

DIMENSION 5:

PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Progress in implementing the women, peace and security agenda in the region remains uneven. The progressive adoption of national action plans (NAPs) to carry forward United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security has not been accompanied by firm financial commitments. While women have a critical role to play in times of conflict and crisis, they remain underrepresented in peace negotiations and in the military, police and diplomatic sectors. In recent years, the region has witnessed a spike in refugee and asylum-seeking populations, with women facing heightened vulnerabilities. Women human rights defenders confront rising repression and violence in some parts of the region, and intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination continue to impede efforts to reach women who are furthest behind.

While nearly two thirds of countries have adopted NAPs for resolution 1325 (64.3 per cent), the lack of adequate financing constitutes a major barrier to implementation.¹ Since 2005, 36 countries and Kosovo² have developed NAPs; some have adopted second- and third-generation plans.³ Yet only eight countries – Albania, Canada, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom – costed or budgeted their NAPs at the time of adoption.⁴ In Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, seven countries have not developed NAPs: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.⁵ In the western part of the region, Greece and Israel remain the two most notable examples of the failure to develop NAPs.⁶

A recent desk-based analysis of 75 NAPs elaborated by members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from 2005 to mid-2019 indicates positive trends in the number of issues covered by the plans, particularly around the prevention and participation pillars.⁷ Emerging women, peace and security issues, such as disasters and violent extremism, have been increasingly reflected in the plans.⁸ Other signs of positive progress are the increased specificity of monitoring and evaluation components, and greater use of inclusive practices, although civil society engagement continues to lag behind.⁹ Budgeting remains a concern, with most NAPs not featuring agency- or programme-specific financial allocations, and even lacking broadly defined budgets.¹⁰

The limited capacity and commitment of key stakeholders involved in NAP implementation results in such financial shortages, which can limit gender-sensitive conflict prevention, peacebuilding and negotiations for peace restoration. The women, peace and security agenda continues to be considered secondary to national security policy, with laws and policies lacking context-specific and gender-sensitive analysis, and primarily focusing on women as victims. A complex set of patriarchal social norms, including common stereotypes that security-related issues are traditionally men's issues, continue to reinforce these gaps and place women in a disadvantageous position.

Today, the rise in violent extremism and its deeply misogynist ideology poses a threat to regional security and the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.¹¹ Yet this may also open opportunities to capitalize on women's roles in conflict prevention, and increase their participation in national and regional

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

security processes.¹² Women and girls are differently affected by violent extremism. They are often the first victims of violent extremist groups, experiencing horrific violations of their rights. They may also be perpetrators of violent extremism themselves, including through support for family members. Their association with violent extremist groups is due to a complex combination of factors, often involving coercion, co-option, enslavement, kidnapping or subjugation in their communities, among other issues.¹³ In many cases, the lack of consistent and coherent policies on returnee women and girls associated with terrorist or extremist groups renders them prone to abuse.¹⁴

Recent research suggests that women foreign terrorist fighters are returning at a considerably lower rate than men and children.¹⁵

Globally, only between 3 and 4 per cent of the 7,366 recorded returnees from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic were women, despite comprising between 10 to 13 per cent of all Islamic State affiliates.¹⁶ At the subregional level, women account for less than one in every four Islamic State affiliates in Western Europe (16 to 17 per cent), Eastern Europe (12 to 23 per cent) and Central Asia (10 to 13 per cent), and for less than 1 in every 10 returnees from these subregions (Western Europe, 8 per cent; Eastern Europe, 5 per cent; and Central Asia, less than 1 per cent).¹⁷

Women’s direct participation in peace and conflict negotiations increases the sustainability and quality of peace.

A global study investigating 82 peace agreements for 42 armed conflicts between 1989 and 2011 found that agreements with women signatories were associated with durable peace.¹⁸ The same study discovered that such agreements have a higher number of provisions aimed at political reform and a greater implementation rate.¹⁹ Another global study based on an analysis of 98 peace agreements involving 55 countries between 2000 and 2016 found that they are more likely to have gender provisions when women participate in official and high-level talks or unofficial dialogues that support the main negotiations.²⁰

In Europe and Central Asia, women’s participation in peace processes remains low, despite some progress.

Ten years after the launch of the Geneva International Discussions on the conflict in Georgia, women comprise 30 per cent of negotiators.²¹ In Ukraine, low women’s engagement has been evident in high-level talks on the settlement of the international armed conflict in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as in peacekeeping.²² Nonetheless, this represents an improvement from the late 1990s and early 2000s, when women accounted for a very minor share of negotiators. In conflict-affected countries and the European Union, consistent support has been offered to

build the capacity and support the inclusion of women mediators in active negotiations.²³

Share of women involved in Peace Processes

Bosnia	0%	(Dayton Agreement, 1995)
Croatia	11%	(Erdut Agreement, 1995)
Northern Ireland	10%	(Good Friday Agreement, 1998)
Kosovo	3%	(Rambouillet Accords, 1999)
North Macedonia	5%	(Ohrid Agreement, 2001)

Source: Council on Foreign Relations. 2020. Women’s Participation in Peace Processes. Accessed 28 June 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>.

Peace agreements have rarely included gender-sensitive language.

Between 1995 and 2019, only 23 of the 241 peace agreements signed by countries in the region included provisions specifically addressing women’s inclusion and rights.²⁴ Less than 1 in every 10 peace agreements (9.5 per cent) made explicit references to women, girls, widows, mothers or lactating women; to violence against women and girls, including sexual violence; or to resolution 1325 or the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).²⁵

Women remain underrepresented in the military, police and diplomatic corps, most notably in conflict-affected countries.

In the eastern part of the region, women held less than 2 of every 10 armed forces jobs from 2013 to 2019 in the seven countries with data: the Czech Republic (7.4 per cent), Croatia (8.9 per cent), Albania (13 per cent), Armenia (13.8 per cent), Hungary (14.5 per cent), Cyprus (14.9 per cent) and Bulgaria (15.3 per cent).²⁶ In the western part of the region, women in the Netherlands and Norway accounted for 8 and 26.9 per cent of all those employed in armed forces positions, respectively.²⁷ Countries have made progress in increasing women’s representation in the military in recent years. For instance, women have been integrated into United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military missions for the first time in Albania, held senior decision-making and command positions in the armed forces of Slovenia, and gained access to all combat positions in the United Kingdom.²⁸

On average, men largely outnumbered women in the police in the 33 countries with data from 2012 to 2017, holding more than 8 out of every 10 staff positions (83.3 per cent).²⁹

Women’s share of police staff exceeds one third in Estonia (35 per cent), Latvia (36.8 per cent) and Lithuania (38.6 per cent). Sweden is the only country where women outnumber men (66.3 per cent).³⁰

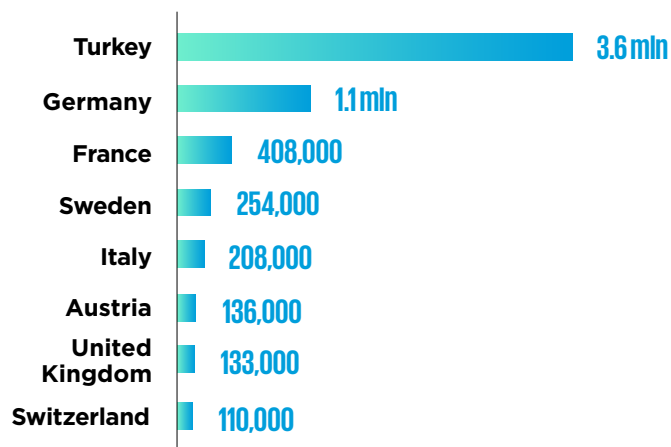
Conversely, women hold less than 10 per cent of staff positions in the police in Albania (9.8 per cent), Georgia (9.5 per cent), Italy (8.4 per cent), Portugal (7.8 per cent) and Turkey (6.1 per cent).

Women are underrepresented at the highest diplomatic ranks, accounting for just 21.7 per cent of all ambassadors in the 32 countries with data from 2012 to 2017.³¹ A great degree of variation exists, with female representation being generally higher in the western part of the region. For instance, women head more than a third of embassies from Ireland (35.2 per cent), Estonia (36.6 per cent), Slovenia (40 per cent), Canada (43.1 per cent), Sweden (45.3 per cent) and Finland (45.6 per cent). In contrast, women account for less than 15 per cent of all ambassadors in Montenegro (14.7 per cent), Israel (12.5 per cent), Spain (12.1 per cent), Italy (10.8 per cent), Georgia (10.3 per cent), Armenia (7.5 per cent), Belarus (7 per cent), Kazakhstan (3.5 per cent) and Ukraine (1.5 per cent).³²

In recent years, the region has witnessed a spike in refugee and asylum-seeking populations, primarily as a result of conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. At the end of 2019, the region's countries were home to 7 million refugees and 2.2 million asylum seekers.³³ Refugee populations remained considerably lower in the eastern part of the region with the exception of the Russian Federation (42,000), Serbia, Kosovo (26,000) and Bulgaria (20,000).³⁴

Number of refugees in selected countries

Number of refugees in selected countries



Source: UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). 2020. UNHCR Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019 Data. Accessed 30 June 2019. <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/unhcr-global-trends-forced-displacement-in-2019-data>.

Women outnumbered men among refugee populations in only 3 of the 16 countries with complete sex-disaggregated data: Montenegro (53.6 per cent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (57.7 per cent) and Turkmenistan (61.3 per cent), all of which are home to small refugee

populations.³⁵ In Turkey, less than half of all refugees were women (46 per cent) and around 2 in every 10 were girls under 18 (22 per cent).³⁶ In Germany, these shares stood at 38.5 and 14.7 per cent, respectively.³⁷ Women and girls are among the most vulnerable to different forms of violence that take root in times of war and displacement, including sexual violence and exploitation, child marriage and human trafficking.³⁸

Germany and Turkey each hosted over 300,000 asylum seekers at the end of 2019, who were 45.9 and 35.5 per cent female, respectively.³⁹ As primary destinations, both countries spent significant resources to respond to the sevenfold increase in applications for asylum and international protection, and in the case of Germany, to support migrant women's integration.⁴⁰ In Sweden, women's asylum applications are examined separately, and payments to asylum seekers are granted individually, rather than on a family basis.⁴¹ Numerous countries in the European Union and South-Eastern Europe affected by the migration crisis developed targeted initiatives to ensure access to health care, social welfare services and employment for women migrants.⁴²

Since 2014, a few countries have recognized gender-based forms of persecution as a basis for claiming asylum and international protection.⁴³ In most contexts, however, women and girls who seek asylum on such grounds face legal obstacles in obtaining recognition of their refugee status. This is due in particular to judicial interpretations of the category "membership in a particular social group", as well as the refusal of judges to recognize rape and sexual violence as a form of persecution rather than an individual crime.⁴⁴ For instance, on an application in the United Kingdom by a victim of rape from Afghanistan in the early 2000s, the initial adjudicator refused to recognize the rape as persecution because "the only reason for the rape of the Appellant in Takhar was because her assailant found her attractive, and therefore that the attack was a purely personal one, and no more than a common crime".⁴⁵ The decision was overturned on appeal.⁴⁶

Some countries have made progress in ensuring access to justice for women victims of conflict-related sexual violence, as enshrined in Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010). Bosnia and Herzegovina amended the State-level Criminal Code in 2015, removing references to the use of force in the definition of rape as a crime against humanity.⁴⁷ Entity-level legal amendments now regulate the rights of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including their access to reparations. In 2016, Croatia passed the Act on the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence During the Armed Aggression Against the Republic of

Croatia in the Homeland War.⁴⁸ Prior to its adoption, war crimes victims could only receive indemnification through individual criminal proceedings brought against perpetrators. The Act regulates the rights of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to both indemnification and services. Despite the legal advances in both countries, however, survivors continue to be stigmatized through the lack of awareness and capacity of judicial and other authorities.⁴⁹ In 2015, Kosovo passed the Regulation on Defining the Procedures for Recognition and Verification of the Status of Sexual Violence Victims During the Kosovo Liberation War, offering victims reparations such as a personal disability pension, access to health services abroad for health conditions that are a consequence of war and for which no domestic treatment is available, and priority in public and private employment, among others.⁵⁰

Women, girls and gender non-conforming people standing up for human rights have faced increased repression and violence, particularly in the eastern part of the region following the rise of conservative movements.⁵¹ Since 2015, the United Nations has recorded and verified 187 killings of female human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in 41 countries across the globe.⁵² In the region, egregious incidents involving women human rights defenders, women journalists and their families have recently been recorded in Albania, Kazakhstan, Malta and Ukraine.⁵³ Experts from national women's machineries and civil society organizations in South-Eastern Europe have warned about an increase in hate messages on social media inciting violence against women in political and other leadership positions, as well as against feminist and LGBTIQ organizations.⁵⁴ The protection of human rights defenders has seldom been addressed in public policy frameworks, however. In 2017, the United Kingdom developed Guidelines for Working with Human Rights Defenders, including women human rights defenders, while Sweden adopted the Action Plan Defending Free Speech to protect journalists, elected representatives and artists from exposure to hatred and threats.⁵⁵

Intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination continue to impede efforts to reach marginalized and vulnerable women, including women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, poor women, migrants and refugees, LBTQI and sex workers, among others.⁵⁶ Yet some landmark achievements have occurred. For example, Ireland passed the Marriage Act and Children and Family Relationships Act recognizing same-sex marriage and family relations.⁵⁷ Malta amended its Constitution and the Marriage Equality Act to recognize same-sex marriage and civil unions, while Cyprus established civil partnerships for same sex couples in 2015.⁵⁸ In Belgium, as of 2016, married mothers are automatically

recognized as parents without having to undergo adoption proceedings, and transgender persons can modify their civil status without medical procedures. In 2019, Iceland approved a bill enabling persons above the age of 15 to define their own gender.⁵⁹

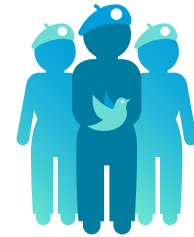
Nearly 4 in every 10 dollars spent by members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on bilateral aid targeted gender equality as a principal (primary) or significant (secondary) objective (37 per cent), amounting to a total of USD 41.7 billion in 2015-2016.⁶⁰ Bilateral agreements targeting gender equality as a principal objective, however, only represented 4 per cent of total aid expenditure or USD 4.6 billion.⁶¹ Belgium and Canada dedicate between 60 and 70 per cent of their official development assistance (ODA) to gender equality, either as a principal or significant objective. The share exceeds 80 per cent in Iceland, Ireland and Sweden.⁶² Between 20 and 30 per cent of ODA from Turkey, the Czech Republic and Slovenia targets gender equality.⁶³ France and Sweden have explicitly qualified their foreign policy and assistance as feminist, while the Netherlands applies feminist principles to ODA.⁶⁴ Many donor countries have continued to provide financial support to international justice fora and mechanisms, including the Trust Fund for Victims linked to the International Criminal Court, and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, among others.⁶⁵

The women, peace and security agenda remains severely underfunded. While globally, the overall share of bilateral aid for the promotion of gender equality in conflict-affected contexts has increased since 2010, the proportion going to programmes with gender equality as the primary objective has stagnated at under 5 per cent, relying on a very small group of major donors.⁶⁶ Women's leadership continues to be impeded by lack of access to sustainable funding sources, with only 0.2 per cent of bilateral aid to conflict-affected contexts going directly to women's organizations from 2016 to 2017.⁶⁷

In Europe and Central Asia, services and programmes to address gender-based violence in emergencies remain underresourced. In 2019, the Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan raised just USD 400,000 or 12.9 per cent of the USD 3.2 million needed to address gender-based violence.⁶⁸ This represented a sharp decrease from the previous year, when USD 1.8 million was provided of the required USD 2.5 million (72 per cent). In both years, resources to address gender-based violence were the lowest amounts among all clusters and sectors, accounting for just 1.3 and 1.9 per cent of all resources stipulated under the 2018 and 2019 Humanitarian Response Plans, respectively.⁶⁹

SNAPSHOT

Women's leadership in building peaceful and inclusive societies has never been more urgent



Progress in implementing the women, peace and security agenda remains uneven

Since 2005,

36 countries and Kosovo have developed NAPs for resolution 1325

Yet

only 8 countries

costed or budgeted NAPs at the time of adoption: Albania, Canada, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom⁷⁰

Despite their essential roles, women are often excluded from peace processes, and remain underrepresented in the military, police and diplomatic corps

Among the **nine countries** with data from 2013 to 2019 the share of women in the armed forces ranged⁷¹

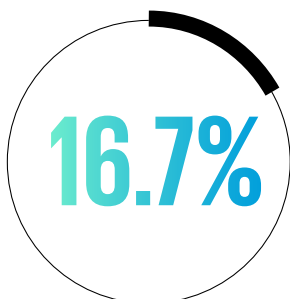


Between 1995 and 2019, just



of peace agreements signed by countries in the region **included provisions specifically addressing women's inclusion and rights**⁷²

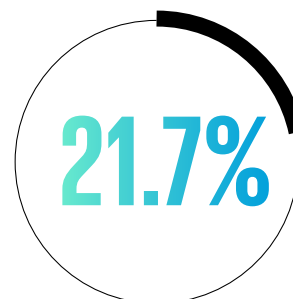
Women held on average



of staff positions in the police

in 33 countries with data from 2012 to 2017⁷³

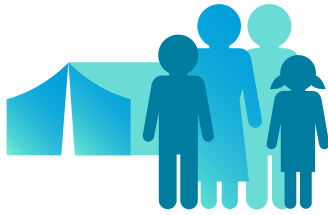
Women headed just



of embassies

from **32 countries** with data from 2012 to 2017⁷⁴

The region has witnessed a spike in refugee and asylum-seeking populations, requiring gender-specific policies and financing

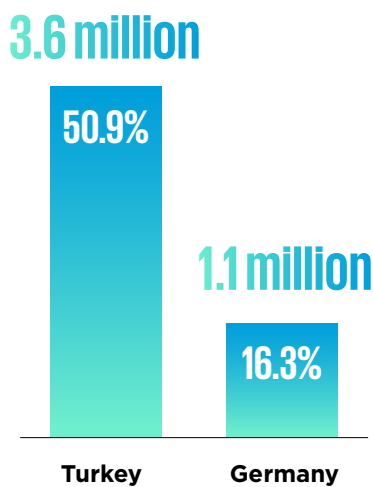


At the end of 2019 the region's countries were home to⁷⁵

7 million & 2.2 million
refugees asylum seekers

TWO THIRDS

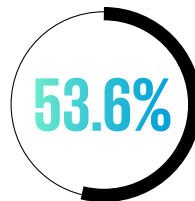
of the region's refugees were hosted by⁷⁶



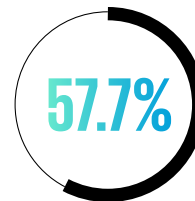
Women outnumbered men among refugee populations in

only 3 of the 16 countries ▲

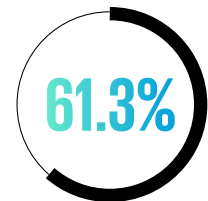
with complete sex-disaggregated data⁷⁷



Montenegro

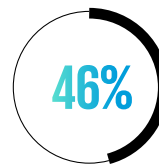


Bosnia and Herzegovina

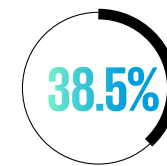


Turkmenistan

Women refugees accounted for:



Turkey



Germany

Since 2014, only a few countries have recognized

gender-based forms of persecution

as a basis for granting asylum and international protection⁷⁸



Services and programmes to address

violence against women and girls

in emergencies remain

▼ **LARGELY UNDERFUNDED**

In 2019, only

1 IN EVERY 10

dollars needed to address violence against women and girls was raised under the Ukraine Humanitarian Response – 12.9% or⁷⁹

USD 400,000 out of USD 3.2 million

