for use by 18 entities across the United Nations.

## **Making villages places of empowerment and peace**

In **Indonesia**, UN Women has partnered with the Wahid Foundation to introduce Peace Villages, starting in 2017. Each Peace Village begins with a local declaration among community members to live in peace and harmony with their neighbors, settle conflicts respectfully, and empower the most marginalized in their communities, especially women. The process encourages women and minorities to join local groups that sustain discussions on security and the prevention of violent extremism. By 2019,

women comprised 40 per cent of group members.

The novel concept has taken off in more than a dozen localities, and in August 2019, the Provincial Government of Nusa Tenggara Barat started the process of becoming a Peace Region, marking the first major expansion of the initiative outside the Java region. The Indonesian President has praised the approach and proposed it as a strategy for implementing the National Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism once it is endorsed.



# INDONESIA

## Integrating gender in national and subnational prevention plans

As the Government of **Kenya** began revising its National Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism Policy, it turned to UN Women for expertise in developing a specific gender pillar in the policy, and integrating gender-responsive dimensions throughout all aspects of it. Forty-seven county-level action plans on countering violent extremism now mirror this approach. These advances built on earlier research by UN Women in partnership with the Institute for Security Studies that explored women's important roles in preventing violent extremism in Kenya.<sup>4</sup>

At a major Africa regional meet on counter-terrorism, the Government of Kenya also

hosted a dialogue, the first ever of its type, between the UN Secretary-General and women-led civil society organizations operating in places affected by terrorism. They shared powerful testimonies and ground truths. After a long history of women and gender issues being pushed to the margins in counter-terrorism policy, the initiative signaled an important shift towards closer engagement and a recognition of the value of partnership with women's civil society groups. UN Women had a leading role in organizing the event, which made a series of recommendations on bolstering the roles of women and civil society. These were subsequently shared with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

# KENYA

4. Preventing violent extremism in Kenya; Violent Extremism in Kenya; Role of Women in Violent Extremism in Kenya. December 2017.

## Advancing understanding of links between gender and prevention

Gender and how it intersects with other community-level dynamics that drive or prevent radicalization and the spread of violent extremist and terrorist ideologies is still understudied. There are persistent gaps in understanding how counter-terrorist measures affect women, human rights defenders and civil society more broadly. UN Women carries out innovative research exploring these dynamics to improve prevention efforts. In 2019, new studies explored the issue in terms of masculinities and misogyny, demographic changes,

identity formation and youth perspectives, and gender and early-intervention and deradicalization work.

These efforts contribute to programming grounded in solid evidence, and have been shared through a 2019 guidance note for UN partners on mainstreaming gender into programmes and policy advice. In Libya, international partners supporting the Libya Counter Terrorism Strategy requested assistance from UN Women and women's groups in making the strategy fully responsive to gender.



**“Including women’s insights offers a strategic advantage to those looking to build lasting peace, and prevent conflict and violent extremism.”**

Yanar Mohammed, co-founder and president of the Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq

# FINANCING THE **WPS** **AGENDA**

Without realizing the women, peace and security agenda in full, the world cannot make and sustain peace, much less achieve the SDGs. Yet despite lofty rhetoric, woefully insufficient funding remains the main barrier to progress.

The agenda requires a holistic approach, multipronged strategies, multilateral cooperation and partnerships, and commitment at every level. These require high levels of investment, sustained over time. While the primary responsibility for implementation of the agenda lies with UN Member States, civil society organizations and the UN system are key actors as well. UN Women draws on a lengthy track record of global leadership and advocacy to increase financial commitments that are flexible,

sustainable and long-term. Existing and new mechanisms leverage partnerships that generate funds not only making UN Women's work possible, but that of many national and local women's civil society partners as well.

The increasingly complex and fragmented nature of today's conflicts call for prioritizing regular resources in particular. These sustain strategic results, and underpin UN Women's global reach and effectiveness. Yet this category of funding is falling behind. Committing more regular resources, or other forms of highly flexible resources, would enhance UN Women's capacity to respond to conflict and crisis as they unfold, work across expanded time-horizons, and back efforts to resolve the roots of conflict and inequality.



A rehearsal session with Colombia's Cantadora Network, a network of singers using traditional Afro-Colombian music to preserve their culture and promote peace. 2018. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

## Pooled funds incentivize finance for gender equality

Pooled funds, offering resources committed to specific themes, make strategic contributions to the women, peace and security agenda, including through UN Women. The Peacebuilding Fund is a prominent example. In 2019, it allocated 40 per cent of its funding to projects integrating a gender perspective, including 14.3 per cent to projects with gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal

objective. A special window, the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, supported projects totalling \$41.6 million.

The number of UN Women offices benefitting from Peacebuilding Fund allocations rose to 27, from 16 the year before. Funds went towards supporting local peacebuilders and inclusive security in Liberia, working on transitional justice in Guatemala, Security Sector Reform in South Sudan,

inclusive security in Liberia and supporting the empowerment of young women in Yemen, among many other initiatives.

UN Women serves as the secretariat for the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. In 2019, UN Women mobilized close to USD 18 million for the fund to channel

into women's rights and women-led organizations in conflicts and humanitarian emergencies. In 2019, the Fund actively supported over 100 grass-roots civil society organizations across 12 countries or country groups. For more, see the Fund's 2019 Annual Report.



## Supporters of the UN Women

While greater commitment to financing the women, peace and security agenda is imperative, UN Women is

fortunate to have many existing strong champions, and is grateful for their continued commitment.

Women mediators participate in a welcome performance in Bururi Province, Burundi.  
Photo: WPHF/Matthew Rullo



## VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN WOMEN IN 2019

### PEACE AND SECURITY SECTION (Non-Core Revenue)

From governments and other donors (expressed in USD)



\*Joint project with Peace and Security and Civil Society Division

# LOOKING AHEAD: **WHAT'S NEXT?**

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has put extreme pressure on governments and civil society. It has exacerbated the movement of people within and across borders, provided cover for violent extremist groups, and contributed to dangerous xenophobic and nationalist narratives. It is upending many hard-fought gains, and ushering in a worrisome pattern of using securitized pandemic responses to crack down on women's human rights defenders and free and open civic spaces.

The crisis presents an existential threat to women peace actors. With the move to virtual convening spaces, many women are excluded given the lack of digital tools and infrastructure. Funding has dramatically declined as donors reallocate funds to the pandemic response.

In laying bare inequalities and inequities that could drive new conflicts, the COVID-19 crisis has also underscored the importance of coordinated, human rights-centred responses. These are likely to become even more critical as the world looks ahead to likely greater devastation from climate change.

UN Women's work on women, peace and security and humanitarian action already takes this approach, and has pioneered many versions of it. But as the pandemic continues, and spirals into new forms of economic and political crisis, programmes will need to scale up urgently to meet increased demands, prevent rollbacks and sustain gains. Even before the crisis, at the end of 2019, UN Women had made a strategic decision to merge its humanitarian action and peace and security sections

to strengthen coordination among interconnected areas of work, and enhance already significant stores of gender expertise.

Moving into 2020 and beyond, UN Women is committed to

working in close partnership with key allies across the UN system and with Member States and civil society to achieve progress on the six catalytic priorities for women, peace and security that were outlined by the Secretary-General.

Helin Argav, United Nations tour guide from Germany, speaks to a group of young visitors about United Nations peacekeeping operations. Photo: UN Photo / Loey Felipe



**GLOBAL COMPACT ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION HAS BRING TOGETHER THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE ITS COMMITMENTS ON THESE ISSUES, OFFERING A POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO EXPEDITE MOMENTUM AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

UN Women will strive for greater protection and more space for women's human rights defenders and peacebuilders to carry out their work, including in contexts affected by terrorism and violent extremism. With boosted financial support, and in line with political commitments to and the broad public endorsement of the women, peace and security agenda, UN Women will send significantly more funding to women-led civil society organizations to prevent and mediate conflict, negotiate and build peace, and contribute to recovery and resilience in their communities.

For women in areas affected by conflict or disaster, UN Women will collaborate with key partners to guarantee women's greater access to economic resources and inclusion in decision-making. Further establishing gender-responsive conflict analysis as a priority will support the growth of knowledge and capacity within the UN system, towards making the approach a standard operating procedure. By the end of 2020, UN Women aims for all UN-led and co-led peace processes to include women and gender expertise. Another objective is to continue bringing

more uniformed women into UN peacekeeping and police operations, at a more rapid pace and including in top leadership.

In 2020 and beyond, a new Global Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action has brought together the international community to achieve its commitments on these issues, offering a powerful opportunity to expedite momentum and accountability. This will be critical in moving into the remaining Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs.

As it has been from the moment it began, 10 years ago, UN Women will continue punch above its weight and achieve outsized impacts. Its experts and advocates remain committed and undaunted. Every day, they do the difficult work of pushing for women's participation and gender-responsiveness in peace and security, from the local to the regional and global levels. And they keep on with the essential task of supporting local women who are making a profound and lasting difference on the front lines of conflict and crisis, all over the world.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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