

2020 CIVIL SOCIETY ROADMAP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL & MEMBER STATES



BACKGROUND

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG) is an independent advocacy coalition consisting of 18 international NGOs that advocates for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security.

Our members work alongside women and women-led organizations in conflict and post-conflict situations in over 50 countries and work directly with over 200 NGOs and 75 networks of civil society actors and activists. Our members^a represent a broad spectrum of fields spanning the entire peace and security spectrum, including: human rights and women's rights, humanitarian assistance, disability rights, refugees and forcibly displaced populations, international humanitarian law, disarmament, security sector reform and transformative justice. This breadth of issue expertise, along with our joint expansive global civil society networks, enables us to develop and promote country-specific policy recommendations that positively impact the lives of women affected by conflict to Member States and United Nations (UN) leadership.

The [2020 Civil Society Roadmap on Women, Peace and Security](#) outlines key priorities and recommendations to the UN, Security Council and Member States in 2020 and beyond in **five key areas**:

1. **Prevention of conflict.** Take decisive action to prevent conflict, end violence and avert crisis, including by addressing gendered drivers of conflict and instability.
2. **Women's meaningful participation.** Ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security.
3. **Human rights defenders (HRDs), peacebuilders and civil society space.** Defend the legitimacy of the work of all HRDs and peacebuilders and their role in promoting peace and security, and effectively prevent and address attacks against them.
4. **Gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls, including access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR),** must be central to maintaining international peace and security.
5. **Accountability for implementation.** In addition to ensuring implementation by Member States, promoting system-wide accountability of the UN for implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.

The following document presents [recommendations to the Security Council and Member States](#).

^aCurrent members of the NGOWG are: Amnesty International; CARE International; Center for Reproductive Rights; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Cordaid; Global Justice Center; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict; Human Rights Watch; International Alert; MADRE; Nobel Women's Initiative; OutRight Action International; Oxfam International; Refugees International; Women Enabled; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and Women's Refugee Commission.

2020 Civil Society Roadmap on Women, Peace and Security Recommendations to the Security Council & Member States

I. Prevention of conflict

- ❑ **Defend the centrality of gender equality and the full scope of human rights of all women and girls in all international peace and security processes and all outcome documents.** This includes calling for gender equality and human rights to be at the center of negotiations in the context of all peace processes. This also requires including specific provisions in the mandates of all peace operations that call on them, along with UN Country Teams, to monitor and report on violations and abuses of human rights, including violations of all women’s human rights in line with the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW). In addition, this should also require both peace operations and Country Teams to consult with women’s civil society organizations as part of their mandate to protect and promote human rights.
- ❑ **The Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.** Its members should support timely and decisive action aimed at preventing or ending the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. They should publicly pledge not to vote against a credible draft resolution before the Security Council aimed at halting or preventing such crimes, in line with the [Accountability Coherence and Transparency Group’s Code of Conduct \(A/70/621\)](#).¹ Relatedly, members of the Security Council and Member States must not enable arms transfers when there is a substantial risk that they may be used to “commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence (GBV) or serious acts of violence against women and children,” in line with the [Arms Trade Treaty](#) (ATT). Members States must also intensify efforts towards reducing the flow of small arms and light weapons (SALW) by implementing all relevant treaties and protocols, including the ATT, Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition ([A/RES/55/255](#)), and the [Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects](#) (UN PoA).²
- ❑ **Respect, protect and fulfill all obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, unequivocally condemn any violations, including abuses targeting women and girls, by all parties to armed conflict, and ensure accountability of perpetrators.** This should include consistently condemning direct and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, deliberate targeting of schools, hospitals or other civilian infrastructure, denial of sexual and reproductive health services, and arbitrary denial of humanitarian access, all of which undermine women’s human rights. Ensure that there are consequences for state and non-state actors who deliberately violate or disregard international obligations, including through accountability mechanisms. Consistently support the creation of international, independent investigative mechanisms in situations of armed conflict. Commit to making the reports of such mechanisms public to bring greater transparency to the Security Council’s work in pursuit of accountability for grave violations and to deter future violations. Encourage parties to armed conflict to decisively and transparently investigate allegations of civilian harm committed by their forces.³

- ❑ **Center deliberations and decision-making regarding the formation, review and drawdown of peace operations on long-term approaches to sustaining peace, including gender-sensitive analysis of the root causes of conflict**, in line with [Resolution 2282 \(2016\)](#). This entails the inclusion of provisions related to gender-responsive early warning and peacebuilding in the mandates of peace operations, and ensuring that capacity for gender-responsive peacebuilding is prioritized during any transition. In this respect, the Security Council should regularly request, deliberate and draw upon the specific advice of the Peacebuilding Commission and ensure complementarity of efforts.
- ❑ **Intensify efforts to employ gender-sensitive small arms control as part of arms embargoes to safeguard against proliferation and diversion**. Explicitly call for all associated expert groups to carry out intersectional gender-sensitive analysis of the role that small arms play in exacerbating conflict and undermining peace and security, and call for detailed information related to arms transfers that violate the ATT and thus contribute to violations of [international humanitarian law](#), including GBV.

II. Women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security

To the Security Council:

- ❑ **Actively support women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and refrain from supporting new peace processes that exclude women**. Include explicit language calling for the full, equal and meaningful participation of diverse women in all thematic, country- and region-specific outcome documents, mandates of peace operations, and in any public statements. Call for the removal of all barriers to participation, including logistical, technical, legal, accessibility-related and financial barriers; proactively ensure accessibility of peacemaking spaces and communications, and address threats and violence against women participating in peace and security processes. Emphasize at all relevant opportunities that participation in informal processes or advisory roles can complement, but is never a substitute for, structured, direct participation in formal processes.
- ❑ **Security Council members and Member States must hold the UN accountable for ensuring the direct participation of diverse women in peace and political processes within, and between, all formal and informal peace tracks**. This includes asking UN leadership to brief the Security Council on specific efforts and strategies to ensure meaningful participation, highlighting the extent to which processes are gender-sensitive, and holding UN leadership accountable when they fail to ensure inclusive and representative processes.

To Member States:

- ❑ **Ensure that peace processes or negotiations they host or fund have diverse women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making roles, in formal and informal processes**. Member States supporting peace processes should ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and women’s civil society organizations by providing timely support and proactively funding their participation in peace processes, in line with [Resolution 2242 \(2015\)](#).⁴

III. Human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil society space

To the Security Council:

- ❑ **Support the participation of civil society briefers, including peacebuilders and HRDs, at the Security Council.** Actively invite and support diverse women civil society briefers on all country situations, prioritizing invitations to briefers who have been independently selected by civil society organizations, networks and coalitions. Council members should provide political and financial support as required, including any assistance or diplomatic support to obtain visas in order to brief UN bodies such as the Security Council. With a view to coherence and inclusivity, consider more diverse and independent sources of information from women-led and women's rights groups, as part of their deliberative process, including civil society alternative reports submitted to other UN bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Universal Periodic Review, as well as formal and informal civil society briefings.
- ❑ **Include provisions in the mandate of peace operations requiring the monitoring and reporting of attacks, threats and killings of HRDs, including women human rights defenders (WHRDs), and further require all peace operations to meaningfully consult with diverse women's civil society organizations** in all aspects of mandate implementation, including conflict prevention, protection of civilians, peacebuilding and electoral support, as called for in [Resolution 2122 \(2013\)](#) and outlined in the Department of Peace Operations' [Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Policy](#) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs' [Women, Peace and Security Policy](#).
- ❑ **Prevent reprisals against civil society representatives, including peacebuilders and HRDs, for cooperating with UN bodies.** Recognition of the legitimacy and value of HRDs in promoting peace and security can be an important deterrent against attacks or reprisals against them, and can contribute to an enabling environment for them to continue to carry out their work safely in the long-term. For this reason, public recognition of the legitimate role of HRDs, including women's civil society, and condemnation of all attacks against them, including in the context of counter-terrorism efforts or for cooperating with UN bodies such as the Security Council, can be expressed in outcome documents and public statements. When reprisals occur for engaging with UN bodies, the agency, concerns and safety of the HRD, and the context in which they work, must be at the center of any response, which should be gender-sensitive and crafted in consultation with the defender at risk. Finally, it is critical that any avenues for civil society participation or contributions to the work of UN bodies remain dedicated and independent spaces for women civil society, and any efforts to mitigate or respond to reprisals must never compromise their participation. Any response by the Security Council or other UN bodies must comply with international standards, principles and recommendations made by relevant UN experts such as the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.
- ❑ **Reinforce and support the recommendations of experts,** such as the Special Rapporteur on Counter-terrorism and the recent recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, in relevant discussions and outcomes on country- and region-specific situations, including by calling for governments to refrain from using counter-terrorism and national security policies to target and restrict HRDs, including WHRDs.

To Member States:

- ❑ **Ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society** in which WHRDs are protected, supported and their legitimacy is recognized. Adopt and implement legislation that recognizes and protects the rights of WHRDs, peace activists and humanitarian personnel, such as freedom of expression, association, assembly and other civil liberties in law and practice. Eliminate all laws that restrict and criminalize the work that HRDs do, as well as the issues and populations with which they engage, including counter-terrorism and national security legislation, which is often used to unduly attack, restrict and otherwise criminalize the work of HRDs. Adopt and implement gender-sensitive protection measures to enable both the participation and safety of WHRDs.

IV. Promotion of human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights

To the Security Council:

- ❑ **Defend SRHR in both thematic and country-specific discussions and any outcome documents.** Reinforce previously agreed language on SRHR and ensure full implementation of all WPS resolutions. Outcomes that undermine, damage or fail to advance the core tenets of the WPS agenda, or endorse anything less than full implementation, are unacceptable.
- ❑ **Reinforce that a holistic survivor-centered approach to addressing, responding to and preventing GBV must be rights-based and designed with reciprocal communication in partnership with affected populations.** The Security Council should call for all governments to uphold their obligations to recognize that GBV services, including sexual and reproductive health services, are essential services and must be accessible in a safe and user-friendly way, including by allocating budgets and support for staff. The Security Council should reinforce this understanding in all relevant outcome documents adopted on country- and region-specific situations.
- ❑ **Reinforce recommendations articulated by independent experts and expert groups in country- and region-specific discussions and outcomes, including those resulting from human rights treaty bodies and special procedures.**

V. Ensure system-wide accountability across the UN for implementation of the WPS agenda

To the Security Council:

- ❑ **Ensure all peace operations have robust, holistic and comprehensive mandates to address WPS.** Include provisions in all peace operations mission mandates that call for gender to be a cross-cutting issue, in addition to specific language with regard to the need for effective protection and full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls within each mandate component. Additionally, the Security Council should explicitly require the integration of WPS as a cross-cutting issue in all reports of the Secretary-General on country-specific and regional situations, as well as thematic issues; this analysis should be accompanied by sex-, disability- and age-disaggregated data. Further, all peace operations

must be mandated to consult regularly with diverse women's groups as part of implementing their WPS mandate.

¹ *Joint Statement: 22 NGOs Call for Action to Strengthen the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2019.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/joint-statement-22-ngos-call-action-strengthen-protection-civilians-armed-conflict>

² Gerome, *Preventing Gender-Based Violence through Arms Control*, 2016.

³ *Joint Statement: 22 NGOs Call for Action to Strengthen the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2019.

⁴ Resolution 2242 (2015), OP 1.