



Australian Government

Australian National Action Plan on

Women, Peace and Security

2021-2031

Minister's Foreword

Our lives, and the lives of all those of our generation, will be dramatically changed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. We have already seen vast economic dislocation, social upheaval, and significant stress placed on domestic and global institutions.

We need the powerful outcomes generated by the United Nations Security Council's Women, Peace and Security agenda to assist us as we reconstitute our societies and institutions, and as we resist the temptation to allow conflict to take root in the uncertainty we are all facing.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, I have seen first-hand the transformative power of gender equality around the world. It boosts economies and can break cycles of conflict to lay a solid foundation for peace.

Yet we continue to see women excluded from conflict resolution, peacebuilding and security operations. We must remedy this, and we should not allow such exclusion to become a feature of our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, women and girls are disproportionately affected – experiencing unequal access to food, healthcare, education, and justice, and often experiencing sexual and gender-based violence.

Women and girls are not on the sidelines of conflict or mass social dislocation. They are often most affected and therefore should be at the centre of efforts to ensure peace, security and social cohesion.

The Australian Government has a steadfast commitment to women and girls' empowerment, which is also at the heart of the United Nations Security Council's Women, Peace and Security agenda.

When women and girls have voice and agency they are a powerful force for global stability. They are best placed to determine their own needs in fragile, dislocated, or conflict-affected contexts, and the community benefits from their skills and expertise.

To achieve this, we can support their meaningful participation in bringing about stability after disasters, preventing conflict, and creating durable peace in conflict's wake.

We will pursue women's participation and leadership in peace, security and stability decision-making, including in operational activities, formal negotiations and economic recovery.

Quite simply, if we fail to respond to the breadth of women and girls' roles and needs in crises, we limit our capacity for success in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

I am proud of our achievements under Australia's first National Action Plan.

Today, all Australian Defence Force personnel deployed to fragile, dislocated and conflict-affected contexts are trained in Women, Peace and Security. There are also now nearly 200 Gender Advisors, women and men, who can be deployed on military, humanitarian, relief and recovery operations.

The Australian Federal Police has deployed more women, and has built partner country capacity for improved responses to gender-based crimes, including domestic violence, forced marriage and trafficking.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has embedded gender equality into its day-to-day advocacy, and established the Gender Equality Fund, which includes support for women's organisations to engage in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Australia is a global leader on Women, Peace and Security. This second National Action Plan will build on these successes.

It has been designed collaboratively across Australian Government agencies and with civil society.

It is an ambitious, long-term strategy in support of meaningful, concrete outcomes that improve the lives of women and girls in our Indo-Pacific region and globally.

The National Action Plan aims to:

- support women and girls' meaningful participation and needs in peace processes;
- reduce sexual and gender-based violence;
- support resilience, crisis and security, law and justice efforts to meet the needs and rights of all women and girls; and
- demonstrate leadership and accountability for Women, Peace and Security.

These are areas where we can best support conflict prevention, durable peace, and social resilience.

Implemented over ten years, we will work to meet the immediate needs of women and girls in crisis, while tackling more difficult, entrenched issues, like harmful gender norms. We will look to challenge those pervasive barriers to participation, as this is key to making a difference.

The National Action Plan affirms Women, Peace and Security is business as usual. It will continue to be embedded in our policies, in our operations, in our thinking, and in our actions.

I look forward to working with our partners, to make meaningful and tangible gains for women and girls.



Senator the Hon Marise Payne

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Women



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Setting the scene

The Australian Government promotes the human rights of women and girls, and gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to protect their safety and because it is essential to economic and development gains, stability after crises, preventing conflict, and creating durable peace. The Women, Peace and Security agenda¹ supports a holistic approach to peace and security, underpinned by four pillars:

- preventing conflict and sexual and gender-based violence in fragile and conflict-affected contexts
- promoting women's full and meaningful participation, and gender equality in peace and security decision-making processes
- protecting human rights, including reducing sexual and gender-based violence, and
- meeting the needs of women and girls, and reinforcing their agency in relief and recovery efforts.

¹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which was unanimously adopted on 31 October 2000, formalised the Women, Peace and Security agenda.





A woman in the Solomon Islands cleans her pots in a river while her child watches.

Photo: Irene Scott, DFAT

Women, Peace and Security Architecture



The United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security in October 2000.² It was the culmination of decades of work by civil society and women's groups, particularly in conflict-affected countries, to highlight the experiences of women, and the important roles women and girls play in conflict prevention, peace processes and promoting peace and security.

Since UNSCR 1325, the UN Security Council has adopted nine additional Women, Peace and Security resolutions.³ These promote women and girls' human rights and support durable peace. After nearly two decades of implementation, many of the commitments of this UN agenda remain unmet.

Since Australia's first National Action Plan was adopted in 2012, the Women, Peace and Security agenda has evolved. UNSCR 2242, adopted in 2015, acknowledged the changing global context of peace and security and the relevance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda to a range of crosscutting issues including countering violent extremism, climate change and health pandemics.

Evidence of the importance of gender equality to preventing conflict and peacebuilding has grown since 2012. In 2015, UN Women conducted a comprehensive review of UNSCR 1325 (the Global Study). It reaffirmed the human rights mandate of the Women, Peace and Security agenda as necessary to sustaining peace and identified areas for increased global effort. It used a growing evidence base to demonstrate the value of gender equality to building peace, and showed that as well as being a human right, gender equality accelerates sustainable development, inclusive growth and community resilience. The Global Study's recommendations included:

- the need for increased efforts to support women's meaningful participation in peace processes as experience shows inclusive peace processes are more long-lasting
- prioritising the protection of women and girls in humanitarian crises, and
- increasing women's leadership and decision-making in efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism.

Beyond the UN Security Council, international humanitarian law, human rights, and other global and regional frameworks inform Australia's contribution to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The Australian Government takes its commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda seriously. This includes supporting the adoption of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's General Recommendation 30 (2013) that provides instruction on the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected contexts,⁴ and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015). These frameworks strengthen accountability and reinforce the links between gender equality, peace and development.

The Australian Government will continue to demonstrate leadership and accountability for this agenda by reporting in key forums beyond the Security Council. We will include Women, Peace and Security as part of our reporting to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We will do the same in our reporting to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

2 UNSCR 1325 is at page 63.

3 The full text of Security Council Women, Peace and Security resolutions, as well as, other statements and reports can be found here: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/women-peace-and-security/>.

4 UN Women, *Guidebook: CEDAW General Recommendation 30 and Women, Peace and Security*, United Nations, New York, 2015, p. 10.

Trends shaping the implementation of Women, Peace and Security

Globally, conflict has become more protracted and complex. It increasingly involves non-state actors, including criminal networks. When these groups target civilians, they can devastate communities. Over the last decade, almost 90 per cent of people killed in conflict were civilians, mostly women and children.⁵ Transboundary challenges, including transnational crime, violent extremism, health pandemics and climate change are also increasingly contributing to fragility and conflict.⁶

Because of conflict, violence, human rights violations, and disasters, the number of displaced people is also increasing.⁷ Displacement can increase the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse through illegal sex work, illegal adoption and child labour.⁸ Communities in crisis can experience increased vulnerability to poverty, development gains can be reversed and stability undermined.⁹ When disasters hit people in fragile and conflict-affected contexts their capacity to respond to crisis may be limited, and existing violence can escalate.¹⁰

Gender inequality and discrimination shape women and girls' experiences in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. This means women and girls can suffer disproportionately, for example experiencing sexual and gender-based violence, unequal access to food, healthcare, education, justice and economic opportunities, and citizenship rights.¹¹ And they are often excluded from the decisions that affect them, including in conflict prevention and peace processes.

Women and girls play pivotal roles in fragile, conflict-affected, humanitarian and disaster contexts. They help build resilience and prevent conflict, and also contribute as first responders to crises.¹²

5 True, J and Rivero-Morales, Y, *Towards inclusive peace: Analysing gender-sensitive peace agreements 2000-2016*, International Political Science Review, Vol. 40 (1), 2019, pp. 23-40.

6 UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, United Nations, New York, 2015 and OECD, *States of Fragility 2018*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018.

7 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security (S/2018/900)*, United Nations, New York, 2018, p. 1.

8 UN Women, op. cit., *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, 2015, p. 84.

9 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Humanitarian Strategy*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2016, p. 4.

10 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 'Summary for Policy Makers', in: *Climate Change 2014: impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014, p. 21.

11 UN Women, op. cit., *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, 2015, p. 69.

12 *ibid.*, p. 169.



Young kids watch a play about gender-based violence at the Young Women's Christian Association in the Solomon Islands.

Photo: Irene Scott, DFAT

Women's participation, voice and agency — across all aspects of peace, security and stability — is key to unlocking the transformative potential of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Women and girls already contribute to conflict prevention and peace processes. Often their existing roles and knowledge are ignored or under-valued. They are also frequently excluded from efforts to build resilience and peace. Women's meaningful participation, including supporting women's rights organisations and networks to participate in conflict prevention and peace processes, helps those processes to succeed more often. This participation is key to building inclusive peace processes and requires new leadership and decision-making structures that remove the barriers to women's full participation.

Australia's National Action Plan

The National Action Plan sets out Australia's long-term strategy to realise gender equality and human rights of women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It does this because human rights and gender equality help lay a solid foundation for peace and break cycles of conflict. Building resilience and social cohesion, and supporting peace is key to ensuring our region is prosperous and stable. Australia's efforts will focus on our region —the Indo-Pacific — while also strengthening and supporting conflict prevention and peace globally.

Gender equality is also a key domestic priority of the Australian Government. While this National Action Plan applies to our international efforts, at home Australia is committed to supporting women's economic security, leadership aspirations and taking action to ensure women and children are safe from violence. A number of separate strategies, plans and commitments support the achievement of these priorities within Australia.

This National Action Plan identifies **four key outcomes** to guide our international efforts in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Selected for their contribution to peace, the outcomes are:

- support women and girls' meaningful participation and needs in conflict prevention and peace processes
- reduce sexual and gender-based violence
- support resilience, crisis response, and security, law and justice sector efforts to meet the needs and rights of women and girls, and
- demonstrate leadership and accountability for the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

These four outcomes are mutually reinforcing. They support coordinated action across government to ensure that the Women, Peace and Security agenda is an inseparable part of all our efforts, whether in relation to peace, security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, development assistance or combat.

Women and girls' meaningful participation will be front and centre of Australia's efforts to implement this National Action Plan. Their meaningful participation is key to realising gender equality and will be the thread that connects each of these four key outcomes.





Maternal and child health training in Bangladesh.

Photo: DFAT

Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021–2031

Aim Australia will make the most of the transformative potential of the Women, Peace and Security agenda by placing women's meaningful participation at the centre of all our efforts to protect and promote women's and girls' human rights, prevent and resolve conflict, and establish enduring peace.

Principles

A 'do no harm' approach

Gender mainstreaming

A human rights-based approach

Recognising and responding to diverse experiences

Outcomes

1.

Supporting women's meaningful participation and needs in peace processes

Increasing women's participation in conflict prevention

Increasing women's participation in all peace processes

2.

Reducing sexual and gender-based violence

Reducing harmful gender norms

Increasing women and girls' safety and security

Increasing access to justice

3.

Supporting resilience, crisis, and security, law and justice efforts to meet the needs and rights of all women and girls

Security, law and justice responses

Preventing and countering violent extremism

Humanitarian action, stabilisation and disaster management

4.

Demonstrating leadership and accountability for WPS

Australia demonstrates global leadership

Australia demonstrates accountability for results

We will strengthen implementation by:

- increasing women's participation and leadership in the peace and security sector
- building knowledge and capabilities
- using evidence-based approaches
- strengthening our partnership with civil society

Implementation plans are delivered by:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Defence

Department of Home Affairs

Australian Federal Police

Australian Civil-Military Centre

Key features of the National Action Plan

This National Action Plan was developed based on the recommendations from two independent reviews, national consultations conducted by government and civil society, and Women, Peace and Security research and evidence.

This National Action Plan:

- covers a ten-year period, enabling the Australian Government to demonstrate impact against long-term outcomes
- outlines what the Australian Government wants to achieve, supported by departmental implementation plans, with the flexibility to determine contributions that best reflect their expertise
- identifies four outcomes, which implement the four Women, Peace and Security pillars
- is underpinned by four interlinked principles that demonstrate Australian values of equality and fairness
- strengthens the partnership with civil society to make better connections between all actors implementing this Agenda, and
- is firmly grounded in human rights principles, recognising the need to respond to diverse experiences; addresses root causes of conflict; and acknowledges violent extremism, health pandemics and climate change.

K. Vasantha Kumary is a female deminer working for DASH a demining organisation working in Northern Sri Lanka

Photo: Conor Ashleigh, DFAT

What is meaningful participation of women and girls?

Meaningful participation means women and girls have their voices heard and concerns taken seriously.

It means they can contribute their expertise and experience to shape decisions and outcomes. One way to support meaningful participation is to adopt international standards to protect and promote human rights.

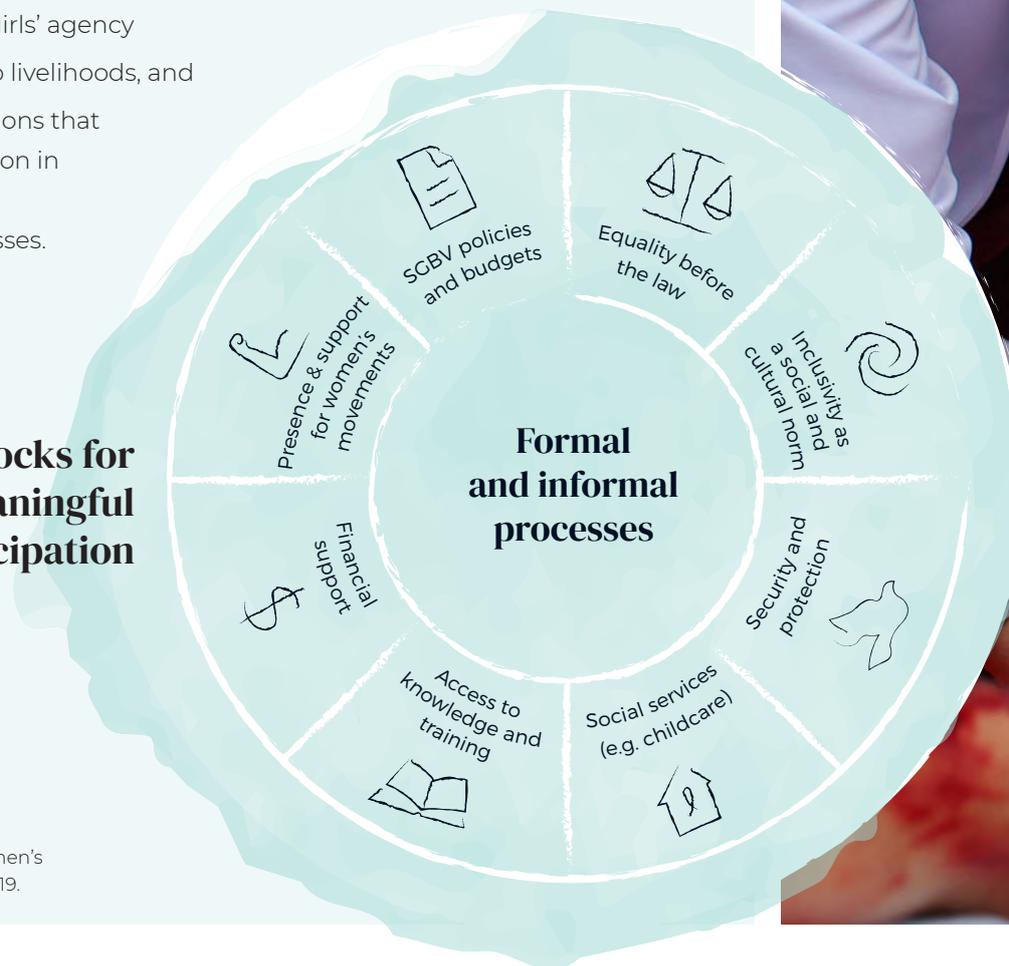
There are many barriers that prevent women's meaningful participation, including:

- stereotypical gender roles, bias and discrimination that reduce access to education and health services and limit access to paid employment, as well as political structures that exclude participation
- sexual and gender-based violence, including violence against women in politics, and
- limited funding to support their participation.

Investing in women and girls' participation:

- advances women and girls' agency
- increases their access to livelihoods, and
- can change the institutions that prevent their participation in formal and informal decision-making processes.

Building blocks for women's meaningful participation



Graphic adapted from 'Building blocks for women's meaningful participation', Equality Institute, 2019.

Doctors tend to a volunteer patient during an Australian-funded emergency simulation at Pondok Kopi Hospital, east Jakarta, to ensure the hospital is prepared to deal with a major influx of patients.

Photo: Josh Estey, DFAT



Principles of Australia's implementation

Australia's National Action Plan is underpinned by four interconnected principles that apply to all aspects of implementation. These principles reflect Australian values and contribute to the transformative potential — and long-term success — of the National Action Plan. They are:

- a 'do no harm' approach'
- a human rights-based approach
- gender mainstreaming, and
- recognising and responding to diverse experiences.

A 'do no harm' approach

In this context, a 'do no harm' approach means maximising positive outcomes for women and girls, men and boys, while minimising any unintended potential harm that could arise from our actions.

Supporting empowerment opportunities that provide the most transformative outcomes for women and girls is a focus of our peace and security efforts. We will ensure our investments in Women, Peace and Security respond to inequality while reducing the risk that our actions have potential unintended consequences, such as exacerbating existing vulnerabilities.

A human rights-based approach

A human rights-based approach centres on human rights and gender equality as a central feature of international peace and security. It also ensures actions contribute to long-term changes to remove inequality and discrimination.

The reversal of human rights — particularly gender equality — is an early sign of increasing vulnerability to conflict and greater risk of atrocities.¹³

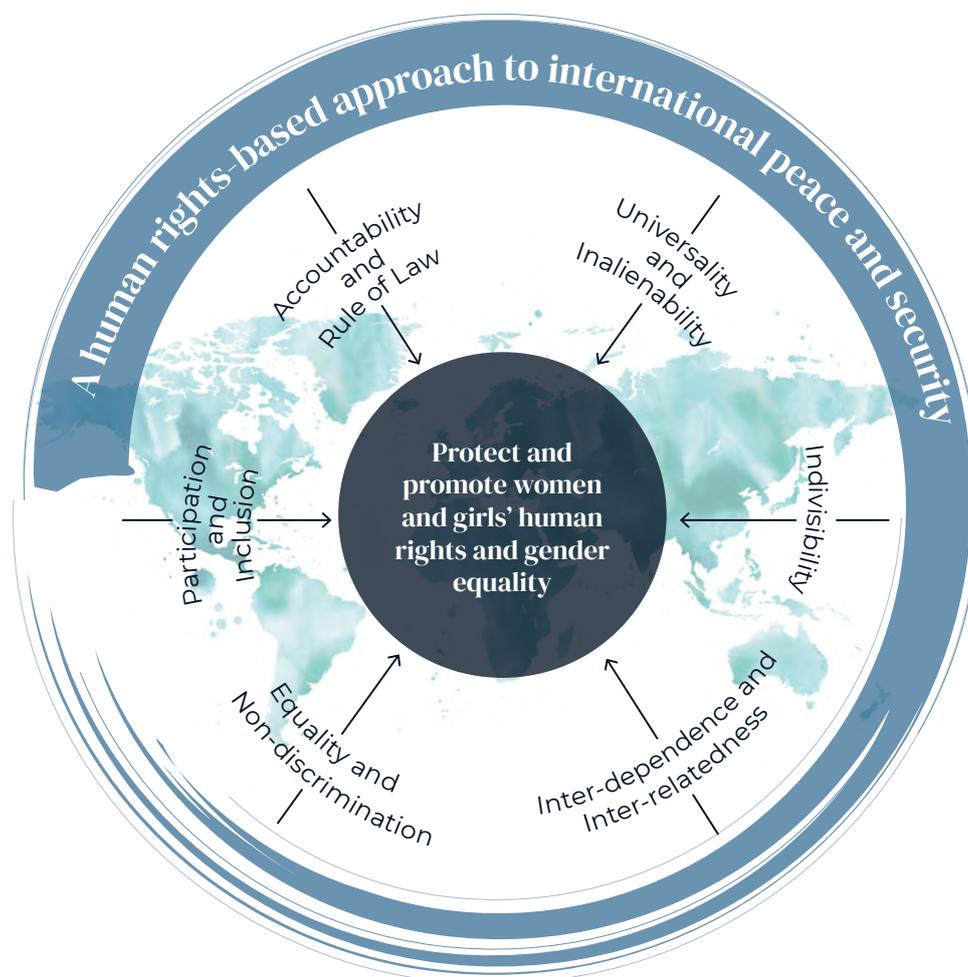
Australian Government implementation will apply human rights-based approaches by:

- aligning our efforts with human rights mechanisms¹⁴
- protecting the human rights of women and girls
- supporting women and girls to know their rights and claim them, and
- supporting their meaningful participation in peace and security decision-making processes.

¹³ UN Women, *Gender-Responsive Early Warning: Overview and how-to guide*, United Nations, New York, 2012 and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2141 (S/RES/2171), 2014, paragraph 13.

¹⁴ Human rights mechanisms help inform, monitor and uphold international human rights standards and principles. Examples of mechanisms include the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), and the [Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women](#).

A human rights-based approach to international peace and security



Graphic adapted from 'Rights based approach to International Peace and Security', Equality Institute, 2019.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a tool to promote gender equality. It ensures gender perspectives are considered throughout design, implementation, and evaluation of activities to support this National Action Plan.

When gender is not adequately considered, implementation efforts can create new sources of inequality and entrench existing gender norms and discrimination.

Effective gender mainstreaming starts with understanding how gender inequality shapes the lives of women and girls, men and boys, and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.¹⁵ This principle is an ongoing commitment of the Australian Government's implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Gender inequality – unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and value



Graphic adapted from 'Gender inequality – unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and value', Equality Institute, 2019.

¹⁵ The information referenced in the gender inequality graphic is drawn from UN Women's data on gender inequality. This can be accessed at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>.

Women and girls are not a homogenous group, and neither are men and boys.

Australia's National Action Plan promotes the human rights and dignity of all – women and girls, men and boys, and people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities – and tailors approaches to meet their needs.

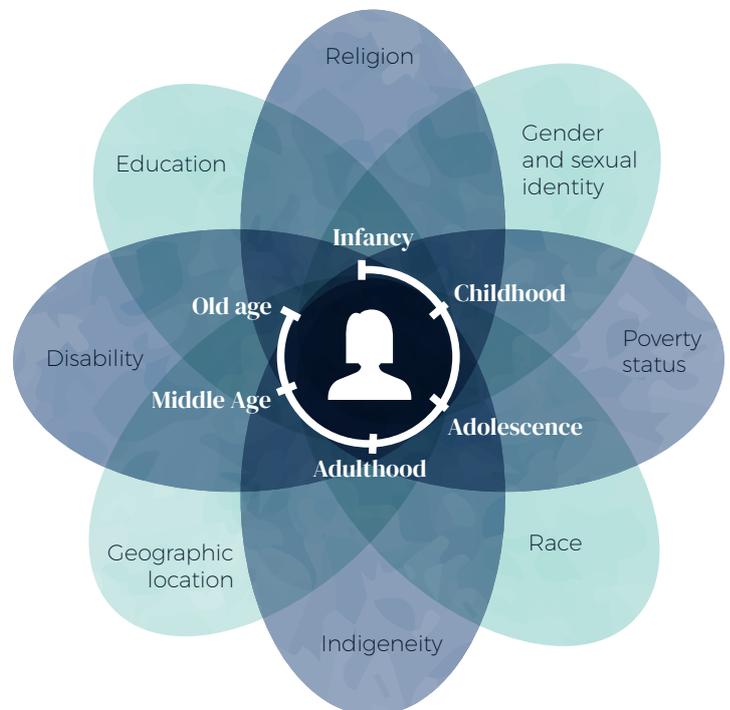
Recognising and responding to diverse experiences

Gender is one aspect of identity and experience. Inequality and discrimination can also occur on the basis of race, ethnicity, political and religious affiliations, education, health, caste, indigeneity, relationship status, disability, age, sex and gender identity and poverty, among other factors. These can combine, overlap and compound to generate specific inequalities and injustices.

The way an individual experiences discrimination and inequality changes over time and can be transmitted over generations.

Understanding how inequality and discrimination can multiply and compound helps us to deliver better targeted responses, which in turn are more effective, and more likely to promote long-term changes that can break cycles of conflict and realise sustainable peace.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda focuses on women and girls. But it is important to recognise that men and boys also play an important role. The involvement of men and boys is crucial in combatting violence against women and girls, as partners in the promotion of women's participation and needs, as well as in challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes.



Graphic adapted from 'Identity and different forms of discrimination', Equality Institute, 2019.

Fidelia Soares and her 12 year old daughter Domingas are involved in CARE's Young Women Young Nation education project in Liquica, Timor-Leste.

Photo: Josh Estey, CARE, DFAT



Outcome 1:

Support women and girls' meaningful participation and needs in conflict prevention and peace processes

Women have an equal right to participate in all areas of peace and security decision-making and to be active in governing their communities and societies. This extends to their inclusion in all conflict prevention and peace processes. Practically, women's meaningful participation in these processes strengthens protection efforts, accelerates economic recovery, deepens peacebuilding efforts and leads to more sustainable peace.¹⁶

¹⁶ O'Reilly, M, Ó Súilleabháin, A, Paffenholz, T, *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes*, International Peace Institute, New York, 2015.

While women can and do contribute to peace processes at all levels, their participation is not always guaranteed and it is not always equal, valued or recognised.

When women are politically active — particularly women human rights defenders — they are often explicitly targeted with violence to deter their participation in decision-making processes. Reducing sexual and gender-based violence is critical to support women’s participation in peace and stability processes.

Decision-making that excludes women assumes that conflict is gender neutral and that male leadership and participation represents the community. Women are also excluded because combatant and State representation is prioritised over civilians or affected communities in formal peace processes. As a consequence, inequality and discrimination are further entrenched and inequality normalised following conflict.

Women and girls’ meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peace processes is an unmet commitment of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. More effort is needed to bridge the gap between commitment and action. Meeting this commitment means:

- connecting informal decision-making to formal decision-making in peace processes
- redesigning peace negotiations to ensure women have a seat at the table
- amplifying the efforts of civil society coalitions, women’s rights organisations and women’s human rights defenders, and
- supporting women’s capacities to analyse, shape agendas, organise and exercise their voice and agency, and their political involvement – and recognising that sometimes they participate differently.

Increasing women’s meaningful participation in conflict prevention

There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to conflict prevention and durable peace. There are many complex, context-specific drivers of conflict, including gender inequality. However, research shows that gender equality — including physical security for women and girls to live free from gender-based violence — correlates positively with State security and sustainable peace.¹⁷ Women can also be instrumental in the prevention of conflict and mass atrocities, which can also occur in times of peace, including through their contributions to locally-led early warning systems.

Achieving gender equality is one of the most effective ways to secure sustainable peace and resilient communities.¹⁸ A deeper understanding of the gendered drivers of inequality and violence, including the different roles and experiences of all actors in crises, can help shape effective conflict prevention responses.

¹⁷ Hudson, V, Ballif-Spanvill, B, Caprioli, M and Emmett, C, *Sex and World Peace*, Columbia University Press, 2012.

¹⁸ UN Women, op. cit., *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, 2015.

Australian Government actions aim to:

- ensure women and their representative organisations are included in political dialogues and development programming on conflict prevention
- ensure gender indicators are included in conflict early warning systems to better monitor and respond to women and girls' experiences of insecurity
- support existing community mobilisation — including the efforts of civil society coalitions, women's rights organisations and youth organisations and human rights defenders — to realise gender equality, remove existing barriers to decision-making structures, and address gendered barriers to social, economic and political rights
- conduct gender-sensitive conflict analysis that includes analysis of the drivers for conflict prevention and peace, and
- support existing efforts to challenge discriminatory gender norms, including about unpaid care, access to education, health and other services, and economic participation, that limit women and girls' roles.



CASE STUDY

Preventing atrocities in the Asia Pacific: Women youth leaders

Together, Australia with the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) is partnering with countries in the region to prevent atrocities. In 2018, APR2P supported the Asia Pacific Partnership for Atrocity Prevention to convene the first ever Youth Summit on the Prevention of Atrocity Crimes in the Asia Pacific, held in Bangkok. Youth delegates representing nine countries across the region participated – of the 29 delegates, 20 were women.

Academic and civil society leaders delivered specialist training in atrocity prevention that focused on: building knowledge and awareness; recognising the role young men and women can play in building community resilience; and empowering youth leaders as agents of effective political and social action. Delegates learnt that bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds can mitigate underlying causes of conflict such as hate speech and incitement to violence.

With the support of the Australian Government, a young Mirriwoong Gajerrroong woman from Western Australia participated, bringing her unique knowledge of working with Indigenous youth in the remote Kimberley region to build and create positive community change. This was also an opportunity for her to learn more about youth solidarity initiatives from young human rights defenders in the region. For example, she learned about local community programs tackling hate speech and building positive connections between different groups in Indonesia, and how these could be replicated in Australia.

The Youth Summit demonstrated the value of finding ways to draw on, and build upon the efforts of young people in building peace. At the end of the Summit, delegates committed to continuing their Responsibility to Protect advocacy by sharing information and raising awareness across social media platforms, engaging with other fora such as the ASEAN

Youth Forum, and surveying existing national capacities and networks to support atrocity prevention.



◀ *Youth delegates at the first ever Youth Summit on the Prevention of Atrocity Crimes in the Asia Pacific, Bangkok, 21 August 2018*

Photo: Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Increasing women's meaningful participation in peace processes

Women's meaningful participation in all stages of formal and informal peace processes is important for peace and stability. Women's knowledge, their community networks and leadership capacities are underutilised in peace, security and stability efforts despite evidence that these contributions strengthen these processes.

Women's participation in peace processes is a long way from where it needs to be. Women made up only three per cent of mediators, eight per cent of negotiators, and three per cent of witnesses or signatories to major peace agreements between 1992 and 2017.¹⁹ This is the case even though the inclusion of women leads to more enduring peace: between 1989 and 2011, of 82 peace agreements in 42 armed conflicts, those with women as signatories lasted longer than those with no women as signatories.²⁰

Inclusive peace processes also acknowledge the localised status and situation of women and girls, and include gender provisions that meet their needs. Including gender provisions helps address the broader needs of the community — particularly in relation to governance, justice, security and recovery aspects — and reduce the risk of conflict. The inclusion of gendered perspectives in peace processes also helps ensure accountability for human rights violations and abuses during conflict.²¹ Nevertheless, between 2000 and 2016, gender provisions were included in only 51 per cent of peace agreements.²² Women's meaningful participation is more likely to ensure the inclusion of gender provisions in building and maintaining peace.



We need to create opportunities for women to shape peace, and ensure the views and needs of multiple groups can meaningfully participate in peace processes, including by ensuring diverse women have a seat at the table.

19 UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations, *Women's Participation in Peace Processes*, 5 January 2019. Information can be accessed at: <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>.

20 Krause, J, Krause, W and Bränfors, P, *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace*, International Interactions Vol 44(6), 2018, pp. 985-1016.

21 Warren, R, Applebaum, A, Mawby, B, Fuhrman, H, Turkington, R, Alam, M, *Inclusive Justice: How women shape transitional justice in Tunisia and Colombia*, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2017.

22 True and Riveros-Morales, op. cit., 2019.

Australian Government actions aim to:

- support women's rights organisations to engage, participate and influence inclusive peace processes at all levels
- provide care services, and financial, transport and accommodation support to enable women to participate in peace and security processes as they occur
- support capacity building to ensure men and women, including in negotiation and mediation teams, can design gender equality provisions
- support capacity building to ensure men and women can implement the gender equality provisions of peace agreements
- influence government agencies involved in the peace process to incorporate women's issues and provide access for women in negotiations or discussions
- use Australia's diplomatic leadership to advocate, including for women and girls' participation in peace processes, reconciliation and stabilisation efforts, and
- ensure women and girls can access education and economic opportunities.

CASE STUDY

Women's participation in social transformation

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Australian Volunteers Program supports the work of the Paung Sie Facility (PSF) that aims to strengthen social cohesion in Myanmar.

One aspect of PSF's work is the Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) window, which targets funding for civil society organisations working in this area. The initiative provides support and advice to improve organisations' capacity to implement projects aimed at increasing women's participation in building social cohesion. Australian Volunteer, Carolyn Grant, supported capacity building as an Organisational Development Mentor. Ms Grant worked on building the confidence and effectiveness of civil society actors in Myanmar in support of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Improving civil society organisations' capacity in this way strengthens their ability to deliver gender-responsive initiatives to increase women's participation and decision-making in building social cohesion. Increased social cohesion makes communities' more resilient to challenges and reduces the risk of violence and conflict.

Working with the GPS window has also improved organisations' advocacy skills. For example, two organisations successfully advocated to the police department to assign women police officers to handle gender-based violence cases in certain townships in Sagaing Region and Rakhine State. GPS partners are also engaging in local decision-making spaces to address gender discrimination and gender-based violence, and a group successfully advocated for a

30 per cent gender quota in a local ethnic minority Culture and Literature Committee in Tamu Town, Sagaing Region. This advocacy is enabling women's greater participation across different aspects of society, further supporting their ability to contribute to building social cohesion.



◀ *Australian Volunteer Carolyn Grant volunteering with the Paung Sie Facility in Myanmar to strengthen women's participation in the peace process.*

Photo: Paung Sie Facility, Myanmar



Women attend a training workshop in West Lombok, Indonesia.

Credit: Josh Estey, DFAT



Outcome 2:

Reduce sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence is a violation of human rights. It is not an inevitable consequence of fragility and conflict. In armed conflicts, sexual and gender-based violence can be crimes against humanity, war crimes, and constitute an act of genocide under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Sexual and gender-based violence is part of the everyday experience of women and girls in places all over the world. Gender-based violence — whether it occurs in peace, fragility or conflict-affected contexts²³ — is enabled by gender inequality.²⁴

Understanding the connection between violence in peace, fragility and conflict is important to supporting effective prevention efforts as well as responses to violence that meet survivors' needs. Failing to do so can enable sexual and gender-based violence to continue once the conflict has ceased.

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the focus of interventions can often be limited to extreme acts of violence and cruelty — particularly against women and girls. This is unhelpful because all gender-based violence is a human rights violation deserving attention.

Gender-based violence can be both a warning sign and a symptom of impending conflict or atrocities. Efforts to prevent and resolve conflict cannot be separated from efforts to address gender-based violence.

Reducing harmful gender norms

Gender inequality is the unequal access to rights, responsibilities and opportunities as a result of harmful gender norms and stereotypes. It drives sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and peace.

Gender norms and stereotypes have consequences for women and girls, men and boys, and people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. Reducing harmful gender norms is a crucial element of conflict prevention, and preventing sexual and gender-based violence. Actions that seek to challenge these norms must recognise the impact of past trauma — for example, resulting from colonisation, racism and social and economic disadvantage. Designing approaches that respond to the impact of trauma and harmful gender norms is key to long-term sustainable efforts to reduce — and ultimately prevent — sexual and gender-based violence.

Replacing harmful gender norms with positive ones takes time. It includes challenging the gender norms, gender relations, gender inequalities and stigma that enable and normalise violence, including the strategic use of sexual and gender-based violence.

Women's rights organisations are key to changing these norms. These organisations are often best placed to understand and respond to local barriers to gender equality.

23 The CEDAW Committee adopted General Recommendation 35, 26 July 2017. Gender-based violence '[...] manifests itself on a continuum of multiple, interrelated and recurring forms, in a range of settings, from private to public, including technology-mediated settings and in the contemporary globalised world it transcends national boundaries' OP6.

The recommendation can be found at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/GR35.aspx>.

24 UN Women, op. cit., *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, 2015, p. 169.



Australian Government actions aim to:

- support women's rights organisations to advance gender equality, and amplify women and girls' capacity to speak, be heard, innovate and drive change
- support local efforts to change harmful gender norms and discriminatory practices
- strengthen local laws and institutions to protect human rights, and to protect against sexual and gender-based violence
- engage with men and boys, women and girls, and sexual and gender minorities to challenge gender inequality and find local solutions to realise gender equality, and
- contribute to the evidence base of what works to change harmful gender norms.

Photo: DFAT

Increasing safety and security for women and girls

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, sexual and gender-based violence often increases and exacerbates conflict, undermines communities and social cohesion, limits women's participation — including in conflict prevention and peace processes — and destabilises relief and recovery efforts.

Women and girls experience increased rates of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Men and boys, and people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, also experience these types of violence but to a lesser extent.²⁵ In situations of conflict and crisis, women and girls, men and boys have different needs and experience different risks. It is important to respond to these in a gender-sensitive way that meet survivors' individual needs and reduces the risk of future violence.

Ensuring victims and survivors have their rights promoted and protected underpins Australian Government efforts in implementing this National Action Plan. Survivors face further security risks through a lack of access to critical services, including health services. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the rates of maternal morbidity and mortality are higher when women and girls lack access to vital sexual and reproductive health services.²⁶ More than 500 women and girls die each day in fragile and conflict-affected contexts from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth²⁷ — this is 60 per cent of all maternal mortality worldwide.²⁸ This means sexual and reproductive health and rights are the primary consideration.

The Australian Government is committed to applying survivor-centred approaches. This allows survivors to determine their needs, and recognises that these needs will be different for diverse groups. A range of needs inform specialised responses, including for:

- female-headed households, widows, male survivors, orphans, unaccompanied minors, women and children associated with armed groups
- those who have experienced abduction, sexual slavery and human trafficking
- those who have experienced child, early and forced marriage, and
- children born out of wartime rape.

A comprehensive coordinated approach to services — including police, prosecutors, and justice and health departments — can support survivors' welfare and access to justice and health needs. This extends to children born out of wartime rape who may experience unique vulnerabilities and harms, including stigma, statelessness, and reduced access to rights and services. Ensuring all survivors have access to economic and social services will support their livelihoods, and increase their resilience to future insecurities. Australia will also help civil society apply survivor-centred approaches, as often these organisations underpin local service delivery.

25 United Nations, *Conflict related sexual violence: report of the United Nations Secretary General (S/2018/280)*, United Nations, New York, 2018.

26 Across the affected region during the Ebola outbreak in 2014, there was a 30 per cent drop in the number of women giving birth in hospitals and health clinics and a 75 per cent increase in the maternal mortality rate (Davies, S and Bennett, A, *A gendered human rights analysis of Ebola and Zika: locating gender in global health emergencies*, International Affairs, Vol 92(5), pp. 1041-60.)

27 United Nations Population Fund, *Humanitarian Action 2018 Overview*, 2018.

28 World Health Organisation, *Maternal Mortality Factsheet*, 16 February 2018.

Australian Government actions aim to:

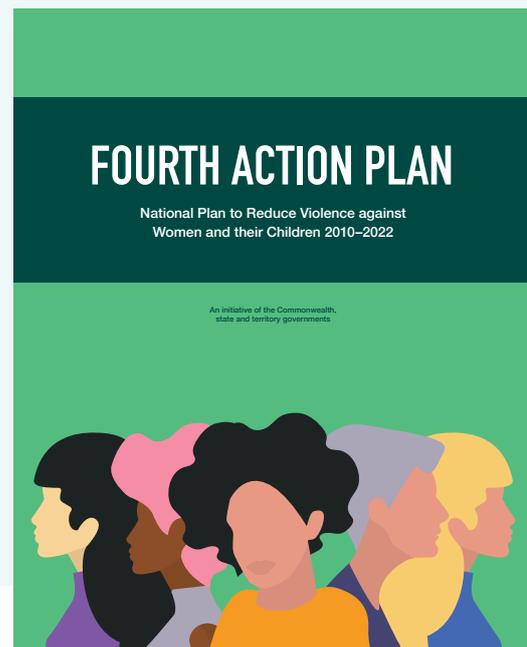
- support access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights
- support programs that work to decrease the stigma often targeted towards survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and integrate mental health and psychosocial support to survivors
- ensure access to comprehensive approaches to support survivors' access to health, education and economic security in partnership with women's rights organisations, and
- work with personnel deployed to fragile and conflict-affected contexts on their responsibilities to affected populations to improve safety and security for women and girls.

Photo: DFAT

The Australian Government is investing in efforts to end violence against women and their children

The security of women and girls is an issue in all societies. Australia has a comprehensive framework of legislation and policies to end pervasive domestic, family and sexual violence.

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* is a framework for Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. The Fourth Action Plan, *Turning the Corner*, is focused on prevention through initiatives such as Australia’s first Prevention Hub, and continuing the national primary prevention campaign. It also focuses on building on the strengths of frontline services and systems that work to keep women and their children safe. The Plan responds to evidence that highlights a link between disrespect and violence against women, and encourages social changes in attitudes towards women.



Increasing access to justice

Sexual and gender-based violence is being used as a tactic of war and terrorism.²⁹ When it occurs, it can indicate increased risk of mass atrocity crimes, including genocide and ethnic cleansing. This violence is part of a broader strategy of conflict and terrorism to displace communities, or gain control of resources. It is used to dominate and disrupt social ties within communities with devastating effects. While perpetrators more often target women and girls, they also target men and boys. This violence, and a continued lack of accountability for perpetrators, can undermine peace and conflict resolution.³⁰

All victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have a right to justice. But perpetrators — including of conflict-related sexual violence — continue to commit these crimes often without prosecution. When this happens, and when impunity is allowed to continue, the victims and survivors of these crimes have no access to justice.

²⁹ United Nations, op cit., *Conflict related sexual violence: report of the United Nations Secretary General*, 2018, p. 5.

³⁰ *ibid.*

Too many barriers remain for survivors to access security and justice institutions. Increasing women's participation in these sectors is key to increasing safe access to justice for victims. Ending impunity remains a considerable challenge in realising the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Increasing access to justice requires strong leadership and commitment from all actors — government and non-government — to ensure policies and laws include effective enforcement mechanisms.



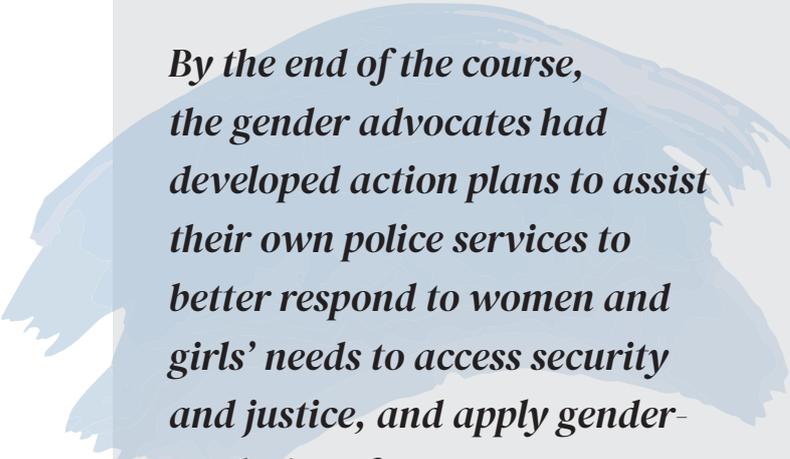
Australian Government actions aim to:

- support a rules-based international order to ensure partner countries understand their responsibility to protect
- increase efforts to address the full range of rights violations that women and girls experience in fragile and conflict-affected contexts
- work at all levels to prevent rape being used as a war tactic, including through established UN frameworks, as well as mechanisms agreed by Member States to protect and defend human rights
- strengthen local capacity to address sexual and gender-based violence through better access to justice and domestic violence units, and
- support partner countries' efforts to introduce and implement domestic laws on sexual and gender-based violence.

CASE STUDY

Tonga Police establish Gender Advocacy Group

The Australian Federal Police, in partnership with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, is delivering a Gender Advocacy Training Program in the Pacific. The program aims to build police capacity to respond to sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence. Participants develop their skills to advocate for positive change in police attitudes, and to increase awareness of gender inequality, human rights and the prevention of gender-based violence.

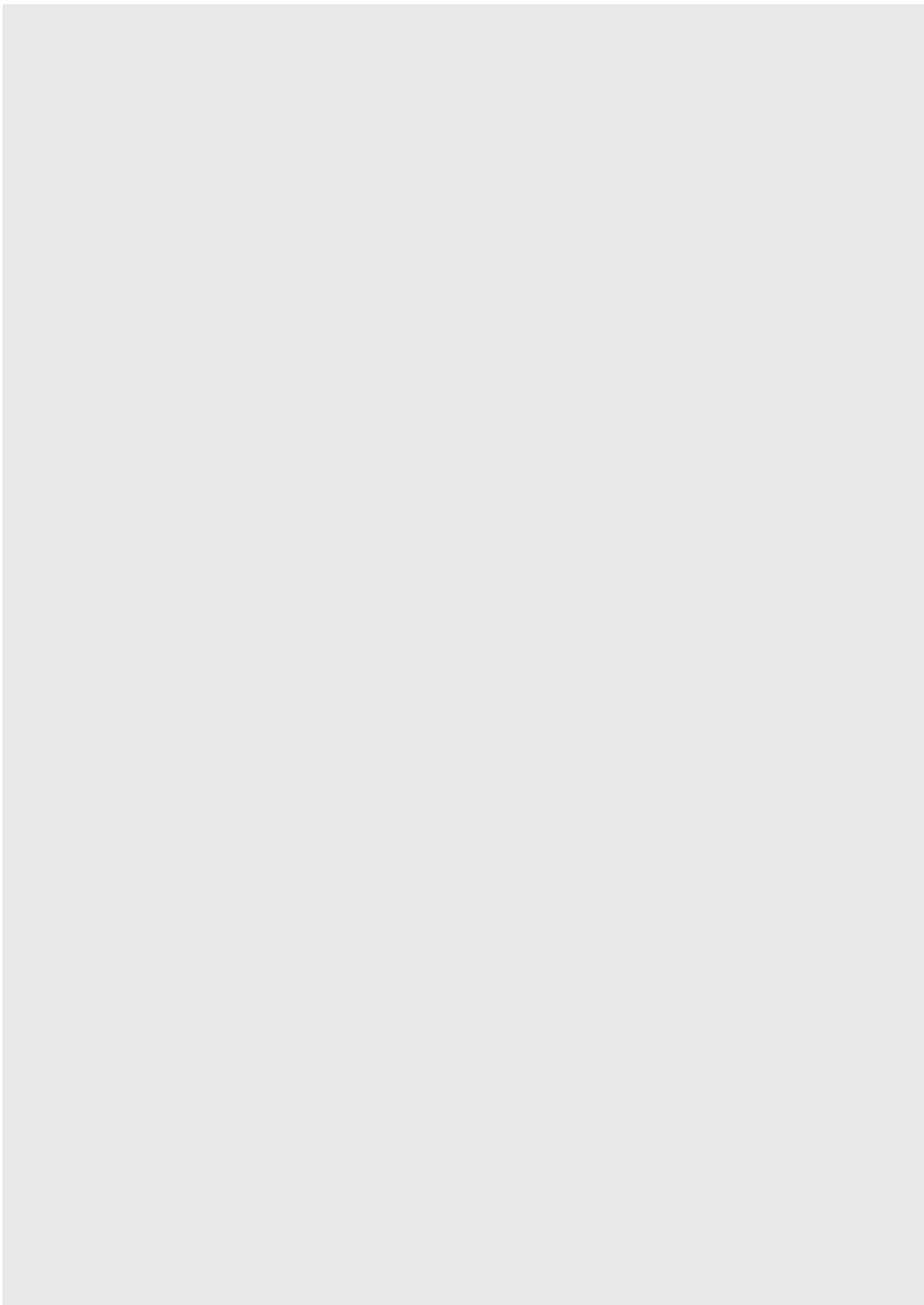


By the end of the course, the gender advocates had developed action plans to assist their own police services to better respond to women and girls' needs to access security and justice, and apply gender-analysis to frame responses.

Training has emerged as a key driver of change, playing an instrumental role in progressing police responses to domestic violence, particularly in setting expectations with recruits in relation to the *Family Protection Act*.

In April 2018, 33 police officers – including 20 women – from Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu undertook the program. By the end of the course, the gender advocates had developed action plans to assist their own police services to better respond to women and girls' needs to access security and justice, and apply gender-analysis to frame responses.

Since returning to Tonga, the gender advocates have established a Gender Action Working Group and a Domestic Violence Advisory Group. The Tongan Police Director of



Walking home after collecting clean drinking water from a public collection point, set up in response to the drought, Tuvalu.

Photo: DFAT





Outcome 3:

Support resilience, crisis response, and security, law and justice sector efforts to meet the needs and rights of all women and girls

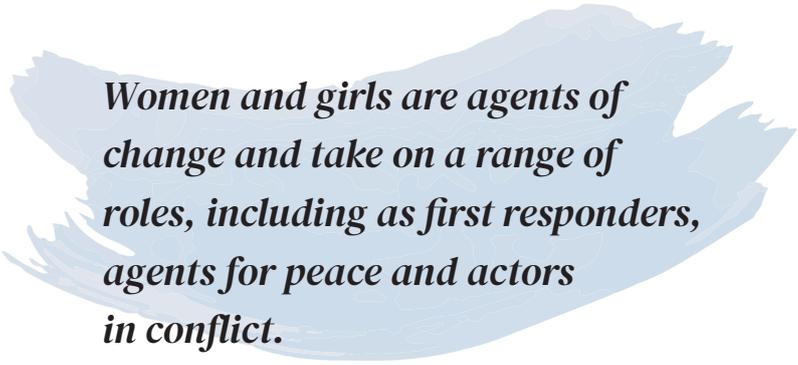
The security environment is complex and driven by transboundary security challenges, including violent extremism and terrorism, health pandemics and climate change. Addressing these challenges requires taking into account human security and environmental security. And, to do this effectively involves cooperation to prevent and respond to violence, conflict, mass atrocities, humanitarian crises, forced displacement and natural disasters. Ensuring women and girls' needs are met is foundational to transforming cycles of conflict and crisis to realise peace.

Increasing access to security, law and justice responses

The security, law and justice sectors have an important role in reconciliation and stabilisation efforts. For example, the security sector supports government institutions to provide services, uphold the rule of law, protect human rights, and provide access to justice following crisis. Designing gender-responsive interventions will help with the delivery of security sector responses that meet women and girls' needs.

Women and girls are agents of change and take on a range of roles, including as first responders, agents for peace and actors in conflict. Their meaningful participation should be supported to define the security challenges that affect their communities and to devise effective responses. Increasing their leadership and decision-making powers in the security sector enables responses that meet the community's security needs, including by supporting inclusive reintegration strategies.

There are a range of transnational crimes with gendered causes and consequences. Women and girls are increasingly vulnerable to human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices — 71 per cent of human trafficking victims are women and girls.³¹ In 2018, three quarters of people trafficked for sexual exploitation were women and girls.³² Vulnerability to transnational crimes can increase in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, because security institutions are undermined, or lack the resources to uphold the law.



Women and girls are agents of change and take on a range of roles, including as first responders, agents for peace and actors in conflict.

Building capacity to prevent and combat these crimes requires the meaningful participation of women, women's rights organisations and survivors, to design, implement and assess the effectiveness of responses. Ultimately, access to justice is underpinned by survivor-centred approaches to address these crimes, human rights abuses and impunity for perpetrators.

Building capability in the security sector to apply gender analysis can strengthen security responses. Gender-responsive approaches to law, justice and security support conflict and atrocity prevention, build community and social resilience, and can prevent a relapse into conflict and deepening crisis. To overlook the gendered dimensions of this security environment is to only partially understand the issues.

³¹ UNDOC, *UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016*, p. 7, 28.

³² UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IV.2.



Australian Government actions aim to:

- apply gender-responsive approaches to all security, law and justice efforts
- support local efforts to increase women's participation and leadership in the security sector
- support partner countries to strengthen legislative frameworks to prevent crimes — particularly those with gendered causes and consequences — including human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices, exploitation and forced labour, and forced marriage
- work with the security and justice sectors to implement gender-responsive policies, legislation, institutions and practices, and
- strengthen accountability and justice for human rights violations and abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence and mass atrocities.



Australian Government approaches to combat human trafficking and slavery

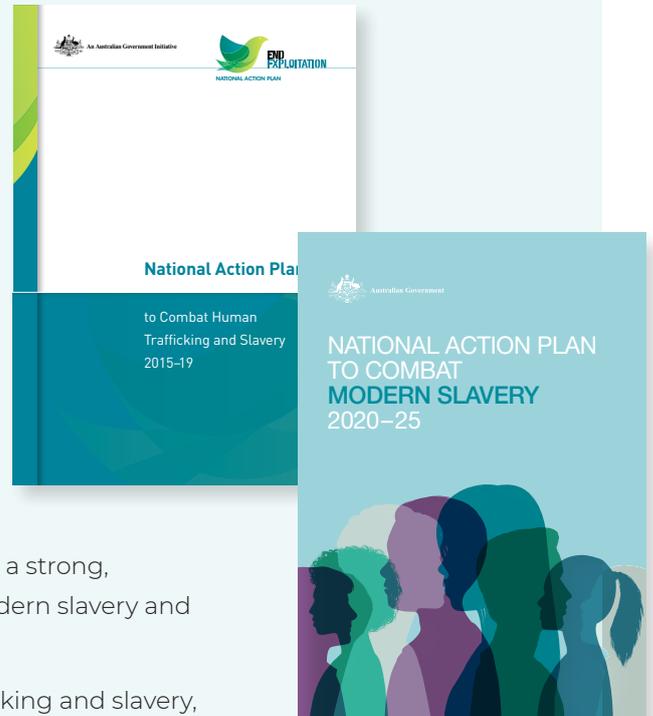
The Australian Government is committed to preventing and addressing modern slavery, which includes human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices. Australia has a comprehensive legislative framework that criminalises human trafficking, slavery and slavery like practices, including forced labour and forced marriage. These crimes violate human rights and are a form of gender-based violence.

Under the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-2019* (the National Action Plan) Australia developed a strong, whole-of-government strategy to combat modern slavery and implemented a range of measures aimed at:

- Preventing and deterring human trafficking and slavery, and responding to labour exploitation in supply chains
- Strengthening Australia's criminal law frameworks, including in respect of detection, investigation and prosecution of offenders
- Supporting trafficked people, including by protecting their human rights and educating vulnerable groups, frontline responders and the broader community, and
- Working with regional partners, including through the *Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime*.

In implementing this National Action Plan, Australia introduced the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (the Act), establishing a transparency framework aimed at driving action by businesses to address modern slavery risks in global operations and supply chains. In a world first, the Act also requires the Australian Government to prepare annual statements outlining the actions it has taken to assess and address modern slavery risks in its operations, including procurement and investment activities.

Australia has recently announced a new five year National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-2025, which will build on existing strategic responses demonstrating Australia's commitment to combatting human trafficking and slavery.



Preventing and countering violent extremism

Integrating a gender perspective in preventing and countering violent extremism is critical to ensuring security responses are effective. It is also crucial for the security of women and girls, and helps build durable peace. The UN Security Council has emphasised the need for measures to address violent extremism, stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and consider women and girls in counter-terrorism interventions. Terrorist organisations can exploit gender norms and stereotypes to support recruitment and financing strategies: this means that understanding the impact of gender on extremist movements is critical to finding effective and suitable responses.

Women and girls are both the victims and the perpetrators of violent extremism. Strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism are more effective when they recognise both the influence of gender norms, as well as the roles women play — for example in recruitment, or as active participants — in violent extremism.

Australian Government actions aim to:

- embed gender-sensitive approaches to violent extremism and counter terrorism
- support research on what works to challenge the gender norms, discrimination and inequality that is being used by extremists to recruit, fund and support extremist violence, and share knowledge and best practice, and
- engage with women's rights organisations to determine their own security needs, and to build and support existing efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, recognising that grass roots women's organisations are responsible for some of the most successful counter-narratives and prevention activities.

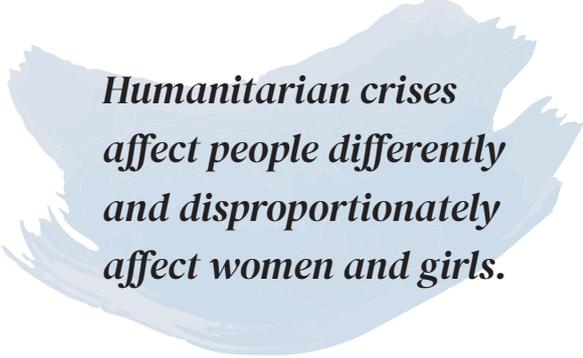


Humanitarian action, stabilisation and disaster management

Humanitarian crises, including disasters and health pandemics, undermine efforts to promote sustainable economic growth and eradicate poverty. Building resilience to prevent conflict and respond to disasters is critical to supporting regional and global security. Natural disasters can be a significant driver of fragility, conflict and humanitarian crises. They exacerbate risk to other insecurities and undermine resilience to respond to fragility and conflict.

Humanitarian crises affect people differently and disproportionately affect women and girls. Sixty per cent of maternal mortality occurs in humanitarian and fragile settings.³³ Conflict, disaster and insecurity increases newborn morbidity and mortality, rates of HIV and other sexually transmissible infections. Providing sexual and reproductive health services during an emergency not only saves lives, it empowers women, revitalises the health system and speeds up recovery.

Gender inequality limits women and girls' agency in crises, and their access to immediate and life-saving assistance. Women and girls are at greater risk of harm and deprivation, including livelihood insecurity, reduced mobility, increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and risks arising from caring responsibilities such as a lack of independence and economic security. Australia's



Humanitarian crises affect people differently and disproportionately affect women and girls.

humanitarian action is designed to address underlying risks and sources of vulnerability, and ensure women and girls, men and boys, and people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities have equal access to help and protection that meets their immediate and long-term needs.³⁴

There are opportunities in humanitarian crises to realise gender equality, and invest in long-term solutions to crisis. Ensuring women and girls' meaningful participation in all aspects of disaster management and humanitarian response — including

decision-making — is critical to upholding human rights, building long-term community resilience and achieving sustainable development outcomes. Gender-responsive approaches can reduce women and girls' vulnerabilities in humanitarian crises, including through resettlement options in response to displacement. Ensuring women and girls directly inform these approaches means responses will better meet their needs for protection, services and livelihoods.

³³ UNFP, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015 – estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank and the UN Population Division*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

³⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, op cit. 2016.

Australian Government actions aim to:

- amplify the work of women's rights organisations, networks and coalitions, which are already investing in crisis response and sustainable disaster management, and encourage their leadership in humanitarian response and disaster management
- adopt a gender-responsive approach to resilience, relief and recovery in our humanitarian action, and stabilisation, development and disaster management
- embed survivor-centred approaches across all efforts to prioritise the prevention of, and response to, sexual and gender-based violence, including safe access to comprehensive and quality services that support sexual and reproductive health and rights
- ensure stabilisation and recovery approaches meet the needs of women and girls for long-term sustainable livelihoods, including access to health, education, and economic opportunities
- engage men and boys to protect and advocate for the rights and inclusion of women and girls in all stages of humanitarian assistance, and
- support women's leadership and participation in climate policy decision-making. These inclusive policy processes will support improved long-term outcomes for communities in crisis, helping to build peace.



Photo: DFAT

CASE STUDY

Gender Advisors in humanitarian operations

The Royal Australian Air Force is training operation planning staff as Gender Advisors. This is just one way it is mainstreaming gender and building capability of its personnel to apply a gender perspective in operations. The Air Force is deploying Air Force Gender Advisors to humanitarian crises in the region.

In 2018, as part of Operation South West Pacific Assist, the Air Force deployed Gender Advisor Squadron Leader Adam Vasilj as part of the Strategic Response Team to Tonga. He advocated for women's participation in relief and recovery planning meetings and the inclusion of women's needs and priorities in the recovery plan. As a result, the plan identified health and wellbeing needs as a priority, as well as resuming business operations and clearing agricultural areas. These activities were then elevated as part of the operational response. Reopening schools was also identified as key to communities' recovery, to ensure continuity of education for children affected by the crisis. With children at school, caregivers were then more able to undertake repairs to their property and assist in recovery efforts.

Following an earthquake and tsunami, the Air Force deployed a Gender Advisor as part of the Contingency Response Squadron for Indonesia Assist 2018. Using capabilities built in gender training, the Gender Adviser applied a gender perspective to operational planning. Because of this planning, aircraft transport used to move people displaced by the earthquake and tsunami included separate holding areas for women and children, separate and private search facilities, and safe spaces for children.





Two girls play in Tonga

Credit: Connor Ashleigh, DFAT

Sangita Training Center, Australian volunteer Julia Price (left) with Nava Kala Sharma (right), Nepal.

Credit: Jim Holmes, DFAT





Outcome 4:

Demonstrate leadership and accountability for the Women, Peace and Security agenda

The Australian Government will continue to demonstrate its leadership in support of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Strong leadership from States is supporting strengthened global commitments to gender equality. Leadership is essential to challenge the push-back on gender equality and human rights that undermines the international rules-based order, and ultimately our peace and security.

Working with global and regional partners and institutions, the Australian Government will continue to support the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We will advocate for stronger commitments and actions to implement the Agenda, through high-level engagement at the UN — including through the Security Council, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council, and by implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda (the 2030 Agenda).

The Australian Government is demonstrating global leadership in a range of different ways. For example:

- the Prime Minister is a member of the UN Secretary General's Circle of Leadership to Prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Operations
- the Minister for Foreign Affairs is a champion of the UK-led Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative
- the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia held their first Women, Peace and Security Dialogue in April 2018, and
- Australia is a member of the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security — an informal network of UN member states that seeks to advance implementation of UNSCR 1325.

Australia will collaborate with cross-regional groupings, like-minded countries and global non-government partners. Beyond the UN, progress on the Women, Peace and Security agenda is achieved in other global and regional fora, and on the ground by women's rights organisations and humanitarian partners, delivering services to communities in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Supporting connections between local peace actors and global fora ensures gendered aspects of conflict prevention and peace processes, as well as those related to emerging security challenges, are considered by global leaders.



The Australian Government is promoting diversity, gender equality and senior gender expertise within our own security, defence and diplomatic sectors.

In demonstrating our commitment, the Australian Government is promoting diversity, gender equality and senior gender expertise within our own security, defence, and diplomatic sectors, as well as the capacity to implement the Agenda. We will continue to focus on women's participation and leadership and will embed gender-sensitive conflict analysis. All National Action Plan partner departments apply a zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.



Photo: DFAT

Australian Government actions aim to:

- support women's rights organisations and networks to represent and lead discussion on international peace, security and stability, and human rights frameworks that strengthen international norms
- cooperate with other countries, and in multilateral fora to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda, fully utilising Australia's diplomatic network, including by supporting women's organisations and peace networks to share good practice
- embed gender-sensitive conflict analysis to implement National Action Plan priorities
- increase women's participation and leadership in Australia's security sector and diplomatic sector
- build capacity in Australia, and our region, to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and
- raise awareness of, and encourage compliance with International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law, and strengthen connections between Women, Peace and Security and human rights mechanisms.





CASE STUDY

Supporting women's participation in defence and security in the Pacific

Under the Pacific Maritime Security Program, the Department of Defence is supporting Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste to increase women's participation in defence and security operations. This support includes training to strengthen defence capability, and professional and policy development support.

Twelve Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste will receive Guardian-class Patrol Boats. Among other improved capabilities, these boats have the facilities needed to ensure women can participate in Pacific defence and security maritime operations. With support from Defence, these countries are taking additional steps to increase women's representation. Tuvalu selected the first woman to join its Police Maritime Wing to crew its new Guardian-class Patrol Boat. The Fiji Navy developed and implemented policies to introduce women into the Navy and increase their opportunities. And, for the first time, Tonga's armed forces are integrating women into non-traditional roles.

These activities promote women's voice in security decision-making and leadership by supporting their greater participation in defence operations.

◀ *Royal Solomon Islands Police Force female officers march down the main street of Honiara on International Women's Day.*

Credit: RAMSI, DFAT

How we will implement the National Action Plan

The Minister for Foreign Affairs leads the National Action Plan, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The National Action Plan is a coordinated whole-of-government partnership. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade works with the Department of Defence, the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Civil-Military Centre ('implementing departments and agencies') to implement the National Action Plan.

Implementing departments and agencies

Each implementing department and agency will develop and release its own implementation plan. These are stand-alone documents that outline department and agency activities that contribute to National Action Plan outcomes.

Implementation plans usually have a two-year duration.

How Australia funds Women, Peace and Security commitments

The Australian Government will deliver the National Action Plan through implementing departments and agencies' programs. They will develop and implement programs that best contribute to achieving their own priorities and National Action Plan outcomes.





Apprentices Michelle Area and Elva Churem undertaking heavy vehicle training at Hating Deering in Port Moresby as part of the APTC training.

Credit: Rocky Roe, DFAT

Australian capabilities

Implementing departments and agencies will maximise Australia's contribution to the agenda by strengthening their capacity to develop gender-sensitive policies, strategies and practices through Women, Peace and Security training.

The Australian Civil-Military Centre is building a shared understanding of Women, Peace and Security. It is supporting capacity building in Australian Government departments and agencies and civil society by:

- developing and delivering online training
- working with international counterparts and UN agencies to identify best practice, and
- mainstreaming gender analysis in civil-military-police education and training.

Training increases capacity to:

- analyse how gender inequalities intersect with other inequalities
- identify how localised gender analysis and gender-conflict analysis can support more effective implementation of Australia's National Action Plan, and
- undertake gender-sensitive conflict analyses and apply the findings to our operations, programs and policies.

Increasing women's participation and leadership

Increasing women's participation and leadership at all levels of implementing departments and agencies is an important commitment, and remains a significant enabler of National Action Plan outcomes.

Research

The relationship between gender, conflict and peace is complex and context-specific. We will support research that helps clarify the connections between gender, conflict and peace, and that identifies best practice in Australia, our region, and the world.

Australia's partners

Australia can only realise the Women, Peace and Security agenda by working in partnership with others.

Key to our success are the connections we will make through our work to reduce inequality, prevent conflict, and to promote peace, security and prosperity.

- Australia will work with partner countries and other donors, including the UN, NATO, regional and global organisations, and civil society organisations.
- We will also identify local civil society actors and support their priorities, particularly women's rights organisations, women human rights defenders, women-led peacebuilding organisations, faith-based organisations and civil society peace networks.

Working in partnership with Australian civil society

Australia's first National Action Plan laid the foundations for strong partnerships between Australian civil society and government. We will strengthen our partnerships with civil society across two key functions — advice and accountability.

The Australian Civil-Military Centre will lead collaboration with Australian civil society. This will support departments' own efforts to engage with civil society on Women, Peace and Security.

The Australian Civil-Military Centre will host open civil society advisory dialogues to bring together the experience, skills and expertise of government departments and agencies, academia and civil society across jurisdictions and sectors. The dialogues will enable:

- discussions on implementation progress and recommendations from independent reviews
- ideas to be exchanged on emerging best practice and recent research, and
- new partnerships to support whole of government implementation.

To support transparency and accountability, the Australian Government will encourage and support civil society to release shadow reports on government progress of National Action Plan commitments.



Participant from a women's sewing group in the Solomon Islands.

Photo: Rob Maccoll, DFAT

Governance and accountability

As noted above, the Minister for Foreign Affairs leads the National Action Plan supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

- chairs the inter-departmental committee on Women, Peace and Security
- coordinates whole-of-government implementation
- releases progress reports, and
- commissions an Interim Independent Review (2025) and an Independent Final Review (2030).

Inter-departmental committee

The inter-departmental committee is the Australian Government's primary mechanism for providing whole-of-government leadership and coordinating implementation of the UN Security Council's Women, Peace and Security agenda, and the National Action Plan. Membership includes all implementing departments and agencies, as well as the Office for Women in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

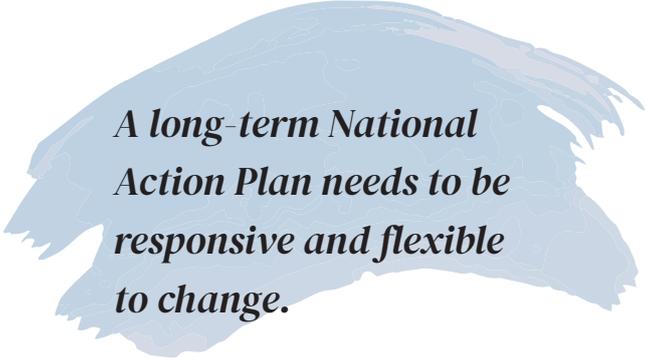
The National Action Plan applies a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework. The framework will support ongoing improvements to implementation to ensure progress towards National Action Plan outcomes.

Departments' implementation plans will identify actions that contribute to National Action Plan outcomes and medium-term outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation is intended to support strengthened implementation by focusing on results. A long-term National Action Plan needs to be responsive and flexible to change. The monitoring and evaluation framework will improve the evidence base of what works, what doesn't, and why – supporting decision-makers to plan and implement the National Action Plan effectively.

The National Action Plan has a ten-year lifespan. The monitoring and evaluation framework is intended to measure our ambition over this period, and tell a whole-of-government story about progress and achievements. The framework measures whole-of-government contributions to outcomes. Department implementation plans will capture specific outputs that contribute to each outcome.

See Annex *Monitoring and evaluation framework* for more information.



A long-term National Action Plan needs to be responsive and flexible to change.

Progress reporting

Progress reports will track Australian Government contributions to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Progress reports will capture departments' implementation actions. The monitoring and evaluation framework will form the basis of progress reporting. The Australian Government will report progress regularly over the course of the National Action Plan.

Independent review

Two independent reviews will be commissioned over the course of the National Action Plan. Recommendations from the independent reviews will be considered by the Australian Government and inform ongoing implementation.

The Independent Interim Review will be commissioned in July 2025 with an aim to be completed by December 2025. The review will consider the effectiveness of actions in meeting the National Action Plan's medium-term outcomes. It will recommend ways to improve ongoing implementation and set targets for the end of this National Action Plan.

The Interim Review's recommendations may change current outcomes, priorities and actions. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will manage a whole-of-government response to the recommendations over the period January to June 2026. Any changes to implementation plans should be in place by mid-2026.

The Independent Final Review will assess the National Action Plan's effectiveness over its lifetime. It will also consider changes to the Agenda relevant to the design of Australia's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. It will be commissioned by July 2030 with an aim to be completed by December 2030. Its recommendations will be considered as part of the design of Australia's next National Action Plan.

Table A. Implementation, reporting and review of the National Action Plan

National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021–2031	
Department implementation period	FY2021–2023
2023 progress report	Covers the period FY2021–2023
Department implementation period	FY2023–2025
2025 progress report	Covers the period FY2023–2025
Independent interim review	Covers the implementation period FY2021–2025
Consider Review recommendations	Six-month reflection to consider amendments to National Action Plan and response finalised by June 2026
Department implementation period	FY2026–2028
2028 progress report	Covers the period FY2026–2028
Department implementation	Covers the period FY2028–2030
Independent final review	Covers the implementation period FY2021–2030
National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2031+	

Annexes

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The monitoring and evaluation framework measures progress towards achieving the four key outcomes identified in this National Action Plan. It is underpinned by a theory of change approach and will provide the basis of regular progress reporting.

The quantitative indicators used have been selected from available data sets for their ability to measure progress over time. Over the next ten years, new indicators and data sources may emerge as global gender data matures. The Australian Government will continue to review the monitoring and evaluation framework, and will (where appropriate), add indicators as new data sets become available and Australian Government activities evolve.

Because outcomes are not affected by Australian Government effort alone, progress reports will also draw on qualitative evidence (including case studies) to demonstrate the impact of our initiatives. Where possible, outcome data will be disaggregated at the country level where Australian implementation is focused.

Impact: By 2031, diverse women and girls realise their human rights and achieve meaningful participation in all of Australia's work to prevent and resolve conflict, and establish enduring peace.

Outcome 1: Support women and girls' meaningful participation and needs in conflict prevention and peace processes

Outcome indicators

Data collected by

1.1 Proportion of positions in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service and judiciary) compared to national distributions

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women

1.2 Proportion of the population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive

UNDP

MTO: 1.1 increasing women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention

Indicators

Data collected by

1.1.1 Percentage of conflict prevention efforts that are gender-sensitive

Monash University

1.1.2 Number and quality of programs that support women's meaningful participation in local, sub-national and national decision-making structures

Australian Government

MTO: 1.2 Increasing women's meaningful participation in peace processes

1.2.1 Percentage of peace agreements with substantive gender provisions

Monash University

1.2.2 Number and percentage of women mediators, witnesses and signatories in formal peace negotiations

Council on Foreign Relations

Outcome 2: Reduce sexual and gender-based violence

Outcome indicators

Data collected by

2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

UN Women and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

UN Women, UNICEF, and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

MTO 2.1: Reducing harmful gender norms

Indicators

Data collected by

2.1.1 Participation rate of youth and adults (sex disaggregated) in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

2.1.2 Number of countries that have more inclusive social institutions in relation to gender, and percentage improvement

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

MTO 2.2 Increasing safety and security for women and girls

2.2.1 Percentage of women aged 15 years and older who report that they 'feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live'

Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security

2.2.2 Proportion of women aged 20–24 who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

UNICEF

MTO 2.3: Increasing access to justice

2.3.1 Number of countries that have national laws that criminalise sexual and gender-based violence

World Bank

Outcome 3: Support resilience, crisis response, and security, law and justice sector efforts to meet the needs and rights of all women and girls

Outcome indicators	Data collected by
3.1 Number and percentage of countries that have laws and regulations that restrict women's ability to participate in society and the economy relative to men	UN Women, World Bank, OECD, International Labour Organization (ILO)
3.2 Maternal mortality ratio	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and World Health Organization (WHO)

MTO 3.1 Increasing access to security, law and justice responses

Indicators	Data collected by
3.1.1 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population	UNODC and WHO
3.1.2 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported to competent authorities or other officially recognised conflict resolution mechanisms	UNODC

MTO 3.2 Humanitarian action, stabilisation and disaster management

3.2.1 Number of women and men, girls and boys, provided with lifesaving assistance in crisis situations	Australian Government
3.2.2 Percentage of women and men, girls and boys affected who report they are satisfied with the opportunities they had to influence the response	Australian Government

Outcome 4: Demonstrate leadership and accountability for the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Outcome indicators	Data collected by
4.1 Number of meetings held by Australian posts with women mediators and participants to peace processes, as well as women's rights organisations, on peace processes	Australian Government
4.2 Number of times that Women, Peace and Security is referenced in public statements by the Australian Government	Australian Government
4.3 Number and percentage of missions and operations with mandates and planning documents that include clear references to Women, Peace and Security issues and report on this	Australian Government
MTO 4.1 The Australian Government demonstrates commitment to, and leadership of, the Women, Peace and Security agenda	
Indicators	Data collected by
4.1.1 Number and percentage of countries where the Australian aid program is directly supporting a National Action Plan or an equivalent	Australian Government
4.1.2 Number of times Australia leads/sponsors statements on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and women's participation in UN and multilateral fora	Australian Government
MTO 4.2 The Australian Government demonstrates effective accountability for its Women, Peace and Security efforts	
4.2.1 Timely release of Progress Reports and Departmental Implementation Plans	Australian Government
MTO 4.3 Australia's efforts to support the Women, Peace and Security agenda are harmonised	
4.3.1 Number and percentage of Australian government employees deployed and posted to fragile, conflict-affected and humanitarian and disaster settings	Australian Government
4.3.2 Number of relevant policies and strategies into which Women, Peace and Security is integrated	Australian Government

United Nations Security Council

Resolution 1325

United Nations

S/RES/1325 (2000)



Security Council

Distr.: General
31 October 2000

Resolution 1325 (2000)

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on
31 October 2000**

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

Reaffirming also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

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Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

Recognizing the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

Recognizing also the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

Recognizing that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;
7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;

13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;

16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to

submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.
