

Joint Statement on Strengthening the Implementation and Shaping the Future of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Issued on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

As civil society organizations committed to advancing gender equality and peace, we call upon all governments of UN member states to renew and strengthen their commitment to UNSCR 1325 and to the extended Women, Peace and Security agenda.

While we acknowledge progress made over the past 25 years and commend, among others, the Norwegian state for choosing WPS as a priority area in its international relations, we observe with great concern a conservative and authoritarian political shift at global scale. This shift has led to the political and financial targeting of organizations working for women's rights, as well as increasing threats to women's rights and peace globally, with a dangerous emphasis and impunity in conflict zones and in countries with increasing authoritarianism and intolerance for diversity.

We insist that States ensure the following in their national and international political, diplomatic, and aid cooperation efforts, and urge meaningful action in the following critical areas:

1. Strong and Effective Protection of Women and Persons with Diverse Gender Identities in conflict environments

25 years after UNSCR 1325, women, girls, and persons with diverse gender identities continue to be targeted (including by armed actors) with the most abhorrent forms of violence, in and out of conflict. The Women, Peace and Security agenda represents a commitment to a more just and peaceful world. As civil society organizations working directly with communities affected by conflict, we witness daily both the devastating impacts of war on women and girls and their remarkable resilience and leadership in building peace. Therefore, we insist in:

- Zero tolerance to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) anywhere in the world, particularly when used as weapons of war
- Stronger and decisive diplomatic and legal action to protect women and persons with diverse gender identities' rights, to fight impunity and to ensure access to restorative justice and reparations

- Unwavering political and financial support for comprehensive SGBV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and mental health and psychosocial support response. These services must be made accessible to women, girls and persons with diverse gender identities especially in humanitarian responses
- Unwavering political and financial prioritization of women's rights and women-led organizations' leadership in development-humanitarian-peace initiatives, particularly in prevention of and response to SGBV
- Specific protection strategies for persons with diverse gender identities in conflict settings, recognizing their heightened vulnerability
- Firm opposition to the growing backlash against gender equality and strong political, diplomatic and legal defence of fundamental rights for all, as instructed in International Law.
- Integration of trauma-informed approaches in all protection initiatives

We stand ready to partner with Norway and other States in implementing these recommendations, but we also stand firm in our demand for urgent and transformative action. The time for performative commitments has passed—the next 25 years must deliver on the promise of UNSC Resolution 1325 of a world where women, girls and persons with diverse gender identities can live without fear of violence based on their gender identity.

2. Ensuring Meaningful Participation of Women in shaping Peace

Women's participation in mediation and peace processes continues to be neglected and remains dangerously low despite evidence showing that inclusive peace is more sustainable. We demand:

- Active promotion of women's meaningful participation in mediation and peace negotiations at all levels, through diplomatic channels and aid cooperation
- Support for local women's coalitions to develop their peace agendas and select their representatives prior to formal negotiations
- Creation of accountability mechanisms to ensure women's political participation at all levels of governance in post-conflict settings
- Recognition and inclusion of diverse women's voices with an intersectional perspective, including especially those from marginalized or neglected communities

3. Funding that Focuses on Women-led Peacebuilding

We call for a transformative approach to funding that recognizes and addresses colonial power structures in international development and peacebuilding. This requires:

- Substantially increasing direct funding to local women's rights and women-led organizations and gender equality movements, ensuring resources reach grassroots movements leading change in their communities
- Strengthen and amplify long-term funding mechanisms that prioritize local ownership and leadership of women in peacebuilding efforts, recognizing the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls
- Proactively ensure earmarking dedicated funding for gender equality in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding action, and gender justice initiatives in the reconstruction of societies ravaged by war.
- Eliminating bureaucratic and political barriers that prevent local organizations from accessing international funding

4. Protecting and Expanding Civic Space for Women's Rights

The shrinking space for civil society globally threatens decades of progress on women's rights. We urge the States signatories of UNSCR 1325 to:

- Publicly condemn and take diplomatic action against the closing of civic space for women's rights
- Establish robust protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders, particularly those working for gender equality and against SGBV in conflict settings
- Materialize a steadfast commitment to long-term gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and persons with diverse gender identities in development, humanitarian, and peace efforts. This dedication must persist even as military budgets expand, understanding that sustainable peace is built on inclusive social infrastructure
- Challenge legislation that restricts or controls civil society organisations from receiving international funding or from using it to advance gender equality and/or women's rights
- Develop specific strategies to counter the targeting of women's rights organizations and support and promote their work politically, diplomatically and financially, as they are often the first to be silenced in authoritarian contexts
- Create and sustainably support emergency response protocols for women-led organizations who face immediate threats

This statement is endorsed by:

[Signatures of civil society organizations and NGOs]