



Pathways to peace and security forged by women:

An agenda for the Americas



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Pathways to peace and security forged by women: An agenda for the Americas

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1. Preface

Alejandra Mora Mora

Executive Secretary, CIM/OAS

Since the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, for those of us working in the Americas it has been a challenge to foster the appropriation and application of this agenda, in particular in regional political and normative forums such as the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the Organization of American States (OAS). Moreover, since the adoption of Resolution 1325, the feminist and women's movement in the region has established a Women, Peace and Security agenda articulated with input from the multiple realities of our countries, and from the specific experience of countries as diverse as Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, and Haiti.

However, the gap between the agenda articulated by women's movements, and the actions of States are reflected in various ways that represent barriers to advance the construction of a gender perspective on situations of crises and conflicts in the region. Thus, for example, the vision that seeks to restrict UNSCR 1325 to contexts of war and internal armed conflict and that only involves the security sector excludes the differentiated approaches and uses of women in their daily management of conflict, security, and peace. These are some of the complexities identified for the implementation of women's agenda for peace and security in the Americas, from the institutions, including the National Mechanisms for Women, as well as at the multilateral level, from the instances and spaces of the OAS.

In multilateral debates on security in our region, women's leadership and gender issues have been rendered invisible even though it is the women leaders in other areas, such as civil society and the community, who have expanded the discussion beyond traditional security issues – national security and defense, personal safety, and the role of the armed forces – as well as a conception of peace that goes beyond the absence of violence. Women leaders have given visibility to a broad spectrum of threats to security – inequality, the deterioration of democracy, climate change, and the various forms of violence against women, including the violence faced by women human rights and environmental defenders – that require firm political responses from the national and regional levels. These responses, for their part, require that women's leadership move from community spaces and activism to formal politics and the forums where decisions are made daily.

The coming decades will be marked by a profound social polarization that will cut across the approach to a series of issues – from specific crises like COVID-19 to historical struc-

tural inequalities. This discourse, from a reconceptualization of “security” arising out of the feminist experience, understanding women’s experiences and resilience as the fundamental basis for peacebuilding, is the starting point of this document, of CIM’s new working agenda, and of a new regional approach to the issue of Women, Peace and Security – one that has at its core the history and future of women’s leadership in managing crises and conflicts and in building and sustaining peace.

2. Introduction

More than 20 years have passed since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325, 2000) on Women, Peace and Security. In October 2019 the Security Council, with the aim of following up on its implementation, strongly urged regional organizations to review implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda¹ in the regions in which they work.

It is in this context that the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) presents this study, whose main objective is to serve as a catalyst for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in the Americas by identifying new entry points, actors, partnerships, and priorities.

The social, political, economic, and environmental reality of the Americas requires a non-traditional approach to the issue of crises, conflicts, peace and security. Previously, in 2003, the Organization of American States (OAS), in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, reaffirmed a series of approaches and shared principles for understanding security challenges through a multidimensional lens. Among these, the following stand out:

–The importance of improving women’s participation in efforts to promote peace and security and integrate a gender perspective “in all policies, programs, and activities of all inter-American organs, agencies, entities, conferences, and processes that deal with matters of hemispheric security.”

–That security challenges include traditional threats along with new threats resulting from intersectoral problems. That responses involve governments and state institutions as

Peace-building: action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace (New York: United Nations, 1992).

Positive peace: transformation of the structures that generated forms of violence and conflict (Galtung, 1969), which implies improvements in governance and in fair access to economic opportunities, justice, security, and other aspects of well-being, such as health, education, and a dignified place in which to live. These are the factors which, together, provide persons the resilience that enables them to confront their differences and conflicts without violence.

“What is Peacebuilding?”, International Alert, <https://www.international-alert.org/about/what-is-peacebuilding/#:-:text=Peacebuilding%20is%20fundamentally%20about%20dealing,conflicts%20without%20resorting%20to%20violence>

Negative peace: mere absence of physical or individual violence.

Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research” (1969).

¹ The WPS agenda is made up of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC Res.) 1325 and nine other resolutions: UNSC Res. 1820 (2009), UNSC Res. 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), UNSC Res.1960 (2011), UNSC Res. 2106 (2013), UNSC Res. 2122 (2013), UNSC Res. 2242 (2015), UNSC Res.2467 (2019), and UNSC Res. 2493 (2019). In respect of this project, focused on preventing violence and armed conflict, the main ones are UNSC Res. 1325 (2000), UNSC Res. 2122 (2013), UNSC Res. 2467 (2019), and UNSC Res.2493 (2019).

well as the private sector and civil society, plus international cooperation agencies when the transnational nature of the threats so requires.

This Declaration lists the new security threats and a variety of challenges that have a major impact in the region. These are:

- “terrorism, transnational organized crime, the global drug problem, corruption, asset laundering, illicit trafficking in weapons, and the connections among them;
- extreme poverty and social exclusion of broad sectors of the population, which also affect stability and democracy. Extreme poverty erodes social cohesion and undermines the security of states;
- natural and man-made disasters,
- HIV/AIDS and other diseases, other health risks, and environmental degradation;
- trafficking in persons;
- attacks to cyber security;
- the potential for damage to arise in the event of an accident or incident during the maritime transport of potentially hazardous materials, including petroleum and radioactive materials and toxic waste;
- and the possibility of access, possession, and use of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery by terrorists.”²

Yet in general, and beyond the existing theoretical/conceptual exploration, there is no clear link between the security agendas and the context of the programs and agendas for furthering democracy, development, and human rights, and even less with the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Nonetheless, that link has been established internationally since the 1990s. In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action was put forward in the context of the Fourth World Conference on Women. This platform defined a variety of specific actions to combat gender violence, in situations of war or conflict and in peacetime. This platform offers several entry points related to more egalitarian, transparent, and efficient leadership. At the same time, it recognizes the important role women play preventing armed conflicts, as well as developing broad mechanisms of security grounded in concepts such as human security and citizen security. These concepts, based on the right to live free from violence enshrined in the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994),³ transcend the notion of physical security so as to include freedom from fear and

2 OAS (2003), “Declaration on Security in the Americas,” OEA/Ser.K/XXXVIII, CES/dec.1/03 rev.1, https://www.oas.org/36ag/es-panol/doc_referencia/DeclaracionMexico_Seguridad.pdf

3 In the Americas the Convention of Belém do Pará is the instrument that defines the political commitment of the States to fight violence. With a view to furthering the implementation of this instrument, in 2004 the OAS established the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI): <https://www.oas.org/es/mesecvi/>

necessity. Indeed, reports of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that address human security broaden the concept so as to take in seven elements: economic security, nutritional security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.

And so the Americas region faces common issues of security, crisis and conflict prevention, and peace-building, albeit with varying degrees of intensity, interrelated with other problems which, as they have a strong gender element, are very relevant in expanded discussions of security. The different forms of gender-based violence, respect for sexual and reproductive rights, the causes and effects of human mobility, the struggle against human trafficking, and the collapse of the refugee regime are no doubt key issues for discussion with impacts that are determinant for women's security, requiring another type of analysis and approach.

The basis of the WPS agenda is UNSCR 1325. That resolution is based on principles set forth in the Beijing Platform, plus it takes a deeper dive into a series of aspects that are key for including a gender perspective and addressing the issues of peace and security that are important for women.

The resolution is based on four pillars:

- Women's **participation** in decision-making and peace processes,
- **Protecting** women and girls in post-conflict reconstruction and consolidating peace,
- Inclusion of women and their organizations in **prevention** initiatives for peace and conflict resolution, and,
- Specific consideration of the needs of women and girls in repatriation, reintegration, **humanitarian action**, and post-conflict **reconstruction**.

Among other elements listed in the resolution, specific recommendations are made for integrating a gender perspective in conflict management, especially as related to:

- Economic, financial, technical, and logistical support in trainings aimed at raising awareness about gender issues in post-conflict situations;
- The commitment of the states to carry out constitutional mandates to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of sexual violence;
- The need for specific training in a gender perspective for personnel involved in peacekeeping operations (military and political personnel, humanitarian workers, and observers);
- Inclusion of a gender perspective in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration.

3. Women in peacebuilding and reconceptualizing security

This proposal recognizes that the evolution of security as a concept – public security, citizen security, multidimensional security, human security⁴ -- is key for how one conceptualizes peacebuilding and a life free from violence. We seek to identify entry points for positive peacebuilding, with a view to attaining social peace. Nonetheless, for the specific purposes of this strategy we elect to focus on those entry points that have a potential to develop a critical mass that mobilizes actions, proposals, and research studies led by women who face crises that put their security at risk, along with the security of the contexts in which they live and work.

Human Security: ... an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people.... Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

United Nations General Assembly. Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, October 25, 2012, A/RES/66/290.

Traditionally, security has been associated with defense capability, with the institutional military apparatus (“state security”) establishing strategies for coercing and regulating populations and reducing tensions inherent to different conflicts (negative peace). Traditionally security has been a male-dominated area, like almost all power structures in society.

There is a lag in the consolidation of structural and cultural transformations that ensure that inequalities will be reduced, despite efforts to increase not only the participation but the recognition of women’s contributions to society and the strong evidence of the practical and symbolic benefits of empowering women and of their economic and political participation. Healthy economies and substantive and sustainable economic development correlate positively with increased gender equality, which is mistakenly understood to benefit only women, but not society and the economy at large. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), “a 1 percent increase in gender inequality reduces a country’s human development index by 0.75 percent.”⁵ This lag in integrating a gender perspective in develo-

4 Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, (New York, 2003), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/503749?ln=es>

5 UNDP, *Africa Human Development Report 2016: Accelerating Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Africa* (New York, 2016), <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/2016-africa-human-development-report.html>

ment policies is closely tied to maintaining exclusionary power structures and forms of economic, political, and social exclusion that affect women in particular.

Nonetheless, there is an extensive body of literature describing women's leadership building social cohesion and promoting tolerance and democratic governance. At the same time, the institutional response is key when it comes to building trust between the women who work with social initiatives focused on preventing the escalation of conflicts and those who work in the administration of justice. Therefore, including women in debates and actions tied to peacebuilding, safety and security goes hand-in-hand with institutional strengthening and recognizing women's autonomy and women's power to engage in individual and collective advocacy. For example, there is an interrelationship between gender inequality and the stability of the state. Fourteen of the 17 countries with the lowest scores in the Social Institutions and Gender Index of the OECD have experienced conflicts in the last 20 years.⁶ Indeed, gender inequality appears to predict phenomena such as instability better than other indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) or democracy.⁷ The more the participation of women in public life, the less the risk that violence will be used to resolve political disputes; at the same time, larger numbers of women in representative bodies and assemblies is related to fewer human rights abuses by state actors.⁸

In Latin America and the Caribbean women are the organizers par excellence of community action at the grassroots. Women are key agents in confidence-building, logistical coordination, cooperative work, and access to communities, especially in times of crisis for climatic and/or social reasons. In situations of conflict, including social conflict, we have seen how the *continuum of violence* that occurs at the private and interpersonal level against women is naturalized to the point of constituting a regular form of interaction, which in turn endorses complex forms of violence that escalate and are expressed politically and symbolically. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has documented how this phenomenon has found expression in high levels of violence against women human rights defenders and environmental defenders, particularly those who work with sexual violence, defend sexual and reproductive rights, pursue work on sexual orientation and gender identity, and defend the environment.⁹

Family violence is one reason women decide to migrate, while community and structural violence are the main causes of the migration of women and/or their cooptation by

6 Information referenced in Clinton Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, *The Full Participation Report, No Ceilings* (2015), using data from the OECD Development Centre, Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.

7 Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). See also Mary Caprioli, "Gendered Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2000): 53-68.

8 Erik Melander, "Political Gender Equality and State Human Rights Abuse," *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 2 (March 2005):149-166.

9 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), *Towards Effective Integral Protection Policies for Human Rights Defenders* (Washington, D.C.: 2017): 16. <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/proteccion-personas-defensoras.pdf>

criminal organizations engaged, among other things, in human trafficking or the sale and trafficking of drugs. Accordingly, women's participation in processes of negotiating and consolidating peace, including negotiating and implementing peace agreements, is crucial considering, first, the importance of giving visibility to the disproportionate and differentiated impacts of gender violence and the sexual violence that occurred during conflicts, and second because gender experiences and a gender perspective transform relationship dynamics, the issues to discuss, and implementation of the agreements. Women's participation is critical for peace agreements to be enduring instruments, according to Stone's statistical analysis of women's participation in 182 agreements from 1989 to 2011, noting the positive effect of such measures.¹⁰

All the considerations set forth above guide the approach that should be adopted in this document to serve as a catalyst of the WPS agenda in the Americas. Entry points are proposed that are situated mainly in the conflict-prevention pillar of the WPS agenda, an area in which there are few efforts formally tied to implementation of the WPS agenda and an opportunity for greater access to women's participation in all processes of peace, security, and access to justice.

This document is being proposed at a key historic moment. At this time the Americas is the region with the greatest inequality in the world¹¹, the most violent region¹², the most urbanized¹³, and consequently the region hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴ All these elements need to be thought through with a gender perspective not only to provide alternatives aimed at eliminating discrimination against women, but to highlight the importance of and need for women's leadership, participation, and perspectives. The COVID pandemic itself has highlighted the importance of care in sustaining societies – in both the public and private spheres – and how the excess burden affects mostly women.

In addition, in recent decades some peace agreements in the region have been significant in incorporating the voices, needs, and specificities of women. One example of that is the "Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace" (2016)¹⁵, signed by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP rebel force, which em-

10 Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes*, (New York: International Peace Institute, 2015), <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf>

11 ECLAC, *La matriz de la desigualdad social en América Latina* (Santiago, Chile, 2016): 16, https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/matriz_de_la_desigualdad.pdf

12 Angelika Rettberg, "Violencia en América Latina hoy: manifestaciones e impactos," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 73 (2020): 2-17.

13 CEPAL, *Población, territorio y desarrollo sostenible*. (Santiago, Chile, 2012): 126, <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/22425-poblacion-territorio-desarrollo-sostenible>

14 "Latin American and Caribbean Overview," World Bank, <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/region/lac/overview>

15 Available at: <https://www.jep.gov.co/Normativa/Paginas/Acuerdo-Final.aspx>

phasizes the central role of women for carrying out the commitments to peace.

The social and political mobilization of women in Latin America and the Caribbean stands out for the dynamism, rapid response capability, and diversity of areas in which it is present. Feminist mobilizations have been expressed with a different intensity and at different points in time in each country. Nonetheless, there has been intense civil society cooperation with the defense of human rights and more recently to fight violence against women. As will be explored in more detail in the next section, however, in general in the Americas there is little awareness or knowledge of the WPS agenda¹⁶, with the exception of Colombia for reasons inherent to the conflict and the 2016 Peace Agreement.¹⁷

This expanded framework on women's contributions to the consolidation of peace and the threats they face is key for fostering a change in paradigm in the regional work on Women, Peace and Security. So an analytical model is proposed that considers all those gains and processes that have unfolded in the region in the formal context of implementing the WPS agenda in the region to date. Next, the issue of women's leadership and participation in the issues of peace and security will be addressed, as well as the main intersections between feminist and human rights activism and mobilization and their reflections on security. A description will follow of entry points for the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Americas. And lastly is a brief section of conclusions and recommendations. And so this WPS advocacy strategy is proposed as an agenda in the Americas, for the OAS, with a view to strengthening the understanding of the phenomenon, inviting a regional interpretation of the scope of the agenda in keeping with the panorama of new security threats. Finally, in light of the analytical and proactive purpose of this document, no exhaustive descriptions will be put forth on any country. However, relevant examples of different contexts will be cited to illustrate the proposal.

16 While some countries consider the domestic sphere in their National Plans (see section 4.2.3), a review of the periodic reports submitted to CEDAW showed that with the exception of El Salvador, no country shows progress in the WPS as applied to their own domestic situation. This is also evident in the contents of most discussions that came up in the meeting "Opportunities for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Americas," held in Montevideo in December 2019. In addition, Gender Associations undertook the study "Identifying inequalities for planning a lasting peace," which identified this lack of knowledge among women's groups in Brazil, Chile, and Bolivia. http://www.genderassociations.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final_Report.pdf

By way of contrast, Canada's National Action Plan under Resolution 1325 includes a special, explicit focus on the protection and participation of the Indigenous population in Canada and therefore includes a perspective not only in its foreign policy, but also within its own country. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Global Affairs has the lead in implementing Resolution 1325 and ties it to its feminist foreign policy.

17 "Colombia: Mujeres, paz y seguridad," UN Women, <https://colombia.unwomen.org/es/como-trabajamos/paz-y-seguridad>

4. The Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Americas: History, gains, and challenges to implementation

4.1 International law in support of gender equality and lasting peace

Many inalienable rights are inherent to the human person. Violations of human rights such as the *right to life, liberty, and security of the person*; the right to not be subjected to *torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, and the right to *health and well-being* are prohibited in both peacetime and in war, as is sexual violence. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a binding international instrument that requires the almost 200 states party to report periodically to the CEDAW Committee regarding progress in implementing the Convention. Even though the Convention does not make specific reference to reforming the security sector, Article 7 requires that states allow women to “participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.” Article 2 calls on states party to “establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men”; “to refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women;” and to “repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.” In its General Recommendation¹⁸ No. 30 (GR30) of 2013¹⁹ on *women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations*, the CEDAW Committee addressed the crucial problems women face in armed conflicts in more detail, including violence and the challenges of access to justice, education, employment, and health.

GR30 offers a comprehensive vision of the different elements to be considered in designing policies and legislation relevant to the question of women in conflict situations. GR30 proposes a detailed interpretation of the contents of CEDAW around the role of women in contexts of conflict and states of emergency.²⁰ At the same time, the section on conflict prevention offers key observations for giving content to the prevention pillar from a gender perspective. These include creating and establishing effective early warning systems; preventive diplomacy and mediation; support for initiatives that address

18 While it is established that violence is the most exacerbated form of discrimination, the Committee must make general recommendations that particular issues with special interest. Accordingly, recommendations 12, 19, 30, and 35 have to do specifically with violence against women and its broad implications.

19 General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. (CEDAW/C/GC/30. <https://www.refworld.org/es/docid/52d9026f4.html>)

20 Paragraph 4, on the scope of the Recommendation, includes: “Internal disturbances, protracted and low-intensity civil strife, political strife, ethnic and communal violence, states of emergency and suppression of mass uprisings, war against terrorism and organized crime, that may not necessarily be classified as armed conflict under international humanitarian law and which result in serious violations of women’s rights...”

the deep causes of conflicts; and solid and effective regulation of the arms trade and controls over the movement of arms. It also establishes that lack of knowledge of the gender dimension in the context of conflict prevention makes it difficult to detect the key drivers of conflict, which is crucial for effectively predicting and preventing crises.

Sustaining peace: ... should be broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance.

United Nations General Assembly, Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, April 27, 2016, A/RES/70/262.

Analyses of the causes of conflict require a historical, conceptual, and situational triangulation, i.e., framed in the processes of global change.²¹ Nonetheless, few analyze power relations, exclusion, and discrimination in depth, especially as related to violence against women. This can only be done by including a gender and intersectional perspective that considers, for example, how certain specific experiences of women and feminized groups account for the advent of conflicts of greater scope or the escalation of violence. Other aspects of that more integral conflict analysis could include issues such as the deployment of a militarized masculinity²² accompanied by the bearing of arms, which generally correlates with high levels of violence against and intimidation of women in public spaces and in the home.²³ In addition, there is evidence of how being exposed to domestic violence is a risk factor in joining armed groups and gangs, given that these groups serve as strategies for containment and defense.²⁴ Accordingly, analysis of the causes of the conflicts should consider in detail the ways in which gender impacts specific indicators of conflictiveness. Bearing in mind the differences between the experiences, autonomy, power, and capacities of men and women, from an intersectional perspective, in the face of the different forms of violence, may identify essential characteristics of the conflict and help understanding of its consequences more integrally, and promote peace more sustainably.

21 Fernando Calderón, "Diez tesis sobre el conflicto social en América Latina," *Revista CEPAL*, no. 107 (2012): 8.

22 We understand by militarized masculinity that whose strength is based on the use of violence and the propensity to aggression as a means of expression, relations, and domination, which includes a deployment of physical force, the use of arms, and the suppression of emotions, with a high degree of misogyny. Kimberly Theidon, "Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia," *Human Rights Quarterly* 31 (2009), 1-34.

23 Aldana Romano, Sidonie Porterie, Carola Cóncaro, Ileana Arduino, and Julián Alfie, *Violencia de género y armas de fuego en Argentina. Informe preliminar: entre la precariedad de la información y la ausencia de políticas públicas* (INECIP: 2018).

24 UNDP, *Regional Human Development Report 2013-2014: Citizen Security with a Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America* (New York, 2013): 7. See also: Department of Public Security, *Definition and categorization of gangs* (OAS, 2007): 10.

Accordingly, a gender perspective offers an angle of conflict analysis and an approach for resolving conflicts that has often been ignored in formal scenarios.²⁵ In addition, it is demanded that prevention policies be guided by a principle of fighting inequality, therefore, initiatives for mitigating conflict cannot reinforce or aggravate the situation of gender inequality. To the contrary, the idea is for these policies to promote women's empowerment.

Therefore, CEDAW is a complementary instrument applicable in times of peace and conflict that supplements some of the gaps between humanitarian law and human rights law. One of the most relevant points of this instrument is the accountability commitment established through its reporting mechanisms. The periodic submission of reports is a useful tool that supplements other legal obligations one finds in the WPS agenda, as well as in humanitarian law and international criminal law.

In the Americas, the Convention of Belém do Pará (1994) has at its core a broad understanding of what constitutes violence against women. It also establishes mechanisms for the protection and defense of women's human rights in the region and covers the public and private spaces in which the different forms of violence occur, in addition to establishing a wide-ranging series of obligations for states. The Convention mentions, as part of the definition of "violence against women" "... physical, sexual and psychological violence ... that is perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents regardless of where it occurs" (Article 2) and the interpretation of this instrument by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights²⁶ has focused decidedly, across several cases, on this specific point.²⁷

In 2021, the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI)²⁸ "... validated the general will of the States to continue taking actions to adapt national legal systems in correspondence with the Belém do Pará Convention...[including] to harmonize national criminal codes, reform legislation, or legal instruments to protect victims of violence and adopt national laws to protect and eradicate violence against women." Similarly, the Committee welcomes the states continuing to expand their definitions so as to take in concepts such as violence against reproductive rights, femicide/feminicide, and forms of violence that are physical, psychological, sexual, economic, labor, political, institutional, ethnic or racial, symbolic, and media-based,

25 For example, in Colombia, since the promulgation of UNSC Res. 1325, two processes of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDRO) have taken place resulting the process processes in 2003 and 2016. In the first there was no participation of women, and in the second immense pressure was brought to bear by civil society, especially feminist groups, human rights organizations, and victims' organizations. As a result, the Peace Agreement signed in 2016 is an example globally of the incorporation of women as key victims of the conflict and of the policies and programs for reparation and the consolidation of peace.

26 See, for example, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Cuadernillo de Jurisprudencia de la Corte IDH No. 4 "Derechos Humanos y Mujeres,"* (2018), <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/sitios/libros/todos/docs/cuadernillo4.pdf>

27 On this last point, see: CIM *La violencia contra las mujeres en contextos de conflictividad social* (2022, forthcoming).

28 MESECVI/OAS, *Third Follow-up Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI* (2021), <https://www.oas.org/es/mesecvi/docs/Tercer-Informe-Seguimiento-EN.pdf>

and that oppose dignity. Given the prevalence of crimes of this type, several countries of the region have made progress in adopting provisions in their criminal law to be able to prosecute them; earlier provisions that had indirectly endorsed acts of violence by reference to “attenuating circumstances”²⁹ have been amended.

Citizen Security: Sphere pertaining to state obligations which, in the framework of human rights, protect the life and security of persons. At the inter-American level it has been proposed that “States are bound by a normative core demanding the protection of rights particularly vulnerable to affected by criminal or violent acts.” In this context, prevention and control of violent conduct is identified as a political objective.

Inter-Commission on Human Rights, Report on Citizen Security and Human Rights (2009).

As regards the inclusion of women in the international legal framework, international humanitarian law regulates the conduct of and relations between the armed forces and the civilian population, especially in armed conflict and war. In the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I, certain violations of international humanitarian law are called “serious violations.” These serious violations, along with other international crimes such as war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, may be committed in scenarios of *negative peace* and must be prosecuted by international law and international tribunals.

International criminal law uses humanitarian law as a legal foundation and addresses acts recognized as international crimes; accordingly, it may be a source and a more detailed and specific reference with respect to the international case-law and interpretations of gender crimes in international law. For example, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) underscored the clear prohibition on rape under international humanitarian law as applied in the *Celebici* case in 1998. Nonetheless, the first legal foundation, in terms of a specific definition, was given by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) through the *Akayesu* case, and finally the Rome Statute (1998) establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) recognized rape and other forms of sexual violence as crimes against humanity/war crimes constituting direct violations of the Geneva Conventions. That international case-law laid the basis for recognizing the strategic use of discriminatory, sexual, and gender violence as a weapon of war, but also as a tool of political violence perpetrated by various actors who, by using threats, deter and diminish women’s power and political impact.

As the IACHR noted³⁰, in the case of *Ana Teresa Yarce et al. v. Colombia* the Inter-American Court of Human Rights highlighted the obligation of the state to protect women human

29 Celeste Saccomano, “El femicidio en América Latina: ¿vacío legal o déficit del Estado de Derecho?”, *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals*, no. 117 (2017): 61.

30 IACHR, *Integral Protection Policies for Human Rights Defenders* (2017), <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Defensores-eng-2017.pdf>

rights defenders, in light of the risks and threats they face in their work defending human rights, particularly in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia.

Illustration 1 exemplifies how the WPS agenda is a strategic point of convergence for comprehensively addressing national security and defense actions and policies; public policies to fight violence against women; and enforcing citizen security or public order mandates. While UNSCR 1325 would appear to refer only to scenarios of armed conflict, a broad interpretation of its scope covers the work of preventing conflicts and armed violence, including crime and violence against women, and ensuring access to justice.

At present, the ever more artificial separation among these components is present in the thematic, administrative, and organizational division of the agencies in charge of managing them. This separation exists both at the state level and internally within international and regional organizations, as well as among civil society organizations. The thematic segmentation created for responding to sectoral challenges in ministries of defense, security, interior, justice, and other institutions such as the national machineries for women/gender, far from strengthening joint and coordinated work, have tended to dilute resources among parallel actions with scant coordination. This thematic and operational separation is counter-productive in terms of effectively addressing those situations of conflict and conflictiveness that compromise women's security.



Illustration 1. Conceptual model of regional interpretation of the WPS agenda in the Americas.

4.2 The Women, Peace and Security agenda

The Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS) at present encompasses the objectives of providing a detailed framework for women's participation at the negotiating table during peace negotiations; preventing and protecting civilians from sexual and gender violence, as well as other gender-differentiated impacts in armed conflicts; in addition to actively involving women in consolidating and maintaining peace and in decision-making at all levels with respect to the issues of the peace and security agenda.

This resolution has been considered innovative, having been adopted after intense lobbying efforts by the *NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security* and some United Nations agencies. As a result of this work UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was unanimously adopted in the year 2000.

What is known today as the WPS agenda officially began with the adoption of UNSCR 1325. It was the first UNSC resolution to tie peace-keeping and international security to the experiences of women in conflict situations. Women's participation in peace negotiations, protection from gender violence, access to the search for truth, justice, and reparation, and preventing armed conflicts are some of the dimensions of this resolution, which in light of its unilateral legal nature is binding, albeit not systematically monitored by the United Nations Security Council. Subsequently, several resolutions followed on WPS, spelling out tasks and entrusting them to different actors based on the logic of UNSCR 1325.

While some resolutions on WPS focus on women's participation in peace processes, others seek to prevent and respond to sexual violence related to conflicts including armed conflicts more specifically. UNSC Res. 1820 (2008), for example, was the first to recognize sexual violence related to conflicts as a tactic of war and a critical component for maintaining international peace and security, which requires a response of peace negotiations, justice, and peacekeeping. UNSC Res. 1888 (2009) strengthened the tools for implementing UNSC Res. 1820 by assigning leadership and fostering judicial responses and reporting mechanisms; and UNSC Res. 1960 (2010) suggests an accountability mechanism for addressing sexual violence related to conflicts. UNSC Res. 2106 (2013) is focused on the accountability of perpetrators of sexual violence in conflicts, placing emphasis on the political and economic empowerment of women. Finally, of the most recent resolutions, UNSC Res. 2467 (2019) emphasizes the importance of women as agents of change and the fact that men and boys are also victims of gender violence and gender-based insecurities, while UNSC Res. 2493 (2019) highlights the gains in implementation and requires UN agencies and regional organizations to contribute to women's participation in peace and security initiatives.

Despite the binding nature of these resolutions, there are few standards, internationally, regionally, or nationally, that tie the WPS agenda to the rule of law and the obligations it imposes on states. Regionally, one action connected to the WPS agenda was the Biennial Resolution on “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control,” led by Trinidad and Tobago in 2010 and adopted as Resolution 65/69 of the UN General Assembly. This resolution urges the states to foster women’s participation in decision-making processes on disarmament. This resolution was the first formal recognition by the General Assembly of the integral ties between women and disarmament.

According to the analysis proposed by Benevane et al., *“Resolution (1325) is an important gain for gender equality and for women and men who aspire to a stable and lasting peace, transforming the political commitment of the states into real practice; it is a path to be taken. One way to institutionalize the political will to incorporate a gender perspective and take into account the whole population, including women, in peace processes, is to draw up plans and procedures for their implementation.”*³¹ Accordingly, a transformative political commitment is needed, guided by equality to ensure the inclusion of gender in discussions of peace and security.

4.2.1 Action plans and implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the region

There are major differences in the Americas in the degree to which the resolution has been integrated in the national agendas of security, gender equality, and development cooperation, marked by the experience of violent conflict that each country has experienced, especially since the second half of the 20th century. On the one hand, one finds countries that have experienced profound medium- to high-intensity internal conflicts. For example, in Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, and Honduras UNSCR 1325 has been widely adopted by the women’s movements – though in no case by the state – as a tool for demanding attention and compliance with the content of the resolution when it comes to how conflicts are handled politically and militarily. On the other hand are countries that have suffered military repression and dictatorships and in their democratic transition have successfully made progress in designing and implementing National Action Plans (NAP). The NAPs establish tools and activities to be carried out by the states to implement UNSCR 1325, especially as related to gender training for military personnel and capacity-building for women who are to join peacekeeping operations. Accordingly, *“there have been gains as regards legal changes on the entry of female personnel to the armed forces and police forces, and the conditions for serving. The entry of women to the career service for commanding officers is by now generalized throughout the region; yet there*

31 María Cristina R. Benavente, Marcela Donadio, and Pamela Villalobos, *Manual de formación regional para la implementación de la resolución 1325 (2000) del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas relativa a las mujeres, la paz y la seguridad* (CEPAL-UNFPA AECID, 2016): 103.

are still few legislative or regulatory changes for them to serve in the different specialties.”³² Finally, Canada and the United States have incorporated the WPS agenda into their development cooperation plans, albeit generally with less emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean, with the notable exception of Colombia.

At present there are ten WPS action plans in the Americas, including seven in Latin America. While countries such as Argentina (2015), Brazil (2017), El Salvador (2017), Guatemala (2017), Paraguay (2015), Mexico (2021), and Peru (2021) are implementing their first actions plans; Canada, Chile, and the United States are implementing their second or third.³³ Uruguay is currently working on its first NAP. To date no Caribbean country (be it English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, or French-speaking) has yet adopted an NAP, and none is considering the WPS agenda in the current formulation of their policies and programs on security issues.

In the case of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile – as in the United States and Canada – implementation of the WPS agendas is mostly associated with foreign policy, defense policy, and/or development cooperation. The core focus is on incorporating women to the security sector and especially in peace and security operations. In the case of Chile the Ministry of Defense initiated and led the development of the first action plan in 2009. Before the official launch of its NAP Brazil had made several efforts to expand women’s participation in decision-making, security, and peacekeeping. These initiatives include the Pluriannual Plan (2012-2015) and the National Plan for Women’s Policies. Mexico integrated its action plan in its Feminist Foreign Policy.³⁴

By way of contrast, Guatemala’s NAP situates the suggested elements of action in the context of the country’s postwar situation, highlighting the links between aggression in wartime and the violence perpetrated against women after the conflict. The general objectives of the NAP involve incorporating gender equality and women’s rights in the full social and political spectrum of Guatemala.³⁵

While other countries also involved civil society in the action plans, most assign it a more passive role. Nonetheless, civil society plays an important part not only in implementing international law; it is also a key player in responding to and preventing gender violence, as well as in promoting women’s rights and women’s participation in all decision-making processes, including those that have to do with states’ internal security policies. Groups of women and civil society have roles to play, and potential benefits to reap, when it co-

32 Id., 114.

33 For a description of each NAP see Annex 1.

34 Government of Mexico, *México anuncia la adopción de su Política Exterior Feminista*, Press release No. 015. (January 2020).

35 “Guatemala,” Peacewomen, <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/guatemala/>

mes to preventing armed violence, promoting more sustainable processes associated with development and human security. Without women it will not be possible to resolve the security challenges of the 21st century.

4.2.2 Taking stock of contexts, actions, gaps, and challenges for an expanded agenda on Women, Peace, Security, and violence in the region

The Americas is impacted by large-scale situations or problems that entail different forms of violence against women and girls. The main ones include the following³⁶:

The different situations of violence associated with the exercise of territorial control by criminal groups, which are present on a large scale in the Northern Triangle of Central America, Colombia, Mexico, Haiti, and Venezuela, but also in Brazil and Paraguay and, to a lesser extent (in small territories) associated with retail drug trafficking in most Latin American countries, and also with extractive economies and illegal markets: In all cases violence is used intensively (among rival groups, directed against the state, and directed against the population), finding differential expression when directed against women. In those contexts various forms of violence are common: femicides, rape, sexual slavery, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and domestic (intimate partner) violence, and there are stereotypes that reproduce inequality between men and women (e.g. in “*narcocultura*,” or the subcultures one finds in the world of drug trafficking).

The different forms of violence associated with mass migration: Whether in the case of international migration (crossing national borders) or internal migration (forced displacement), in mass migrations women and girls are generally more vulnerable to gender violence: rape, groping or harassment in camps for refugees or displaced persons, at border crossings or along the roads; sexual or labor exploitation; human trafficking; increase in sex for survival; and femicides, among other forms of violence. At present Venezuela is the country of the Americas in which the crisis is seeing the largest numbers of people leaving, but the other countries described (Mexico, the Northern Triangle, Haiti, and Colombia) also have large permanent migratory flows. The problem affects all the other migrant-receiving countries of the Americas. Different forms of violence against women and girls also occur in those countries.

Different forms of violence associated with poverty and structural violations of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR): Extreme poverty is itself a form of violence. Yet women and girls who live in that situation are also particularly vulnerable to different forms of gender violence, including sexual violence. Inadequate care of girls (which

36 This account was prepared in light of a series of interviews with experts from the region, in preparation of the document: CIM, *Violencia contra las mujeres en contextos de conflictividad: Un acercamiento desde la agenda de mujeres, paz y seguridad* (CIM, 2022), <https://www.oas.org/es/CIM/PazySeguridad.asp>

makes them vulnerable to rape); transactional sex in a state of necessity or early marriages or unions; non-existent or insufficient state protection from armed actors; sexual exploitation, including human trafficking; difficulty escaping domestic (intimate partner) violence; among others, are forms of violence associated with contexts of extreme poverty. Cases such as these were described in the multifactorial crises of Haiti and Venezuela, yet they also occur in the contexts of poverty in all the other countries of Latin America.

Forms of violence associated with the actions of security forces: The cases of Chile (2019) and Colombia (2021) were described; in both countries mass social mobilizations were answered by the excessive use of force by the state, including police violence against women and adolescent girls (rape, threats of rape, psychological violence, groping, and stripping). Yet, as several experts who were consulted noted,³⁷ social and political mobilizations are common in the region, as is the excessive state response in the context of a legacy of military dictatorships and repressive policies, thus it is a reality that affects or may affect other countries. Indeed, in the last five years there were also massive demonstrations that were answered with the excessive use of force in Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Cuba, although in these cases there were few if any reports of sexual violence against women. Moreover, in those countries in which armed criminal groups exercise territorial control, it is common, as noted above, for the state to also abuse its punitive power to victimize innocent persons, including women, in the context of its security policies.

Only a few countries address these “macro-situations” from the perspective of the WPS agenda. As noted above, just one-third of the countries of the hemisphere (11) have National Action Plans, (including the Peace Agreement reached in Colombia); and of these, most (6) do not provide for situations of internal conflict, emergencies, or the context of internal security. They assume a very narrow view of the WPS agenda, with objectives limited to the country’s participation in peace missions or peace diplomacy, in the foreign policy context. Only five of the countries with such plans include domestic policy scenarios, and of these only four explicitly include prevention of and protection from sexual violence, these being El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Colombia.

4.2.3 Countries that include domestic scenarios in their National Action Plans or Agreements

Only the plans of Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala include measures to prevent and respond to the various forms of violence associated with territorial control by criminal groups; only Argentina’s and Brazil’s plans include some measures related to the forms of violence associated with massive migratory movements (limited references to the at-

37 Id.

tention accorded women asylum-seekers or who are applying for refugee status). Only the plans of El Salvador and Guatemala and the Agreement in Colombia include measures to address the forms of violence associated with poverty and the structural violation of economic, social, and cultural rights; while none of the plans makes reference to preventing the forms of violence associated with the actions of security forces in crowd control. In only a few cases are there general references to incorporating a gender perspective to security policy. Having seen the magnitude of the problems described here, their major impact on the lives of women, and their extent in several countries of the Americas, it is quite clear that they constitute major gaps and, at the same time, become issues/challenges for an extended WPS agenda.

Other key elements of the WPS agenda, such as promoting women's participation in different spheres and levels of decision-making, both in general and associated with managing peace and security, and for determining the target sectors for training on gender issues or on the human rights of women and girls, are addressed in a very limited way in the plans outlined.³⁸

4.3 New threats and the deteriorating quality of democracy

The main threats to human security in general, in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in particular to the security of women, occur in peacetime. The “paradox of peace” described by Kurtenbach³⁹ in Latin America and the Caribbean is founded on the low levels of interstate conflict (wars), and marked by internal disputes with high levels of militarization and armed violence. She identifies three forms of violence that exemplify this paradox:

- The upsurge of violence traditionally classified as ‘criminal’: violence tied to mafias engaged in drug-trafficking, human trafficking, or the proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons.
- Repressive state policies and the militarization of public security.⁴⁰
- The persistence of high levels of selective political violence against human rights defenders, representatives of social movements, and environmental, feminist, and community activists.

According to Kurtenbach this paradox is all the more apparent when analyzing the positions that the different governments take, independent of their ideological orientation, on adopting a public discourse that justifies the repression deployed by the state in response to “crime” but that ignores the official excesses committed in pursuing that end.

38 See Annex 2 for the summary in the form of a table.

39 Sabine Kurtenbach, “The Limits of Peace in Latin America,” *Peacebuilding* 7, No. 3 (June 2019).

40 Antonio Jorge Ramalho, Rut Diamint, Lisa Sánchez, *La militarización de la seguridad y el regreso de los militares a la política en América Latina* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, March 2020), <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/la-seguridad/16106.pdf>

In tandem with the gradual escalation of criminal violence, citizen insecurity⁴¹ has been a constant complaint in the region and is directly related to armed violence, multicausal in nature, that subsists thanks to the tolerance, carrying, use, and deployment of small arms and light weapons: *“One of the consequences of the military dictatorships that took over in several countries of the region from the 1960s until the late 1980s was the great accumulation of weapons by the regimes and their opponents.”*⁴² Countries such as Chile and Brazil have an installed industrial capacity for the production of small arms for both the civilian and the military-state markets: *“The policy of liberalization in many of the Latin American states has been carried out in tandem with an increase in the number of arms in the hands of criminal organizations, drug cartels, insurgents, and minor criminals.”* In keeping with what is proposed in GR30, *“the proliferation of conventional arms, especially small arms, including diverted arms from the legal trade, can have a direct or indirect effect on women as victims of conflict-related gender-based violence, as victims of domestic violence and also as protestors or actors in resistance movements.”*⁴³

The other two forms of non-traditional violence, outlined by Kurtenbach, are intimately related to *“the deterioration in the quality of democracy,”* which has been described by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Its report on the state of democracy (2019),⁴⁴ identifies a series of characteristics and problems that go beyond electoral democracy. This decline in the quality of democracy is crucial for understanding the contemporary context of the social and political mobilization of women’s movements. The issues are summarized in Table 1:

41 United Nations Human Development Program, *Venciendo el Temor: (In)seguridad Ciudadana y Desarrollo Humano en Costa Rica* (San José, 2005).

42 Martin Appiolaza, *Armas de fuego en América Latina y el Caribe: entre el diagnóstico y la acción. Manual de ONG, del Centro regional de las Naciones Unidas para la Paz, el Desarme y el desarrollo* (2015), <https://issuu.com/martin.appiolaza/docs/13235430-armas-de-fuego-en-america->

43 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 30, 9.

44 International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), *The Global State of Democracy 2019: Addressing the Ills, Reviving the Promise* (Stockholm, 2019): 27-30. <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-global-state-of-democracy-2019.pdf>

Table 1. Factors of democratic destabilization identified in “The Global State of Democracy” and interpretation in the regional context

| Factors of democratic destabilization ⁴⁵ | Factors of democratic destabilization in the region |
|--|---|
| “The crisis of representation of political parties and the rise of populism.” ⁴⁶ | <p>Political boom of movements led by individual personalism, on both the left and the right.</p> <p>There is a growing and strong bond between ultraconservative anti-rights platforms, aligned with the strengthening of the arms race, defense of what is considered <i>national</i>, and the ties between the state and the churches.</p> |
| Existence of patterns and conditions for democratic backsliding: gradual weakening of the checks and balances on government and of civil liberties | The central role played by powerful figures is accompanied by a gradual weakening of the oversight agencies and their independence and the cooptation of intermediate and decentralized structures. There is a growing concern about the gradual politicization of military and police forces. |
| “The empowerment of civil society in a shrinking civic space” | Individualizing civic engagement, facilitated by the use of ICTs, in contexts in which the representativeness of traditional leadership (in political parties, trade unions, industrial associations) is being called into question. Polarization along the political-ideological spectrum, with clear tensions in civil society, with little direct impact on decision-making processes. Cyber-attacks and the profiling of opposition forces. |
| Hostile environments and multiple challenges for holding elections, both technical and as regards their legitimacy and respect for the results. | Political maneuvering, constitutional changes, and low participation in elections are in addition to the direct manipulation of the vote, the spread of fake news, and the logistical difficulties ensuring the validity of ballots handled without adequate custody. Special mention should also be made of the obstruction of opposition parties and movements in Latin America and the Caribbean. |
| Impact of corruption and money on politics. To the detriment of trust in the state. | In Latin America clientelism ⁴⁷ has been a common and widespread practice. The impact of neoliberalism brought along an outsourcing of state actions, thanks to which private participation in public spending expanded. These two elements together have favored the diversion of public funds to the private sector, which subsequently finances political campaigns and parties who govern for their benefit. “The perceived inability of some countries to effectively curb corruption is seen as one of the causes for the rise of populism.” ⁴⁸ |

45 The table is by the authors based on the key findings presented in the IDEA report at page 26.

46 The discussion on populism is not a subject of this document. We generally apply the term to a type of government which, independent of its ideological ties, proposes a direct relationship between the rulers and a population dissatisfied with their situation, in which one is invited to distrust in the “governing elites,” marked by effectiveness, the rupture of the checks and balances on the different branches of government, the tendency of rulers to perpetuate themselves in power and to reform constitutions in so doing, all self-legitimated through popular support. Accordingly, they are governments without checks and balances that normally require accountability and protect political pluralism.

47 We understand clientelism to refer to a transactional relationship between political figures and the voters, who benefit directly at the individual level and in economic terms, as a result of the political election, through extraofficial concessions.

48 IDEA, “The Global State of Democracy 2019, 26.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, IDEA also identifies two characteristics of deteriorated democracies: growing inequality in formal democracies and physical and political attacks on those who defend human and environmental rights. This complex scenario of conflictive dynamics interconnected causally or by chance is profoundly marked by patriarchal culture, in which the masculine figure of the *male*, or *macho*, dominates the private and public sphere, i.e. *machismo*, with its deployment of virility and a propensity to violence present on a daily basis.⁴⁹ This strong male figure focused on the “boss” – of the home, of the state, of the hacienda, of the company – answers to a hierarchical and vertical structure for the exercise of authority and strength. That image stands in sharp contrast to those who work for the defense of environmental and human rights, which as will be seen below are working for a social transformation characterized by actions of collective resistance, networking, and making connections from and for care.

4.4 The Caribbean and the challenges facing island states

The Caribbean subregion requires a special analysis of the security challenges in light of its geophysical particularities, human geography, the persistence of colonial ties, and the diversity one encounters. In principle, it is noteworthy that the Caribbean has a broad variability both human and linguistic, in which there are Spanish-speaking, French-speaking, and English-speaking territories distributed across 28 political entities. Some, such as Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic are autonomous states, whereas others, like Guadeloupe, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, are overseas territories of colonial powers or former colonial powers.

At this time the Caribbean is facing a series of security challenges related to their status as island states related directly to climate change, the environmental degradation of marine-coastal ecosystems, dependence on tourism, the presence of firearms in the hands of the civilian population, and the multiple effects of the war on drugs and other forms of crime. In addition, they are societies in which women are at the core of the social/family order. “If we focus on Caribbean culture we observe that predominantly, either formally or structurally, home and family appear to be under exclusive female/maternal care, whereas male figures are itinerant or construed as dispensable in the formation and permanence of the family unit.”⁵⁰ This formation describes a kind of social organization that is a fruit of colonization and the continuum of family and labor relations in the Caribbean, which was nonetheless a matter of interest insofar as it moved away from the “norm” of the monogamous nuclear family of the Western world: “if the nuclear family is

49 Interesting efforts have been made in the region to perform specific analyses of masculinities in the context of conflict and security in Latin America. Francisco Aguayo and Marcos Nascimento, “Dos décadas de Estudios de Hombres y Masculinidades en América Latina: avances y desafíos,” *Sexualidad, Salud y Sociedad* 22 (Rio de Janeiro, 2016): 207–220.

50 Julia Eva Cogollo, Juliana Flórez-Flórez, and Angélica Nández “El patriarca imposible: una aproximación a la subjetividad masculina afrocaribeña”, en *Conflicto e (in)visibilidad Retos en los estudios de la gente negra en Colombia*, eds. Eduardo Restrepo and Axel Rojas (Editorial Universidad del Cauca, 2004): 195.

ideal, then the Caribbean family becomes symptomatic of pathology and want, with women-headed households labelled in various ways as deviant, disintegrated, naked, and incomplete, a legacy that remains to this day in the region as well as in the diasporas.”⁵¹ All the foregoing has direct and differential effects on the lives of women in the region and their sense of security.

The effects of climate change are devastating for the islands and coasts of the Greater Caribbean⁵² due to the confluence of:

- **Rising sea levels**, which year after year reduce the territory, especially in coastal and beach areas, which are fundamental for economic life, including tourism.
- **The impact of meteorological phenomena such as hurricanes and tropical storms**, which are ever more common, more destructive, and more intense. These not only affect living conditions and the ability to make a living, but entail a permanent cost for adaptation and recovery. It should be recalled that there is generally an increase in gender-based violence among survivors in emergency situations and humanitarian responses to disasters.
- **The relationship between climate change and food security**. There is no food sovereignty in the region, but in addition the tourism industry demands a large amount (and variety) of goods that the region is unable to supply. Fish banks are ever scarcer and smaller due to overfishing. This difficulty affects, in particular, the most vulnerable women, who have to pay very high food prices.
- **The deterioration of marine-coastal ecosystems**. The destruction of the mangrove barrier that usually occupies the coastal zones increases the risks of destruction due to climatic phenomena, at the same time as it reduces marine biodiversity. To this is added that due to the rise in the temperature of the sea, and the discharge of agricultural inputs, tons of sargassum algae proliferate along the beaches, obstructing their recreational use, and negatively impacting tourism, the region’s main economic driver.
- With the exception of Cuba, most of the countries have a very **limited logistical, organization, and protective capacity** for mitigating the impacts of climatic events, especially as regards early warning systems.

In addition, firearms are proliferating in the Caribbean with the attendant negative impact on citizen security throughout the region. According to data from the Inter-American

51 Alissa Trotz, “The Caribbean Family?” in *A Companion to Gender Studies*, eds. Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg, Audrey Kobayashi (Blackwell Publishing, 2017).

52 For more complete information see Jacqueline Laguardia, *Cambio climático y sus impactos en el Gran Caribe* (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2020).

Development Bank⁵³ crime is the main problem identified by 40% of the population in the Caribbean. The use of arms in the Bahamas (82%), Jamaica (73.4%), and Trinidad and Tobago (72.6%) was the direct cause of the high homicide rates. A study by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in 2015 showed high homicide rates in countries of this subregion, as observed in Table 2:

Table 2. Homicides per 100,000 population in the Caribbean, disaggregated by sex

| Country | Rate | Males | Females |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------|---------|
| Antigua and Barbuda | 11.2 | 67.9% | 32.1% |
| Bahamas | 29.8 | 87.4% | 12.6% |
| Barbados | 7.4 | 67.7% | 32.3% |
| Cuba | 4.2 | 75% | 25% |
| Dominica | 21.1 | 87.5% | 12.5% |
| Dominican Republic | 22.1 | 87.5% | 8.9% |
| Grenada | 13.3 | 64.3% | 35.7% |
| Haiti | 10.2 | 78.4% | 21.6% |
| Jamaica | 39.3 | 89.5% | 10.50 % |
| St. Kitts and Nevis | 33.6 | 90.5% | 9.5% |
| St. Lucia | 21.6 | 79.9% | 20.3% |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 25.6 | 88% | 12% |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 28.3 | 91.7% | 8.3% |

Source: UNLIREC, *Violencia Armada, Violencia por Motivos de Género y Armas Pequeñas: Sistematización de datos disponibles en América Latina y el Caribe* (2015): 10.

Several countries established legal frameworks for reducing the distribution and illegal trafficking of firearms in the region. For example, Trinidad and Tobago signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which regulates the international trade in conventional weapons. In this respect Ayanna Webster-Roy, in charge of gender and childhood matters in the Office of the Prime Minister, notes that: “Though we are not manufacturers nor large scale importers of small arms and light weapons, the illicit arms trade in Trinidad and Tobago, and by extension the wider Caribbean region, remains a threat to our socio-economic structures.”⁵⁴

Another relevant aspect when it comes to taking stock of the security situation in the Caribbean, from a gender perspective, has to do with the strategic role of the illicit narcotics trade and the “war on drugs” in the region. Control over the routes which, by sea, facilitate the transport of narcotics between South America and North America is another driving

⁵³ Heather Suttony and Inder Ruprah, *Restoring paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting violence with numbers* (IDB, 2017).

⁵⁴ United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Forces of Change IV. Latin American and Caribbean Women Promoting Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control* (Lima, 2020), <https://unlirec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Fuerza-de-Cambio-IV-INGLES.pdf>

force of violence in the region. For decades the U.S. maritime authorities have sought to control drug-trafficking routes by applying international treaties to authorize detentions in international waters. In this context, traditional fishermen and owners of launches are often pressured to become involved in drug trafficking and are left to their own fate if arrested by the authorities. This phenomenon has torn apart family structures and impoverished those households that depend economically on the person who is locked up.⁵⁵

Climate change, drug-trafficking, carrying and using small arms and light weapons, food insecurity, and the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions associated with the tourism sector, especially in the context of COVID-19, are some of the most significant elements that affect the security of women in the Caribbean. All this has a differential impact based on the territory, in light of each context. Moreover, one finds high levels of violence against women,⁵⁶ as occurs in the Americas in general, and there is an evident need to deepen the debate on insecurity and the peace agenda for the region.

55 Hernando Alvarez, "The island where men are disappearing," *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34487450>

56 "Caribbean Women Count Ending Violence against Women and Girls Data Hub," UN Women, <https://caribbeanwomenscount.unwomen.org/index.html>

5. Women's leadership towards a new peace and security agenda

Before the promulgation of UNSCR 1325, the women of Latin America and the Caribbean had been present in different forums to demand protection for their lives, integrity, and security. During the Cold War there was notable activism on the part of the mothers of persons disappeared by military dictatorships in the context of Plan Cóndor.⁵⁷ Having noted this, a great many of the efforts for the mediation, mobilization, and peaceful action of women throughout the history of Latin America and the Caribbean are simply not referenced because at the time they did not receive the attention needed to be remembered later. Nonetheless, the work of truth commissions as well as criminal justice trials and transitional justice processes have been key for highlighting the acts of women's resistance and mobilization in the context of conflict.⁵⁸

The analysis of the literature on WPS in the region and recent empirical work⁵⁹ indicate that with the exception of the countries that have dealt most directly or most recently with conflict (Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador)⁶⁰ knowledge of the WPS agenda among women's organizations is very limited and, as is reflected in most of the NAPs in the region, is associated almost exclusively with military affairs, police affairs, and foreign relations. Nonetheless, activist women, academics, women in politics, and women social and environmental leaders all have a clear need for more and better tools for thinking and doing with respect to their personal and collective security. Women's efforts to participate in decision-making processes and political processes in the region often remain invisible or ignored. *"In Latin America, women have participated in various high-profile peace negotiations; those of El Salvador and Guatemala stand out. During the peace negotiations in El Salvador in the 1990s, women were present in almost all post-conflict negotiations, accounting for 13% of the members of the negotiating teams. Nonetheless, despite the presence of women at the peace table, little or no attention was devoted to the problems of women in the peace negotiations. Indeed, there was not a single reference to women in the agreements."*⁶¹

57 Mercosur Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights, *A 40 años del Cóndor; de las coordinaciones represivas a la construcción de las políticas públicas regionales en derechos humanos* (November 2015), <http://www.ippdh.mercosur.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/A-40-a%C3%B1os-del-C%C3%B3ndor.pdf>

58 Ivonne Díaz and Nelson Molina, "Comisiones de la Verdad en América Latina. La esperanza de un nuevo porvenir." *Revista Logos, Ciencia & Tecnología* 8, No. 2 (2017): 5-23.

59 GAIC, *Identificar Desigualdades para Planificar una paz duradera* (2020), http://www.genderassociations.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final_Report.pdf

60 Although Haiti is the only country of the region where a peace-keeping operation has been deployed (MINUSTAH) since 2004, there have been no successful efforts to adopt a National Action Plan.

61 Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI), *Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2011).

The recent Colombian peace process has had major and substantive participation by women in the entire agreement; nonetheless, there has been limited progress in implementing the 130 gender commitments, tracked through 51 indicators proposed in the context of monitoring the Agreement. One notes, above all, the partial gains in the measures for victims and political participation, while rural reform, solving the drug problem, and measures for reincorporating former combatants all show considerable lags.⁶²

This section offers an analytical perspective focused on the roles that women's movements have played in the WPS agenda, while taking stock of installed capacities, and examining the possibilities of strengthening different leaders in the present scenarios of crisis. To that end one must start by exploring the characteristics of the web of threats to security faced by women in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of identifying gains and persistent gaps.

5.1 Organized women and scenarios of participation

Throughout history women in the Americas have been key in popular struggles, resistance movements, pro-democracy movements, expanding citizenship, and the enjoyment of human rights.⁶³ Jelin asserts that the process of women's collective mobilization usually unfolds in response to their realization that a state, institutional, or governmental offer is insufficient in light of their role as guarantor of rights. At the same time, cultural tensions are identified between social justice (which people demand) and formal justice (via the channels and apparatus of the state). The widening of this gap is another structural cause of present-day social conflictiveness not only in the region, but globally. "This cultural pattern of relationships of power is combined with the culture of patriarchy, so as to have twice the impact on the social condition of women and their rights."⁶⁴

Since the 1970s, in the context of the second wave of feminism, women in Latin America have been undertaking new struggles in hitherto unexplored areas: access to sexual and reproductive health, political activism in opposition to the dictatorships, the expansion of political and civil rights in terms of representation, recognition of social and economic rights, Indigenism, and the struggle for popular education and access to the land, among others. That is when the relationship between women and human rights emerged as an interrelationship: first, the establishment of a movement for women's human rights,

62 Instancia Especial de Mujeres para el Enfoque de género en la paz, *Balance a tres años de la firma del acuerdo de paz* (2019) and GPAZ, *La paz avanza con las mujeres: Observaciones sobre la incorporación del enfoque de género en el Acuerdo de Paz* (2019). By way of contrast, the official report, "Avances en la Implementación de los 51 indicadores del género (sic) del plan marco de implementación del acuerdo final," authored by the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Stabilization and Consolidation, presents, as significant gains, the legal changes required for carrying out the measures, yet acknowledges the lack of funding.

63 Elizabeth Jelin, "¿Ante, de, en y? Mujeres, derechos humanos," *América Latina Hoy*, no. 9 (Salamanca, 1994): 12.

64 Teresa Valdés, "Mujer y derechos humanos menos tu vientre," (Santiago, 1990). Working paper in the series *Estudios sociales* No. 8.

and second, the presence, action, and leadership of women in the movements in favor of human rights. In the 1990s the agenda was focused mainly on demands for sexual and reproductive rights; eliminating all forms of discrimination; and the global rights to peace, development, and the environment.⁶⁵

Since then the movement has not only grown tremendously and become increasingly diverse, but it has adopted the logic of the times. The advent of the third wave of feminism made it possible to highlight the symbolic and factual exclusions that existed within movements that are not at all homogeneous. In the process of deconstructing power structures, the questioning of racial, ethnic, educational, and class hierarchies, of capacities and gender identity, made the extensive and unfulfilled list of demands for rights complex.

The transformations resulting from the appropriation and popularization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have given rise to what has been called feminism 4.0⁶⁶, where there has been “... *an impressive reaction to the violence, oppression, and discrimination ... fed by the three previous waves, social networks, and the conscientization of the younger generations, it is removing the foundations of patriarchy as never before.*”⁶⁷ The technological tools, the notion of temporal/spatial rupture, the possibility of involvement that is committed yet demarcated from formal structures and the idea of *activism* are some of the characteristics of these new communities. Women authors such as Garita indicate that “*The appearance on the Latin American scene of young, belligerent activists against harassment, against femicide, in favor of the voluntary interruption of pregnancy, has posed the challenge of understanding the histories, the subjectivities of these young women.*”⁶⁸

Nonetheless, this new space is not monopolized by young women, nor split-off from the previous movements that persist in efforts to attain equality. To the contrary, the dynamics particular to “cyber-activism” make it possible for spontaneous actors to emerge from the experience of encounter on the Internet, such that people take to the streets when a problem is denounced or a widespread demand is spontaneously conveyed by thousands of persons—in a relatively short time— through social networks, blogs, forums, chains of e-mails or text messages. Through the use of these tools citizens can organize in the face of conflict and spread information. De Ugarte⁶⁹ calls this phenomenon “cyber-activism”, understood as a strategy that seeks to bring about change in the public agenda by disseminating a given message and promoting its spread by transmitting it from one person

65 Jelin, *¿Ante, de, en y?,* 21.

66 Nuria Varela, *Feminismo 4.0. La Cuarta Ola* (Penguin Random House, 2019).

67 Id., 7.

68 Nora Garita, “Prólogo,” in *Activismos feministas jóvenes: Emergencias, actrices y luchas en América Latina* eds. Marina Larrondo and Camila Ponce (CLACSO, 2019):12.

69 David de Ugarte, “El poder de las redes: Manual ilustrado para personas, colectivos y empresas abocados al ciberactivismo” (2010), <http://www.pensamientocritico.org/davuga0313.pdf>

to the next, which is multiplied by personal measures of electronic communication and publication. Recent years have seen experiences in which the change in the public agenda has been successfully achieved. There are two phases in cyber-activism: one is deliberative, through blogs and forums thoughts are shared as debates unfold, and another involving mobilization, where people take to the streets having been called to protest by e-mails and text messages sent by cell phone. One example of this are the *#Niunamenos* [NotOneLess] proclamations, first made in Argentina as a cry against femicide, or *#El-violadorerestu* [TheRapistIsYou], from the feminist mobilization in Chile; today these are present in the demands for gender equality in the feminist mobilization in Mexico, among other countries of the region and the world.

The metaphor of the waves of feminism describes how the scenario of feminist demands has translated into major gains without considering that the struggle for the ideas of justice, which marked the first wave, is over. Although formally states have gradually recognized women's human rights legally and politically, in practice inequalities between men and women persist, becoming more complex and even expanding in economically precarious situations, amidst the impact of COVID-19, the advance of neo-conservatism, political violence, the lack of access to justice, the high degree of impunity for the crimes of violence against women, and other characteristics mentioned above on the weakening of democracy as a principle for guiding agreements and governance.

5.2 Women's participation in peace processes and peace-building: The cases of Central America and Colombia

As mentioned above, one of the pillars of UNSCR 1325 is the push for women's participation in peace negotiations, dialogues, and processes. According to data from the *Council on Foreign Relations*, even though women play an active role in preventing and resolving conflicts, in formal contexts they are often excluded from peace processes: "Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average, 13 percent of negotiators, 6 percent of mediators, and 6 percent of signatories in major peace processes around the world."⁷⁰ These data show clearly how war and peace continue to be male-dominated spaces despite the individual and collective installed capacity among women for mobilizing actions to de-escalate conflicts, foster peace-building, and bring about opportunities for dialogue, even though women have been used as war bounty and violence against women has been part of military strategy.

Specific studies on the participation of women in peace processes show that it is from civil society that the collective strength of women has been able to have an impact on

70 "Women's Participation in Peace Processes," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/>

the provisions that most directly benefit them.⁷¹ On the one hand, the use of women as war bounty and the use of violence against them as a military strategy has seldom been given visibility or understood in terms of its real impacts on the bodies and lives of women and girls. On the other, in all the processes it is apparent that “the role of women in armed conflicts has been focused on the contributions they can make, as victims, to peace-building, yet one finds little participation of former combatants in such initiatives who are women.”⁷² This last point reflects another approach to analyzing issues of conflict resolution and the inclusion of a gender perspective in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR), which is addressed briefly in the following sub-chapters.

Since the 1990s various peace processes have unfolded in Central American countries such as Nicaragua (1985-1990), El Salvador (1990-1992), and Guatemala (1991-1996), and more recently in Colombia (2012-2016). The processes in Central America unfolded prior to the adoption of UNSCR 1325, whereas the Colombian process went forward under the parameters of the WPS agenda. While each of these case studies is framed by conflicts historically grounded in the tensions particular to post-colonialism in Latin America, in all cases the exacerbation of the conflicts was due to the Cold War, the fear that communist revolutions would spread in the Americas, and the economic, ideological, and political expansion of the United States in the region.

5.2.1 Nicaragua

Nicaragua was governed by one or another member of the Somoza dynasty from 1937 to 1979, when members of the Sandinista movement succeeded in overthrowing the regime of the last one, Anastasio Somoza. While the overthrow succeeded thanks to the confluence of various social, business, and political sectors who wanted a change in the country’s orientation, and who came together under the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction, this unity broke down, giving way to a government of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. This rupture led to the subsequent internal conflicts between the Sandinista government and the Nicaraguan resistance, called the “contra,” who had ample financing from the United States, who saw in the Sandinistas a movement similar to the one that had carried out the 1959 revolution in Cuba. This conflict went through various stages due to the different forms of resistance the Sandinista government encountered. The peace process formally began in 1986, with the regional signing of the Esquipulas Agreement, where the governments made the political decision to attain a firm and lasting peace for the region.⁷³

71 Jana Krausea, Werner Krauseb, and Piia Bränfors, “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace,” *International Interactions* 44, no. 6 (University of Amsterdam, 2018).

72 Omar Díaz, Angie Herrera, and Nancy Hernández, “De mujer combatiente a mujer constructora de paz. Inclusión de la voz femenina en el escenario del posacuerdo,” *Ratio Juris UNAULA* 12, no. 25 (2017): 43-67.

73 For more information in this regard, review documents of the Central American Integration System (SICA), <https://www.sica.int/pacificacion>

During the Sandinista government (1979-1990) major gains were made in gender equity. Indeed, during this period “numerous Nicaraguan women joined the struggle, decidedly expressed their commitment and, from the guerrilla movements, challenged *el somocismo* and vindicated their rights.”⁷⁴ According to UN Women (at that time UNIFEM), it is estimated that women accounted for 25% to 30% of all combatants. Nonetheless, their presence was active on all fronts: intelligence, diplomacy, in the political opposition, in the “contra,” and in generating grassroots support. In the context of implementing the new government’s plans, armed resistance movements emerged among Indigenous groups in the Atlantic Coast region who, while not aligned with the political project of the “contras,” did call for differential treatment mindful of their ethnic identity. Analysts such as Frühling, González, and Buvollen have noted that there was logistical support from the United States that was curtailed and thus the strength of the armed opposition diminished, which forced the indigenous population to lay down their arms and begin a process of dialogue, which took place through “peace commissions.”⁷⁵ Indigenous women played a key role as they mobilized massively to achieve the disarmament of their husbands and sons, without yielding in the struggle for recognition of their rights and their ethnic identity, ancestral medicine, community life plans, and right to peace: “The general accomplishment that was most important for women is the fact that one of the articles of the autonomy statute establishes equal participation in all political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of the autonomous regions,” notes Mirna Cunningham.⁷⁶

At the national level the revolutionary process was positive as it granted and ensured previously non-existent rights, which were demanded internationally and regionally as part of the maturation of the feminist movement. Among the gains special mention should be made of the alimony law, the law authorizing unilateral divorce, and others related to the right to a family. Despite the major presence of women in different mechanisms and as active participants in the conflict in Nicaragua, “women did not participate in the official peace talks, but they did play an important role through their work and their day-to-day attitudes,”⁷⁷ through their different positions in society and the community, and as survivors of the conflict.

Finally, in 1987, following up on the Esquipulas II agreement, a ceasefire commitment was secured from both the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the Nicaraguan Resistance so as to subsequently call elections in February 1990, in which Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was elected president, the first woman elected to high office in Central America.

74 UNIFEM, *Las mujeres en la conquista de la paz: Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua* (2005): 77.

75 Pierre Frühling, Miguel González, and Hans Buvollen, *Etnicidad y Nación, El desarrollo de la Autonomía en la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua (1987-2007)*, (F&G Editores, 2007).

76 UNIFEM, *Las mujeres en la conquista de la paz*, 92.

77 Id., 81.

5.2.2 El Salvador

In the 1980s, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) was formed in El Salvador. It was formed as a Marxist-Leninist socialist guerrilla movement that opposed the U.S.-backed government. This civil war lasted 12 years, during which serious human rights violations were committed, and nearly 80,000 persons lost their lives. The UNIFEM report notes that the FMLN was recognized as a “belligerent army” in the conflict, which constituted a serious threat to the system and forced peace negotiations, culminating in the 1992 Chapultepec Agreement.⁷⁸

In the case of El Salvador, liberation theology contributed to making the movement and its ideals popular with young women. “The organization of Christian base communities politicized the poor of the countryside and the city. Many young women, followers of Liberation Theology, participated actively in political and social spaces, and also joined the revolutionary struggle. Of the FMLN combatants, 30 percent were women, as were 60 percent of the support base, which represents the highest percentage in the history of armed struggle in Latin America.”⁷⁹ The energy and strength of the social movement of women intersected with a large number of militants among women students, teachers, and small farmers. Nonetheless, throughout the negotiations women were excluded and their vision relegated. “The presence of women in the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front benefitted the FMLN more than the women. What the study showed is that the demobilized women who are now doing well were able to achieve their current status because they were able to associate with social networks.”⁸⁰ In this connection, it should be noted that the demobilized women combatants continue to be interested in fighting the different forms of structural discrimination and violence; some women who left the armed struggle have continued working with movements that fight to strengthen democracy, guarantee women’s rights, and work for real equality with men. These include Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Las Dignas), the Salvadoran women’s movement, and the Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Mujer.⁸¹

Though research and work on the participation of women in the Salvadoran conflict continue, there is scant information specifically on their role in the peace process, due to the *de facto* exclusion of women in the negotiated solution to the conflict: “In El Salvador, the lack of analysis on the way in which the armed conflict transformed gender relations, and the scope of this change, had negative consequences once it had ended. The peace agreements ignored both the participation and the needs and interests of women, such that women’s various experiences during the conflict were not taken into account when

78 UNIFEM, *Las mujeres en la conquista de la paz*, 49.

79 Id.

80 Red Nacional de Mujeres, *Memorias Foro Internacional: Mujeres, participación política y procesos de paz: Experiencias de Colombia, El Salvador y Guatemala a la luz de la resolución 1325* (Bogotá, 2014): 19.

81 Díaz et al., “De mujer combatiente a mujer constructora de paz.”

designing and planning the process of rehabilitation after the war.”⁸² The very exclusion of women from the peace negotiations translated into the absence of gender in the peace process and the implementation phase.

Nonetheless, years later, and after the promulgation of UNSCR 1325, El Salvador’s “Women, Peace and Security” National Action Plan 2017-2022⁸³ includes initiatives that recognize the need to recover the historical memory to make progress in more inclusive and lasting peace-building. Specifically, in El Salvador one of the main objectives of the WPS action plan calls for reflecting on the history of armed violence and conflict; recovering the historical memory on the role of women in peace-building; as well as actions to make reparation to the victims of the conflict. The Salvadoran government included various civil society actors in the process of developing the NAP on WPS, including:

- Three representatives of the national non-governmental organizations entered in the corresponding registry dedicated to the promotion of women;
- The Board of Directors of the Program for Reparation of Victims of human rights violations that occurred during the context of the armed conflict, and Concertación Feminista Prudencia Ayala; and
- The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson.

5.2.3 Guatemala

Similar to other countries in the Central American region, the peace accords reached in Guatemala in 1996 are a key point in a history of 36 years of conflict in which the State faced guerrilla movements inspired by the Cuban revolution thanks to the strong military, economic, and logistical impact of the United States. Throughout this civil war there were serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In a counterinsurgency drive the armed forces, trained at the School of the Americas, adopted a strategy that simultaneously sought to militarily decimate the guerrillas and weaken popular support for the movement. Successive military governments carried out “scorched earth” tactics as part of a repressive campaign that combined the massive annihilation of the Indigenous population, torture, sexual violence, and the forced displacement of entire communities.⁸⁴ Accordingly, thousands of persons were assassinated, the vast majority of them of Indigenous origin.⁸⁵

82 Irantzu Mendia, “Género, rehabilitación posbélica y construcción de la paz: Aspectos teóricos y aproximación a la experiencia en El Salvador.” (Bilbao: Hegoa, 2010).

83 Available at: <https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/PLAN-DE-ACCION-NACIONAL-2017-2-022.pdf>

84 “Guatemala Case Study: Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace,” Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/guatemala>

85 The figure for the total number of victims killed is subject to many lines of tension. Officially, the Commission for Historical Clarification (Guatemala’s Truth Commission) recognizes that approximately 25,000 persons lost their lives, but a large and indeterminate number of persons disappeared casts doubt on this figure.

The exacerbation of the internal conflict and the general instability of the region was accompanied by diplomatic action on the part of countries of South and Central America, concerned about the situation in the subregion. Accordingly, in 1984 elections were held, a new constitution was adopted, and a civilian, Vinicio Cerezo, was elected president for the first time. He was one of the signers of the Esquipulas Agreement and made progress deescalating the various forms of violence. In 1990 the government began a series of specific negotiations with social actors, among them women, both collectively and on their own behalf in the various sectors convened (students, private sector, etc.). Thanks to that, the peace agreements include specific demands to recognize and strengthen the role of Indigenous women in the political action of the State: “Women ... have for years been subordinated and excluded, under patriarchal and racist arrangements, especially Indigenous women.”⁸⁶ After a long process of preparation, in 1996 a road map was established for signing the peace agreement.

In this peace process women constituted 13% of the negotiating team – only on the government side – and 25% of all the delegates in the political and diplomatic commissions. In absolute numbers, “During the negotiations, of the 22 negotiators two were women; one of them signed the Peace Accords (11 signatories in total). It’s the first Peace Accord in Latin America to recognize violence against women and created specific mechanisms for Indigenous women (DEMI)⁸⁷ and to institutionalise peace.”⁸⁸ Once again, the women’s organizations were a major part of the mobilization of civil society groups, which “supported the peace process by gathering critical input from across ethnic and regional lines, promoting a broad agenda for reform, and building public support.”⁸⁹

According to the Council on Foreign Relations, women’s main contributions to the process were:

- Broadening the working agenda, including land tenure reform, social justice, economic opportunity, return of refugees, and gender-based violence.
- Working across ethnic, geographic, economic and political divides, drawing on their networks. This contributed to the articulation and inclusion of rural and Indigenous communities, human rights activists, and part of the trade union sector.
- They organized large demonstrations to repudiate the “scorched earth” military actions. The women’s movement was key in denouncing the crimes against humanity committed during the civil war.
- Active collaboration in the disarmament process, especially locally and with the rank and file.

86 UNIFEM, *Las mujeres en la conquista de la paz*, 26.

87 “La Defensoría de la Mujer Indígena,” Government of Guatemala, <https://www.demi.gob.gt/>

88 “Guatemala”, UN Women, <https://lac.unwomen.org/es/donde-estamos/guatemala>

89 “Guatemala Case Study,” Council on Foreign Relations.

In addition, two more contributions are highlighted:

- The adoption of a criminal statute on discrimination; and
- The establishment of the Women's Forum (Foro de la Mujer).

Beyond the crucial participation of women in the lengthy process of dialogue and implementation of the agreements, one very important milestone attained by the feminist movement and Indigenous women leaders with international support was in the Sepur Zarco case. After the period of implementation of the peace agreement, in 2011 women survivors of the serious human rights violations perpetrated there in 1982 brought a complaint to the Supreme Court of Guatemala against members of the military in charge of the advanced military post. For the first time members of the military were convicted of sexual violence and sexual slavery committed against 15 survivors, and for the death and disappearance of three others. The coordinated work among Mayan Indigenous leaders, groups of women attorneys, and women human rights activists was useful not only for convicting those guilty but also for establishing a path of restorative justice with an ethnic perspective.⁹⁰

5.2.4 Colombia

In Colombia 61 peace agreements were signed from 1982 to 2016 between representatives of the government and groups that had taken up arms, in which a minority of those involved were women. Nonetheless, in the last peace process (2012–2016) this participation increased in numerical, operational, and technical terms, as a gender perspective was included in the agreements.⁹¹ The Colombian conflict is paradigmatic for its long duration, the diversity of actors, the dynamics of territorial expansion, and the degradation of the practices of war. This, in turn, has made the conflict a day-to-day praxis for most of the population, exacerbated by lines of power, gender, class, region, abilities/disabilities, ethnic-racial identity, etc. This has meant that the conflict is omnipresent, yet it is experienced differently by the most vulnerable and excluded populations. Women's participation in peacebuilding has been crucial for defining the agendas that specifically address the negative impacts they've suffered for reasons of gender, for example sexual violence in the context of the conflict, disappearances, kidnapping, forced recruitment

90 Additional and complete information Roque Urbieto Hernández, "Genocidio y racismo de Estado en Guatemala: Las 'políticas del perdón' a las mujeres q'eqchi víctimas de violencia en el destacamento militar de Sepur Zarco," *Revista Ciencias y Humanidades* 13, no. 13 (2021): 177–193 and "Sepur Zarco case: The Guatemalan women who rose for justice in a war-torn nation," UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/10/feature-sepur-zarco-case>

91 Complete and detailed information on women's participation in peace processes in Colombia can be found in Nina Chaparro González and Margarita Martínez Osorio, *Negociando desde los márgenes: la participación política de las mujeres en los procesos de paz en Colombia, 1982–2016* (Dejusticia, 2017), <https://www.dejusticia.org/publication/negociando-desde-los-margenes-la-participacion-politica-de-las-mujeres-en-los-procesos-de-paz-de-colombia-1982-2016/>

of minors, and extrajudicial executions, to name a few.⁹² In all cases, most of the surviving victims of the Colombian conflict are rural women, whether peasant, Indigenous, or Afro-Colombian.⁹³

Although the women's movement has changed its orientation, intent, and intensity since the 1950s, when women became full citizens during the dictatorship, they were always out in front in different facets of the conflict, either as combatants, militants, mediators, or representatives of civil society who sought a change in the patriarchal and bellicose structures of the ruling elites and the groups who had taken up arms. For example, they were in the negotiating teams of the M-19 guerrillas, from which position they denounced the torture to which they had been subjected by the army during their years of combat. Many who were in this role acquired and developed skills which, together with their critical mindset, were key when it came to leading local peacebuilding processes.⁹⁴ At the same time, in civil society women social leaders from different regions took up the principles of pacifism, antimilitarism, the right to a life free from violence, and negotiated solutions to conflict, which have facilitated coordination nationally with grassroots organizations, victims' groups, activists, and academics to endow the WPS agenda with experiential and technical content.⁹⁵

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, Colombia has carried out two peace processes with different armed groups: the first with the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) (2002-2006) and the second with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) (2012-2016). While both processes had components of dialogue, DDR, and transitional justice, only the process between the State and the FARC truly included a gender perspective. At the beginning of the Government-FARC talks the negotiating teams did not include any women. This was modified after tough and fair criticisms, and in 2014 a sub-commission on gender was established⁹⁶ that was crucial for including a gender perspective in the negotiations, agreements, and drafting of the final text. At the same time, the Colombian peace process was innovative in bringing together representatives

92 The report of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica) of 2013 "¡Basta ya! Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad," details gender-specific victimizations by formal actors in the armed conflict, i.e. members of guerrilla and paramilitary forces and of the Military Forces and National Police.

93 CNMH, ¡Basta ya! Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 2013), <https://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/>. In the single registry of victims men account for 51% and women 48.9%. This is because the registry adds up mortal victims, the majority of whom were men.

94 Martha Cecilia Herrera and Carol Pertuz Bedoya, "Narrativas femeninas del conflicto armado y la violencia política en Colombia: contar para rehacerse," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* no. 53 (2015): 150-162.

95 The National Summit of Women and Peace (Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz) brings together emblematic organizations such as La Ruta Pacífica de las mujeres, Casa de la Mujer, Sisma Mujer, and the Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica, among others. Other feminist organizations are an active part of this process focused specifically on areas such as forced displacement, e.g. the Liga de mujeres desplazadas; extrajudicial executions, e.g. the mothers of "false positives" from Soacha and Bogotá; forced disappearance – Madres de la Candelaria and the Asociación de Familiares Detenidos Desaparecidos (ASFADES).

96 Joint Communiqué #40, Havana negotiations. For more information see Diana Marcela Gómez Correal, "Mujeres, género y el Acuerdo de la Habana," *Lasa Fórum* 48, no.1 (2017), <https://forum.lasaweb.org/files/vol48-issue1/Debates-ProcesosPaz-5.pdf>

of the victims (60% women and 40% men) to hearings with the negotiating teams in the context of the peace talks, so as to include their perspectives and views in the drafting of the final agreement.⁹⁷ This participation was essential for sustaining the dialogues at times of crisis in the process.

Including a gender perspective in the negotiating and drafting of the final agreement was not the result of an imposition by international organizations or donors. To the contrary, it was a demand won by a lively, diverse, inclusive, and mature women's movement. Therefore, the agreement advocated, in addition, for the inclusion of the LGBTI population, a differential approach, and intersectionality. Among the most notable results of this process is the fact that the entities that make up the transitional justice system (officially known as the Integral System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition) have been characterized by gender parity.⁹⁸ In addition, there is full recognition today of women's role as peacebuilders, mediators of conflict, and experts on security issues, and above all of the differential impact of the conflict for reasons of gender. Finally, feminist movements in Colombia continue to be key actors supporting peace and a negotiated solution to the conflicts that have continued after the signing of the agreement.

5.3 When women human rights defenders must be protected

All the foregoing is directly related to the growing problem of threats, persecution, and surveillance over the agency and bodies of women human rights defenders as well as sexual and reproductive rights activists, and those mobilized against extractivism and for territorial rights either because of the collective vocation of ancestral territories or their environmental importance. These women and their organizations not only face the specific insecurity of their public exposure, but also the moralistic effect of *machista* and conservative sectors that have positioned themselves in power in each country. This point is closely related to violations of the right to life and physical integrity, threats, and women's participation in deliberative spaces with respect to empowerment on issues of development, sustainability, and territorial and environmental management. Most state responses intended to provide "protection" fail on not having a gender perspective or on proposing mitigation measures that end up silencing or hushing the grievances or the leaders being threatened. In addition, in several contexts one finds a worrisome tendency to threaten and even criminalize women judicial officers. There is also a fear of being subject to spurious judicial proceedings, as legal harassment is a strategy of those in power.⁹⁹

97 UNDP, *La voz de las víctimas en la negociación: sistematización de una experiencia* (2017): 28.

98 Coalición 1325, *6 Informe de monitoreo Resolución 1325 de Naciones Unidas Colombia 2017* (Dejusticia, 2017): 30, <https://www.dejusticia.org/en/publication/informe-de-monitoreo-resolucion-1325-de-naciones-unidas-colombia-2017/>

99 Mariana White Londoño, "Quién es Miriam Cruz? La defensora ambiental que el ESMAD detuvo en Tibabuyes," *Mutante*, <https://www.mutante.org/contenidos/quien-es-miriam-cruz-la-defensora-ambiental-que-el-esmad-detuvo-en-tibabuyes>

Environmental and territorial leaders are marked by threats particular to each context. Reports of crimes are often accompanied by violence and repressive methods by state institutions, including and especially by the security sector in collusion with de facto powers such as private business interests, both national and multilateral. The inability of the state security sector to respond to and minimize crime and violence has sparked the rise of private security agencies, hired exclusively by the upper class to protect their properties and lives, or by private businesses to protect their investments. Accordingly, security ceases to be a right so as to become a privilege or an instrument of repression against those who oppose their action and presence. In this context of the feminization of poverty and women's lesser presence in decision-making scenarios, access to justice is replete with barriers to women, especially those in vulnerable situations. The state, under the law, has the duty and responsibility not only to carry out its commitment to guarantee the security of persons, but also to foster human and sustainable development.

One of the main challenges in this regard has to do with the low credibility and legitimacy of institutions such as the police. Data compiled by Latinobarómetro (2018) show that most persons surveyed distrust the police, as reflected in Table 3:

Table 3 Regional responses to the question: “How much do you trust the police?”

| Response | Much trust | Some trust | Little trust | No trust | Doesn't know | No answer |
|--------------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| TOTAL | 10.0% | 24.9% | 35.1% | 28.8% | 1.0% | 0.3% |
| Argentina | 9.0% | 29.4% | 35.2% | 25.9% | 0.4% | 0.1% |
| Bolivia | 4.1% | 18.9% | 41.2% | 34.9% | 0.8% | - |
| Brazil | 17.4% | 29.7% | 36.7% | 15.0% | 0.9% | 0.3% |
| Chile | 12.4% | 35.4% | 31.0% | 18.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% |
| Colombia | 15.5% | 31.8% | 34.6% | 16.9% | 0.5% | 0.7% |
| Costa Rica | 14.3% | 36.6% | 33.7% | 14.6% | 0.5% | 0.3% |
| Dominican Republic | 6.9% | 16.9% | 28.0% | 47.1% | 0.8% | 0.3% |
| Ecuador | 1.5% | 31.9% | 36.7% | 14.4% | 2.4% | 0.1% |
| El Salvador | 9.0% | 13.4% | 39.0% | 38.0% | 0.6% | - |
| Guatemala | 8.7% | 16.3% | 42.5% | 30.4% | 2.0% | 0.1% |
| Honduras | 14.7% | 18.2% | 31.6% | 35.0% | 0.4% | 0.1% |
| Mexico | 3.0% | 16.4% | 39.7% | 40.2% | 0.5% | 0.2% |
| Nicaragua | 8.8% | 11.7% | 16.9% | 60.1% | 2.0% | 0.5% |
| Panama | 10.4% | 30.7% | 35.7% | 22.7% | 0.3% | 0.2% |
| Paraguay | 5.7% | 28.3% | 45.7% | 18.4% | 1.8% | 0.1% |
| Peru | 4.3% | 27.2% | 44.2% | 22.6% | 1.3% | 0.3% |
| Uruguay | 18.6% | 40.7% | 24.6% | 15.4% | 0.7% | 0.1% |
| Venezuela | 2.9% | 9.1% | 31.3% | 56.2% | 0.3% | 0.2% |

Source: Latinobarómetro 2018. Note that the highest values tend to be found in the columns indicating little or no trust.

On analyzing this information broken down by sex of respondent, it was found that women have slightly more trust in the police, with the exception of Bolivia, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Venezuela. In no country is the maximum level of trust greater than 20% of the persons interviewed. Trust in the military forces is relatively better than the police in almost all the countries, whereas there is much trust in the military in countries that are militarized such as Brazil (27.5%) and Colombia (23.7%). The greatest distrust is found in countries where the military forces are highly politicized such as Honduras (33.7%), Nicaragua (55.6%), and Venezuela (52.7%).

In countries in which the Catholic and evangelical movements are very strong, the defenders of sexual and reproductive rights are often subject to threats, wiretapping, cyber-monitoring, and media bullying. There is also a complex situation marked by racial and ethnic discrimination that endorses especially violent practices and attitudes towards racialized and Indigenous women who are active in the feminist movements. In Brazil, for example, there is a historical claim by Black feminism for the State to assume responsibility for the deaths of young Black men and women perpetrated by the police.¹⁰⁰ In Haiti, the Haitian feminist movement has historically positioned itself “... *against the current of all the other feminist movements, it contributes hugely to identifying the problematic national realities, such as for example the different forms of violence committed against women and girls, political participation, impunity, national sovereignty, and the fight against obscurantism.*”¹⁰¹ This flexible and resilient movement exemplifies the values of the anti-racist, anti-patriarchal struggle that has also embraced popular grievances.

Finally, an important point of this agenda has to do with explicit recognition of women’s role as peacemakers and specialists in matters of security and justice, not only because of their personal/professional/collective experience as women, but due to the need to fashion agreements for living together and de-escalating conflict based on women’s knowledge of their communities and contexts: “*Along these same lines, a society that mobilizes but takes on its mobilization and conflict as an opportunity to seek and generate agreements (or conditions for reaching agreements) and not as a way to impose a vision or agenda is a society with the capacity to process the conflict.*”¹⁰² Accordingly, inclusion of a gender perspective in the approach to prevention may help slow down the outbreaks of violence and the escalation of conflicts, on offering integral insights on the causes and their direct and indirect effects. Nonetheless, this progress is attained when there is a commitment and a genuine interest on the part of the institutions to transform ways

100 Renata Giannini and Denise Hirao, “Identificar desigualdades para planejar uma paz duradoura no Brasil” (Gender Associations, 2020), https://www.genderassociations.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Brazil_advocacy_paper.pdf

101 Sabine Lamour, “Haití: como las mujeres sacuden el mundo político,” *La Tinta*, 26/02/2020, <https://latinta.com.ar/2020/02/haiti-como-las-mujeres-sacuden-el-mundo-politico/>

102 Calderón, “Diez tesis,” 12.

of thinking and ways of doing. At the community level it is clear that women play a key role slowing down the violent outbreaks; nonetheless, appeals to governments and state agents to demand the implementation of agreements or the efficient performance of their functions is a challenge that demands more time and resources, as well as different strategies that are not always available or within reach.

6. Analysis of the mapping of actors

In the context of this document, a mapping exercise of actors in the region was undertaken with the aim of identifying relevant actors who are associated with WPS issues, key agents internationally and multilaterally whose work is directly and indirectly related, and a series of civil society organizations, foundations, and associations that may potentially take an interest in the issue as an extension of their work in favor of democracy, the struggle against violence against women, political actions, or the defense of human rights.

Among the entities of the United Nations system, UN Women stands out. In the last year the Regional Women, Peace and Security Program has mapped women's leadership as networks, with the aim of identifying and training women in mediation. The program also offers advisory services to those states that wish to design and implement their NAP.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has undertaken studies, analyses, and research at the regional level that touch on relevant subjects. These include the *Regional training manual for implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*. In addition, it takes periodic measurements of inequality, poverty, education, inequity, and gender, which are key for a multidimensional analysis of violence and conflict in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC has promoted adoption of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement.¹⁰³ It contains the first binding provision in the world on human rights defenders engaged in environmental advocacy.

Some regional networks were identified that directly address WPS issues. They have a marked technical orientation, geared to providing specialized regional advisory services on defense and security (RESDAL, SEHLAC). Special mention should also be made of the impact of organizations that enjoy wide global recognition, such as the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), civil society networks in Central America dedicated to peace-building and human security, and other subregional networks, for example networks of women mediators and feminist articulation in Mercosur.

As regards the civil society organizations internationally, perspectives are expanding yet there is no sign of a critical mass coordinating around WPS. Many of these organizations have a presence in the region in terms of programs or projects in participatory action

103 For more information see: <https://www.cepal.org/es/acuerdodeescazu>

Impact of civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean

Number of organizations in each country

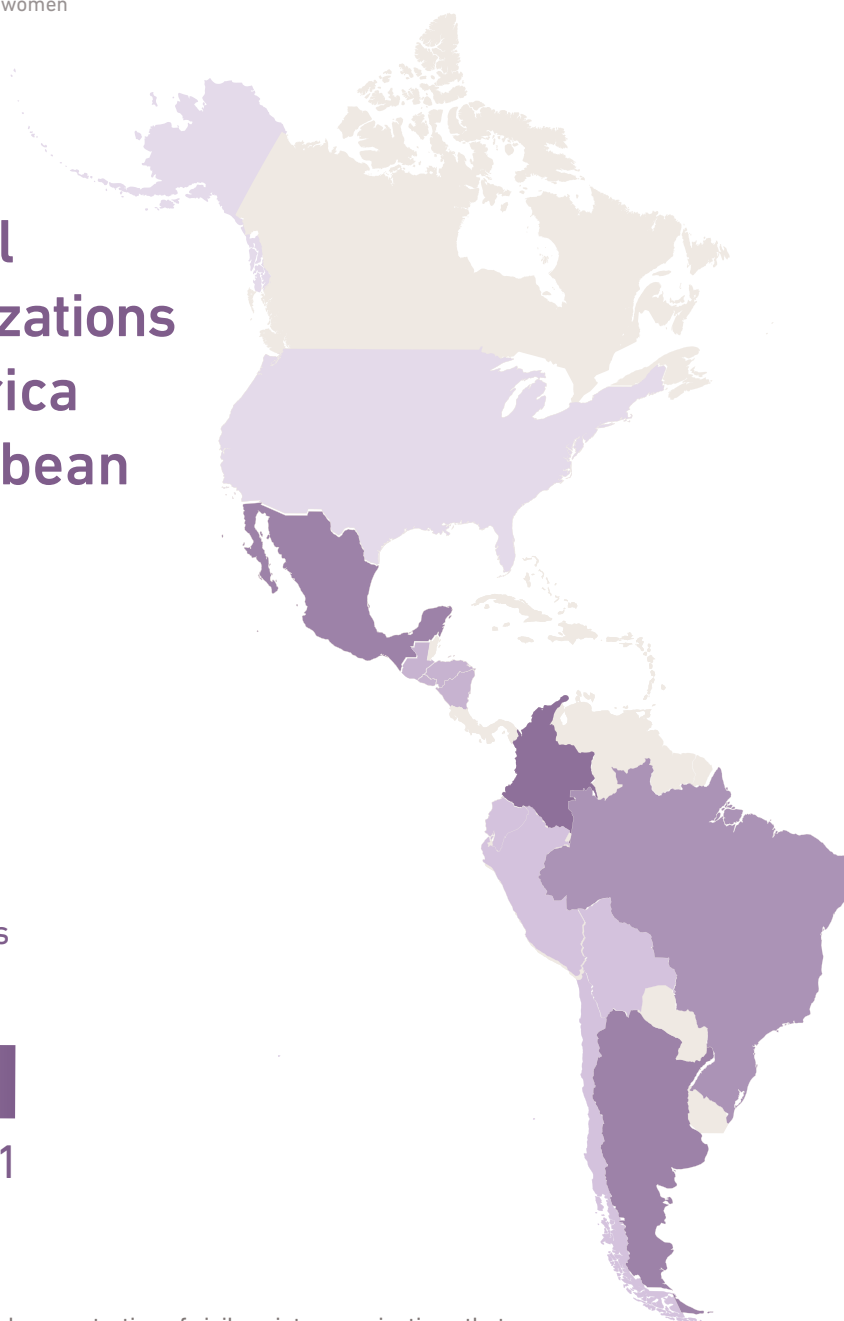


Illustration 2. Geographic distribution and concentration of civil society organizations that we have identified in Latin America and the Caribbean, from the mapping of actors.

With technology of Bing. © Australian Bureau of Statistics, GeoNames, Microsoft, Navinfo, TomTom, Wikipedia

research. The most recurrent issues have to do with conflict resolution, the defense of human rights, strengthening democracy, and research applied to designing and evaluating public policies. This group includes, in particular, the presence of Germany's political party foundations (especially the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/FES and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung), which have some country offices and are key agents for dissemination, discussion, and the strategic positioning of items for the civil society agenda. FES, for example, has promoted a wide-ranging regional program called "FES-minismos" focused on feminist issues that are important for each office, but tied to the purpose of giving impetus to human rights and a gender perspective. Also of special note are certain regional networks that become involved in human rights through religious charisma, for example Diakonia (of the Swedish churches) and Podión (sponsored by Catholic and Protestant churches

from Germany). This category also includes strategic agents for financing initiatives, such as the Open Society Foundations. Most of the global organizations dedicated to WPS issues tend to focus their work in the Americas in the countries in post-conflict, mentioned above. This list includes, in general, various strategic partners with which there can be specific collaboration when the issues so require, but whose agendas are not aligned with one another.

Regarding civil society organizations that operate nationally, we find marked differences among the countries that reflect the historical relationship among the feminist movements of each country, the trends or interest in associating with one another, and the capacity to find a niche for one's work and sustainable funding.¹⁰⁴ Argentina, for example, is home to 11.8% of the organizations identified, more than half of which focus their work on human rights. Only 3.5% of the organizations operate in Bolivia, and half of these are dedicated to gender equality. Of the organizations identified, 17.7% operate in Colombia; of these, 16% work on WPS, 43% on peace-building, and 6% on human rights.

The mapping is understood as a living document that can be expanded, updated, and re-defined depending on the available information.

104 In the period from June to August 2021, an exercise was undertaken to identify institutional actors, international actors, civilian actors, and regional networks because of their work in areas such as WPS, human rights, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, security, and access to justice. Many of these organizations are also involved with issues such as sexual and reproductive rights, diverse gender identities, and representation of ethnic-racial minorities. Most also share a gender perspective and the struggle for a life free from violence. The mapping is not exhaustive, but rather a picture of the current situation at a given point in time.

7. Entry points for the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Americas

As mentioned above, furthering the WPS agenda has been marked by a general lack of knowledge of its antecedents and scope. Nonetheless, it is clear that the current threats to security in the region are interwoven with the crisis of governability; poverty and inequality; the destruction of ecosystems and the effects of climate change; the impact of disasters; corruption and the crisis of legitimacy affecting public institutions generally, particularly those focused on security. In the Caribbean the impact of crime and violence and of the environmental, food, migratory and other crises related to climate change demand a dialogue grounded in the situation and in the priorities of the region in order to identify entry points and appropriate strategies.

In the case of Latin America, the ECLAC report¹⁰⁵ on the impact of inequality identifies it as the key problem to overcome. This inequality, measured in economic terms, is grounded in a complex web of social hierarchies such as class, education, gender, generation, ethnic identity, racial elements, and location as between centers and peripheries. The same ECLAC report notes that it is that combination of inequalities that limits sustainable development, insofar as it is “... based on social, economic, and environmental dimensions which, moreover, are highly interrelated: a lag in one affects the others, and vice versa.”¹⁰⁶

The proposal to re-energize the agenda in the region requires a paradigm change in which there is an expanded conceptual and theoretical understanding of conflict, peace, justice, security, and threats to security, such as the distribution of functions and responsibilities when it comes to guaranteeing security and justice and protecting persons and their human rights. These efforts must more directly involve the national machineries for women, Afrodescendent and Indigenous women, municipal authorities, and the feminist and women’s movements, among others, to foster the development of a critical mass that proactively becomes involved in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and in the enjoyment of a life free from violence, offering a gender perspective for managing different crises and conflicts (environmental, armed, internal, social, etc.).

The analysis of the context and results of the mapping of actors reveals four major challenges:

105 ECLAC, *Desarrollo e igualdad: el pensamiento de la CEPAL en su séptimo decenio* (Santiago, Chile, 2018), https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43540/71/cap05_Desarrollo_e_igualdad_es.pdf

106 Id., 236.

- I. **Conceptual demarcation:** As mentioned above, many of the efforts, especially in civil society (including the media and academia) do not self-identify with or frame their activities in the areas of work of the WPS agenda. Extensive work has been done on gender-based violence, and some initiatives related to peace-keeping. Nonetheless, many of the actors are not entirely focused on women's agency, women's leadership preventing violence, and women's role in reconstructing the social fabric locally, nationally, and regionally.
- II. **Technical/practical approach:** With some notable exceptions among the government and civil society agents, there is a gap between how to apply existing legal and political commitments and turn them into actions, especially in all aspects that build on the leadership and agency of women in peacebuilding, promote participatory democracy, and further sustainable development. A review of their NAPs shows that most of the governments of the region have interpreted the WPS agenda as a foreign policy commitment, either in peacekeeping missions or diplomacy. Accordingly, the greatest effort now required is recognizing and appropriating the domestic applicability of these commitments and translating them in concrete terms to the domestic agenda and national contexts, as part of reconceptualizing security in line with the *Declaration on Security in the Americas* of the OAS (2003).
- III. **Political commitment:** In a scenario of a deteriorating quality of democracy, with low confidence in the institutions, representative bodies, and the military and civilian forces of order, it is necessary to transform the logic of security policies, putting the human factor at the center of the security discussion, which is concomitant with the mission of the state. This endeavor requires progressive leadership and a profound commitment to accept that security is not the just absence of armed violence and/or crime, that the greatest security challenges are domestic, often related to precarious governance and growing inequality. For a large part of the citizens the failure of governments to meet their basic needs, guarantee rights, and manage different crises underlies social discontent and the institutions' low level of legitimacy. An innovative and transformative application of the WPS agenda will become possible through the confluence of political will, the commitment to action, and the activism of a committed civil society with a strong echo in multilateral forums, both regional and international.
- IV. **Confluence of crises:** The overlap and continuity of crisis-triggering events, which would appear to have a diversity of origins, but profoundly tied to the effects of neoliberalism and the deterioration of democracy, demands a reframing of the objectives, placing at the center the sustainability of life. The global crisis we are now experiencing, activated by the COVID-19 health crisis, showed that the apparatuses for defense and response to threats (which includes the public health system, social security networks, channels of communication) did not have strategies for addressing unarmed threats. At the same time, the climate crisis, anticipated more 30 years ago, and ever more evident in the increase in "natural" disasters, is a reality that affects the who-

le world, but where the most vulnerable populations are the hardest hit, due to the destruction of the means of livelihood and the tougher conditions for production. In an analysis of the conflicts in the region Calderón indicated that under the dictates of neoliberalism the states were dispossessed of tools and direct means for managing discontent. This trend was accompanied by reinforced military action, authorities, and freer markets; *"...society is experiencing a process of progressive fragmentation of the collective actors and their identities, reflected in a tendency for demands to proliferate outside of the classic and institutionalized frameworks for handling conflicts."*¹⁰⁷

107 In Calderón, "Diez tesis," 17, the author proposes a look at the characteristics of the Latin American states that keeps them from guaranteeing the rule of law: "The paradox remains of a weak state as the main that is the target of the intense social demands: appeals continue to be made to a state apparatus that in general is poor and not capable of coming forward with institutional and negotiated responses, trapped in the inefficiencies of their bureaucracy, the ineffectiveness of the legal system, the scant credibility of their governments, and chronic problems of corruption and granting of special perks. At the same time, the process of centralization in the collective mindset reaches higher levels, where the central government is the state and, moreover, the president is the state, in a historical-cultural trajectory in which personalism almost never ceased to play a key role in Latin American politics."

8. The Role of the OAS and CIM

Based on the foregoing, the opportunities for transformation are found in the articulation of actors, in the capacity of the state to rethink the bases and logic of its actions, to strengthen its strategic capabilities and political dialogue through multilateral forums.

In these processes the Organization of American States (OAS) and its various offices and mechanisms, both internal and multilateral, have a fundamental role to play, beginning with the commitment to a broader conceptualization and greater articulation implied in the *Declaration on Security in the Americas* (2003). This expanded and holistic vision of security establishes a foundation for a process of dialogue and coordination among actors both internal to and from outside the Organization.



Illustration 3: The WPS agenda of the OAS.

The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), as part of the OAS, is a multilateral political forum in which proposals of this sort can extend not only to direct interlocutors in the government, but to civil society, which has understood the importance of the inter-American setting when it comes to defending women's rights and seeking justice. With this work CIM seeks to articulate a dialogue within the OAS and among the member states that operationalizes an integral understanding of security for women through knowledge management, making recommendations on policies and public programs, and strengthening the capacities of key actors in the process. This first step seeks the establishment, within the OAS, of innovative methodologies and analytical perspectives when it comes to security.

8.1 Articulation with other strategic actors

Beyond internal coordination and with member states, the alliance with other actors who work on similar issues in the region is fundamental. The Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina (RESDAL), UN Women, and the Government of Mexico collaborate, for example, to establish a regional network of women mediators who could accelerate the implementation of the agenda and open up spaces regionally. It is currently engaged in an exercise to identify women leaders so as to train them in mediation, through joint work and an exchange of experiences with networks in Colombia and Mexico.

In addition, women's growing political participation has led to the creation of formal and informal networks of women from different political persuasions to come together. Accordingly, the meetings of women legislators and the political meetings of women in local/provincial/national legislatures are opportunities for putting forward these discussions and envisioning the articulation of women's political action and the strategic purposes of the gender agenda. Similarly, RedCIM, established by women who have graduated from CIM's Course for Women Electoral Candidates, is a suitable forum for debating the political implications of an integral approach to women's security.

It is vital to approach, understand, and work with young women leaders (feminists) who today are part of that wave of different types of activism, almost all responding to the impacts of neoliberalism and the patriarchy, which moreover are at the cutting edge when it comes to making use of technology and producing and disseminating content electronically. This means a twist in the idea of the political subject that is the present-day feminist base,¹⁰⁸ recognizing its vitality and diversity and its potential to put forward its own agendas.

108 Manzano notes a fracture between "maternalistic feminism," which as an ideal type concerns the idea of the adult woman and mother. The present-day cleavage revolves around very young and autonomous activists, and spontaneous forms of activism. Valeria Manzano, "Feminismo y Juventud en la Argentina del Siglo XX," in *Activismos feministas jóvenes: emergencias, actrices y luchas en América Latina*, eds. Mariana Larrondo and Camila Ponce Lara (CLACSO, 2019), 41-58.

Another entry point has to do with the articulation between the Escazú Agreement and the WPS agenda as regards protecting the lives and work of women human rights defenders engaged with environmental issues. While the Agreement (Article 9) spells out important elements to consider, it must be given specific content on the vulnerability and strengths of women defenders, as the IACHR has been doing.

There are other opportunities such as the fact that Uruguay and Canada – a pioneer in implementing the WPS agenda – led the Network of WPS Focal Points¹⁰⁹ until 2021, and from that position established important forums for reflection and dialogue on the applicability of the agenda in the Americas. Through this Network, entry points can be offered not only for implementing the WPS agenda in the region but also for discussing the issues related to gender, peace, and security, such as human trafficking, violence against and systematic exclusion of Indigenous, Afrodescendent, and rural populations, the militarization of their territories and the presence of mining companies and other extractivist activities in the same territories, the high presence of small arms and light weapons, and the general distrust in state institutions, particularly in the security and justice sectors.¹¹⁰

109 Website of the Network of focal points for Women, Peace and Security: <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/>

110 See, for example, the article in the webpage by Toni Haarstrup and Jamie Hagen, *Race, Justice and New Possibilities: 20 Years of the WPS Agenda*, (WPS FPN, 2020) <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/2020/07/28/race-justice-and-new-possibilities-20-years-of-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda/>, which reflects the discussions and reflections of the WPS agenda by its members.

9. Working agenda: Opportunities and challenges

The increase in the representation and participation of women in positions of leadership and decision-making has brought with it better peaceful coexistence and better development results for society. Nonetheless, this change is neither widespread nor totally transformative, given that women continue bearing most of the responsibilities for care and social reproduction in daily life. According to the report by CIM/OAS on the impact of COVID-19 on women's lives: "The pandemic has starkly revealed the ubiquity of care, which already formed part of people's lives, businesses, communities and economies in normal times. The ever-present need for care goes hand in hand with another ubiquity: the ability of families, specifically women, to stretch out their time and their arms in an attempt to simultaneously take on multiple tasks and obligations."¹¹¹ This same logic applies for direct action and participation in peacebuilding to the extent that it is not sustainable if it constitutes a third shift of unremunerated work.

As discussed, an important challenge common to the region is the hegemonic and limited vision of security issues. While the concept of citizen security or multidimensional security has been gaining relevance among the governments and appropriated by civil society, the concept of **human security** is far from being known; indeed, some states openly declare that they do not subscribe to it. The states have put up political resistance to the implementation of the WPS agenda; it is based on the understanding that its adoption domestically entails implicit recognition of the existence of elements of social conflict and conflictiveness that may impact security. Despite everything, it is vital to advocate for the thematic integration of the components of the agenda (gender-based violence, defense and national security policy, and citizen security) with the aim of endowing the WPS agenda with practical and operational content.

Nonetheless, in the different scenarios of public demonstrations in the last five years in the region it is clear that without necessarily naming it as such, what society is calling for is human security, which goes beyond state security and traditional security, and effective responses in this area: solutions to the inequality among different groups in society, the impact of neoliberalism, femicides, the socioeconomic gaps and the exclusion of different groups in society, the breaking of government promises, and effective measures to combat climate change, to mention just a few. To this must be added spe-

111 OAS, *COVID-19 in Women's Lives: The Global Care Emergency* (CIM, 2020) <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/Cuidados-COVID19-ES.pdf>

cific threats in terms of traditional security, such as instability, the disproportionate use of force, the use of military intelligence against human rights defenders, environmental issues, distrust of the security sector, the large number of firearms, transnational crime, drug-trafficking, human trafficking, and arms trafficking. These challenges can only be confronted through an effective political commitment and cooperative work at the local, national, and regional levels.

Implementation of the WPS agenda should not be limited exclusively to the regional context; yet the leadership of the OAS is key for the states to begin the work of appropriating this agenda, and recognizing the specific threats women suffer and confront in their countries, especially at the political level. Recognizing the links between the old and new threats gives additional content to and reinforces the relevance of the WPS agenda in an interpretation more adapted to each context. In turn, regional action and leadership may offer an excellent opportunity to explore an exchange of good practices and lessons learned or a joint effort with other regional organizations such as the European Union, the African Union, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which have already developed WPS monitoring mechanisms. Doing so makes it possible to lift up experiences of political empowerment, social recognition, and networking of more women in countries in conflict together with civil society network such as UNIDAS or the Global Network for Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), which have members in several countries of the region already working on WPS.

In the context of its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan,¹¹² adopted by the delegates of the CIM during their Eighth Special Assembly (July 2022), and with a view to proposing a medium-term strategy, CIM's roadmap proposes a series of strategic and specific objectives:

Strategic Objective 1

To foster a reconceptualization of the conceptual and action framework around conflict, security, and peace from feminism, resilience, and the historical leadership roles of women, crisis prevention and management, and peace-building:

- I. Give visibility to the differentiated effects, from a gender and intersectional perspective, of security policies and measures on women and identify the gaps in terms of women's security;
- II. Foster dialogues and debates, both political and technical, about the policies and measures needed for women's security and their equal participation and leadership in related areas, including justice;

¹¹² CIM. *Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2026 of the Inter-American Commission of Women* (Washington, DC, 2022), <https://www.oas.org/es/cim/docs/CIM-StrategicPlan2022-2026-ES.pdf>

- III. Among the critical mass already aware of and knowledgeable when it comes to WPS issues, promote a reworking of the paradigm in the region, i.e. draw attention to the particular threats to women's security in contexts in which violence does not emanate from traditional armed conflicts, but rather underlies the failings of the development model; and
- IV. Socialize and communicate around these conceptualizations of conflict, security, and peace, the differentiated impacts, and specific recommendations.

Strategic Objective 2

To coordinate the joint work of key actors recognizing the relevance, intersections among its components, and sociopolitical factors at play in the WPS agenda in the region:

- I. Lead a dialogue and multilateral exchange around issues on the Women, Peace and Security agenda that has the support of other mechanisms and agencies of the OAS and civil society participation;
- II. Strengthen and give visibility to the articulation between the regional legal frameworks and the WPS agenda, especially by integrating the human rights approach and reconceptualizing security in the multiple multilateral forums of the OAS;
- III. Propose and coordinate the creation of a regional Women, Peace and Security agenda involving the multilateral forums of the OAS on security, justice, and other relevant issues; and
- IV. Follow up on the implementation of this agenda regionally and nationally with indicators that make it possible to measure the gains and changes accomplished.

Strategic Objective 3

To give visibility to, accompany, and advise women leaders in the implementation of a women, peace, security and justice agenda in all areas and at all levels, with attention to the transition of these leaders from specific times and spaces of conflict and crisis, to formal politics:

- I. Foster democratic feminist leadership for managing crises and conflicts by generating knowledge and training; and
- II. Generate knowledge and promote women's leadership where decisions are made on issues of security, conflict, and crisis, and related issues.

Strategic Objective 4

To promote a gender and intersectional approach as a factor of power fully present in every social action instead of an externality that may be incorporated at random in programs and projects:

- I. Continue making progress providing gender trainings to all relevant actors of the OAS, in all the armed forces (military, police, and others), and in the administration of justice, in a cross-cutting fashion and beyond the specific course or module that is part of a training; and
- II. Systematize the successful experiences of all the member states and others who have already drawn up national action plans on Women, Peace and Security by sharing experiences and engaging in cooperation.

Strategic Objective 5

To identify and analyze the standards and existing case-law on WPS and foster the integration of this agenda in the work of the mechanisms that monitor the relevant regional multilateral treaties.

- I. Heed all the recommendations included in General Recommendation No. 30 of the CEDAW Committee “on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations” and incorporate them into the regional political dialogue;
- II. Identify and socialize the implications of Sustainable Development Goal No. 16 “Promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies,” from a gender perspective and with an intersectional approach;
- III. Mindful of existing standards of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, look more deeply at the implications of the Convention of Belém do Pará in scenarios of social conflict and crisis to identify the relevant state obligations and to generate practical indicators and recommendations; and
- IV. Study the contribution of the regional case-law on these issues, including access to justice, intersectionality, impunity, and women’s political participation, among others.

Annexes

Annex 1

National Action Plans



Argentina (2015)

Argentina's Plan does not consider scenarios of internal crisis or conflict. It is mainly framed in the context of the country's foreign policy and its participation in peacekeeping operations¹¹³ and diplomatic negotiations. The exceptions to this are the lines of: increased participation of women throughout the State (especially in the judicial branch); attention to women asylum-seekers and in search of refugee status; and training for peace and gender equality, which not only includes security officials, but the entire public administration, the system for the administration of justice, and the formal and non-formal education systems, which cover the entire population. At the national level the Plan does not include lines of action on sexual violence.

| Objectives/Areas | Description |
|--|---|
| 1. To increase women's presence in peace and humanitarian assistance missions and participation in decision-making bodies. | The lines of action are all directed at foreign policy and participation in peace-keeping operations. |
| 2. To increase women's political participation in the areas of peace and security, peace negotiations, and conflict management, and in decision-making circles in each of these areas. | Includes structural lines of action geared to increase women's participation and empowerment at all levels and in all areas of the State, including the judiciary. |
| 3. To include a gender perspective in all peace-building activities and humanitarian assistance missions, including activities for disarmament, demobilization, and integration. | Includes structural lines of action geared to expanding education for peace and gender equality in formal and non-formal education. In particular, training in human rights, gender equality, peace and security for all security officials and employees throughout the public administration. |
| 4. To protect the human rights of women and girls in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations (including camps for refugees and displaced persons), especially in the face of gender-based violence and sexual violence, promoting an atmosphere of security and well-being. | Its lines of action are aimed mainly at foreign policy, except for one line of action on women asylum-seekers and applicants for refugee status, and another that notes in generic terms the obligation to promote programs and policies against gender violence and access to justice. |

113 Argentina has participated in peace-keeping missions since 1958 (National Executive Branch, National Action Plan of the Argentine Republic for Implementing Resolution 1325 (2000) of the United Nations Security Council and subsequent ones, 2015, 9)


Chile (2015)¹¹⁴

Chile's Plan does not consider scenarios of internal crisis or conflict. It is exclusively set forth in the context of the country's foreign policy and its participation in peacekeeping operations and diplomatic negotiations. Promoting women's participation in public positions is limited to peacekeeping operations and international efforts associated with peace and conflict-resolution. At the national level the Plan does not include lines of action on sexual violence.

| Objectives/Areas | Description |
|---|--|
| 1. To incorporate a gender perspective in all activities and strategies for conflict prevention and peace-keeping and fostering peace; in the creation of effective mechanisms and institutions for early warning that take account of gender issues and in strengthening the measures to prevent gender violence against women and girls, in particular the various forms of sexual violence. | The lines of action are geared to foreign policy and participation in peacekeeping operations. |
| 2. To promote and support the active and meaningful participation of women in all peace processes and their representation at all levels of decision-making related to preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. It also considers strengthening partnerships and contacts with national and international groups and organizations that defend women's rights. | |
| 3. To strengthen and expand measures to ensure the security, physical and psychological integrity, sexual and reproductive health, well-being, economic autonomy and dignity of women and girls; respecting and ensuring the full exercise of the human rights of women and girls, incorporating a gender perspective in the institutions that play some role in peace, conflict, and post-conflict operations. | |
| 4. To foster women's access in equal conditions to both the mechanisms and services for distributing aid, in particular related to the specific needs of women and girls in all recovery and relief efforts and in transitional justice. | |


Paraguay (2015)¹¹⁵

Paraguay's Plan is framed primarily in the context of the country's foreign policy, and its participation in peace operations and diplomatic negotiations, but it does include a scenario of crisis or internal conflict, namely risk management (associated primarily with natural disaster risks). It also includes a wide-ranging vision of the importance of fostering a culture of peace for preventing conflict situations with the active participation of women, geared to the entire population, not just officials in the security sector. The objective of increasing women's participation at all levels (including executive positions) focuses mainly the security forces and diplomatic positions, but it also takes in the Local Emergency Councils. It does not include specific measures geared to preventing sexual violence in the territory.

114 Government of Chile, Second National Action Plan for Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325/2000. Women, Peace and Security, 2015.

115 National Government, National Action Plan. Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution in the Republic of Paraguay, 2015.

| Objectives/ Areas | Description |
|---|---|
| 1. To increase the participation of women in institutional decision-making in peace processes as well as conflict prevention and resolution. | Includes lines of action to promote women's participation in security forces, diplomatic positions, and Local Emergency Councils, at all levels, including management positions. |
| 2. To incorporate a gender perspective in all areas related to peace processes and conflict resolution. | Include gender training and conflict resolution training for security force personnel and others tied to Resolution No. 1325; as well as incorporating a gender perspective in a Protocol and Handbook for risk management and reduction. |
| 3. To promote a culture of peace to prevent conflict situations, with the active participation of women. | Includes structural lines of action geared to expanding education for peace and gender equality in formal and non-formal education through trainings, campaigns, and research. |
| 4. Establish effective interinstitutional, intersectoral, and international coordination to carry out joint actions and implement and evaluate Resolution No. 1325. | Includes lines of action for coordination. |

Brazil (2017)¹¹⁶

Brazil's Plan does not contemplate scenarios of crisis or conflict domestically. It is geared fundamentally to peace operations and diplomatic work. The exception to this are the lines of action associated with protecting asylum seekers or persons seeking refugee status. As regards promoting women's participation in public positions, it is limited to diplomatic, military, and police institutions associated with diplomatic work and extra-territorial operations. It does not include specific measures aimed at preventing sexual violence in Brazilian territory.

| Objectives/ Areas | Description |
|---|---|
| 1. To increase the effective participation of Brazilian women in international security, even in leadership positions, in activities related to peace and international security in conflict and post-conflict situations that affect them. | Includes lines of action to increase the participation of women diplomats, members of the military and police, civilians, and community members in peace and security activities in the context of diplomatic work and extraterritorial operations. |
| 2. To expand and improve Brazil's contribution to the fight against gender violence and bolster human rights protections for all women and girls in pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations. | Includes lines of action for protection the civil population in peace operations, and also for protecting women seeking asylum or refugee status in Brazilian territory. |
| 3. To strengthen a gender perspective in developing and implementing peace-building operations and humanitarian cooperation undertaken or supported by Brazil. | Includes lines of action for including a gender perspective in Brazil's humanitarian cooperation and in its peace missions; as well as strengthening local institutions (in countries that receive cooperation). |
| 4. To expand knowledge on the Women, Peace and Security agenda and participation in its implementation by public agencies, civil society organizations, feminist and women's movements, academia, and the general public. | Includes lines of action for disseminating the WPS agenda and the National Action Plan in the State and society. |

116 Federative Republic of Brazil, National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, Brasilia, 2017



El Salvador (2017)¹¹⁷

El Salvador's Plan combines both objectives associated with peace operations and diplomacy, and objectives tied to prevention, internal security (vis-à-vis organized crime and specific crimes such as human trafficking), and the post-armed conflict agenda. It explicitly recognizes the importance of a broad approach in the WPS agenda, which makes it an important point of reference: "For years, Resolution 1325 was only considered an instrument applicable to conflict and post-conflict situations. Nonetheless, the new approach given to this Resolution by the CEDAW Committee [General Recommendation No. 30] has created a real opportunity for El Salvador to develop this National Action Plan with a broader and more comprehensive objective."¹¹⁸

It has a broad understanding of increased women's participation at various levels, not only in institutions associated with peace and security (nationally and internationally), but in state institutions in general. It provides for gender training for public servants in security institutions, but also mass campaigns to fight gender stereotypes. It is aimed at having a gender perspective in security policies across the board; it includes special measures geared to preventing sexual violence, in the national context; as well as measures to guarantee protection of the human rights of women and girls, also in the national context (human security, dignified work, education, health, justice and protection, protection of women experiencing violence, migrant women, girls and women who are victims of human trafficking) and reparation and restitution of the rights of women victims who are survivors of the armed conflict.

| Objectives/ Areas | Description |
|--|--|
| 1. To have mechanisms set in motion with the aim of giving voice to women and promoting their participation and balanced representation on issues that concern their own protection. | It includes lines of action aimed at fostering women's participation in decision-making on peace and national and international security; within the State, especially in institutions for public and citizen security; participation and parity representation in decision-making on issues of public and citizen security; and affirmative action measures with the aim of increasing that participation. |
| 2. To design and implement protection mechanisms, data integration, prevention campaigns, fighting stereotypes, and promoting a culture of zero tolerance in the face of violence against women. | It includes lines of action geared to integrating a gender perspective in conflict prevention efforts in contexts of citizen insecurity; training for security forces on women's human rights with the aim of preventing violence against girls and women; mechanisms for early detection and prevention of violence against women and girls, with a special emphasis on preventing sexual violence; and the creation of a national policy of "Zero Tolerance" for abuses of women by state agents, especially in cases associated with sexual violence. |

117 Id.

118 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, National Action Plan. Women, Peace and Security 2017-2022, San Salvador, 2017, 21.

| | |
|---|--|
| 3. To put in place mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights; actions to provide basic services to women and girls; and institutional arrangements to improve their protection and the administration of justice. | It includes lines of action that aim to guarantee protection of the rights of women and girls; in particular access to comprehensive security services, dignified work, education, health, justice, and protection. It places special emphasis on protection women suffering violence, migrants women, and girls and women who are victims of human trafficking. |
| 4. To adopt urgent response measures, mechanisms for reparation of victims, and measures to re-integrate survivors into peaceful and consensus-based societies. | Includes measure of reparation and restitution of rights for women victims who are survivors of the armed conflict; among them, the search for women who disappeared during the armed conflict and women who have disappeared in current contexts of violence. |
| 5. To have their own measures for monitoring and strengthening the process with the aim of ensuring implementation and follow-up of this National Action Plan. Under the coordination of the ministry in charge, all the participating institutions and organizations must integrate and coordinate efforts to ensure the effectiveness of this document. | It is a management objective, with measures that promote the application of and follow-up to the Plan on the part of all the sectors involved. |

Guatemala (2017) ¹¹⁹

Guatemala's Plan combines objectives tied to foreign policy with, to a greater extent, internal security policy and the post-armed conflict agenda. It includes a broad conception of the increased participation of women, not only in the judicial and security fields, but also electoral, at the various levels of the State. It also includes a broad vision of gender training, for both public employees and society in general, through the national education system. It includes disciplinary measures and promotions that aim to protect the rights of women and measures of care, justice, and reparation. The Plan also includes measure of protection from sexual violence.

| Objectives/ Areas | Description |
|---|--|
| To attain parity in the representation of women and men in the decision-making of the national governments and regional and international institutions and mechanisms at all levels and in all areas. | It includes legislative reforms (on electoral, security, and judicial matters) and the promotion of an institutional culture geared to increasing the participation of women in decision-making, conflict resolution, and institutions associated with peace processes and security. |
| To develop and implement sustainable training strategies for carrying out United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and other resolutions related to Women, Peace and Security. | This objective prioritizes the training of public employees, women in general, and the school-age population, through the national education system. |

119 Mesa Interinstitucional Mujer, Paz y Seguridad, MIMPAZ, National Action Plan for implementing Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council and other resolutions related to Women, Peace and Security, 2017.

| | |
|---|---|
| To adopt measures that guarantee the protection, progress, and respect for women's human rights to prevent, address, punish, and eradicate all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including sexual violence. | It includes promoting disciplinary measures against public employees who violate women's human rights; a veto on the hiring or promotion of public employees with a record of crimes of violence against women; strengthening the structure and financing of women's institutions at all levels of the State; and campaigns to promote women's human rights and a culture of peace. |
| To strengthen women's leadership and promote their equitable participation in negotiations and in the processes of resolving conflicts and consolidating peace. | It includes measures to promote women's leadership and initiatives in processes for consolidating peace and actions associated with security. |
| To facilitate women's leadership, participation, and benefits based on actions of dignity and restorative transformation to contribute to eradicating impunity. | It includes different lines of reparation of the forms of violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations, which takes in, among others: vindicating the historical memory of women in conflict and post-conflict situations; creating and strengthening comprehensive care units for women victims of violence; and strengthening the investigation, sanctions, and reparation for violations of the human rights of women in conflict situations. |

Canada (2017)¹²⁰

Canada's Plan does not consider scenarios of internal crisis or conflict. It is framed exclusively in the context of the country's foreign and international assistance policy and its participation in peace-keeping operations and diplomatic negotiations.¹²¹

| Objectives/Areas | Description |
|---|--|
| To expand the meaningful participation of women, women's organizations, and networks on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and state-building in post-conflict settings. | All the Plan's objectives line up with foreign and international assistance policy objectives in the context of Canada's participation in peace and humanitarian aid operations. |
| To prevent, respond to, and put an end to impunity in cases of sexual and gender violence perpetrated in conflicts, sexual exploitation and abuses by peacekeeping personnel and other international personnel, including humanitarian and development staff. | |
| To promote and protect the human rights of women and girls, gender equality, and women's and girls' empowerment in fragile settings in both conflict and post-conflict situations. | |
| To meet the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian contexts, including the defense of their sexual rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services. | |
| To strengthen the capacity of peace operations to advance the WPS agenda, including deploying more women and fully integrating the WPS agenda in the operations of the Canadian Armed Forces and police deployments. | |

¹²⁰ Government of Canada, National Action Plan of Canada for Implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security, Ottawa, 2017

¹²¹ In any event, Canada and the United States have foreign policies that include development assistance, and both countries have programs with major financing on WPS issues.



United States (2019)¹²²

The U.S. Plan does not consider scenarios of internal crisis or conflict. It is exclusively framed in the context of the country's foreign and development cooperation policy and its participation in peace operations and diplomatic negotiations.

| Objectives/ Areas | Description |
|---|---|
| To increase women's meaningful participation in political, civic, and military processes for preventing and resolving conflicts, preparing for disasters, and establishing conditions for stability during the post-conflict period and efforts after the crisis. | All the objectives of the Plan are directed at foreign and development cooperation policy objectives and U.S. participation in peace and humanitarian aid operations. |
| To promote protecting the security, human rights, and needs of women and girls such that they are protected (by their governments) so that they can make significant contributions locally, nationally, and internationally. | |
| To maintain the role of the United States as a leader on the world stage when it comes to promoting the meaningful participation of women in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, and in relief and recovery efforts after conflicts. | |
| To encourage allied governments to reform policies, programs, and plans to increase women's meaningful participation in processes related to peace and security and the decision-making institutions. | |



Mexico (2021)¹²³

Mexico's Plan combines both objectives associated with peace operations and diplomacy and objectives tied to prevention, internal security, and "...the struggle against structural violence."¹²⁴ It includes measures to train military and police personnel and all other public employees, on gender and the human rights of women and girls. It promotes increased women's participation in peace operations and multilateral forums; as well as the creation of networks of women peacebuilders in Mexican territory. The Plan also includes measures to prevent sexual violence in the national territory.

| Objectives/Areas | Description |
|--|--|
| To incorporate a gender perspective in all the activities and strategies for conflict prevention and peacekeeping and peacebuilding, creating effective mechanisms and institutions for early warnings and strengthening measures to prevent violence against women and girls for reasons of gender, in particular the various forms of sexual violence. | It includes campaigns for military and police personnel on the role of women in conflict prevention and peace processes; training public employees (especially at the local level) in women's empowerment, gender perspective in peace processes, and internal security, plus preventing violence against women and girls, in particular sexual violence; and creating specialized policies for preventing, investigating, and prosecuting crimes of violence against women. |

¹²² Seal of the President of the United States, Strategies on Women, Peace and Security of the United States, 2019.

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ Government of Mexico, National Action Plan for follow-up on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, 2021, 9.

| | |
|--|--|
| To promote and guarantee women's active and meaningful participation in all peace processes and their representation at all levels of decision-making related to the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts. It also calls for the hiring and appointment of women in upper-level positions at the United Nations and in peacekeeping forces, in particular in military, civilian, and police positions. | It includes lines of action for strengthening the participation of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations and in multilateral forums on peace, security, and conflict-resolution; as well as creating networks of women peacebuilders in Mexican territory and sharing of experiences and good practices from women's participation implementing local peacebuilding strategies. |
| To strengthen and expand measures for guaranteeing security, physical and psychological integrity, health – including sexual and reproductive health and rights, well-being, economic security, and the dignity of women and girls; promotion and protection of their human rights, incorporating a gender perspective in institutions that participate in United Nations peace operations, as well as in prevention and post-conflict activities. | Its lines of action are focused on participation in peacekeeping operations and promoting the “zero tolerance” policy in the United Nations to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. |
| To foster women's access to and participation in equal conditions in the mechanisms and services by which aid and humanitarian assistance are distributed, in particular those related to the specific needs of women and girls in all initiatives for recovery, humanitarian assistance, and consolidating peace. | It seeks to include a gender perspective in aid and humanitarian assistance, as well as in processes of consolidating peace post-conflict. |

Peru (2021)¹²⁵

Peru's Plan does not consider scenarios of internal crisis or conflict. It is framed in the context of the country's foreign policy and its participation in peace operations and diplomatic negotiations. It includes lines of action associated with training military personnel (in particular those who participate in peace operations); the increased participation of women in peace operations; lines associated with research and analysis of incidents that affect women's and girls' rights in the context of peace operations. It does not include specific measures geared to preventing sexual violence in Peruvian territory.

| Objectives/Areas | Description |
|--|--|
| To incorporate a gender perspective in all activities and strategies for conflict-prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, creating effective early warning mechanisms that take account of gender issues and strengthening measures to prevent violence against women and girls for reasons of gender, in particular, the various forms of sexual violence. | It includes lines of action associated with training military personnel (in particular those who participate in peace operations); and lines associated with research and analysis of incidents that affect women's and girls' rights in the context of peacekeeping operations. |
| To promote and support women's active and meaningful participation in all peace processes and their representation at all levels of decision-making related to preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. It also considers strengthening partnerships and contacts with national and international groups and organizations that defend women's rights. | Its lines of action are aimed at increasing women's participation in the personnel assigned to peacekeeping operations. |

| | |
|---|--|
| To strengthen and expand measures for guaranteeing the security, physical and psychological integrity, sexual and reproductive health, well-being, economic autonomy, and dignity of women and girls; respecting and ensuring the full exercise of women's and girls' human rights, incorporating a gender perspective in institutions that play a role in peace, conflict, and post-conflict operations. | It includes lines of training, information, and the drawing up of protocols and institutional coordination geared to protecting women's and girls' human rights in the context of peacekeeping operations. |
| To foster women's access in equal conditions to transitional justice as well as aid distribution mechanisms and services in all recovery and relief efforts. | Lines of action associated with disseminating information to women and girls about human rights and mechanisms of protection in countries with peacekeeping operations. |

Colombian Peace Agreement (2016)

As indicated above, Colombia does not have a National Action Plan per se, explicitly framed by the WPS agenda, yet the 2016 peace agreement “*Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*” (2016) and its Framework Plan for Implementation,¹²⁶ which does incorporate a gender perspective and includes 122 gender-related measures,¹²⁷ can be understood to constitute a partial national policy guidance on the same subject matter. It is in this context that a summary of its objectives and lines of action is set forth here.

The Agreement includes five substantive points and one on implementation. The substantive points are as follows:

Integral Rural Reform: Intended to “...reverse the effects of the conflict and guarantee the sustainability of peace, it seeks to increase the well-being of rural inhabitants, give impetus to integration of the regions and economic and social development...”¹²⁸

Political Participation: which seeks “...the expansion of democracy to facilitate the rise of new forces on the political scene, and to enrich the debate and deliberation concerning the main national problems.”¹²⁹

End of the Conflict: which is intended “...to bring a definitive end to offensive actions between the Military Forces and National Police and the FARC-EP, hostilities, and any action that may have a negative impact on the civilian population.”¹³⁰

126 National Planning Department, Framework Plan for Implementation of the Peace Agreement, **online at:** <https://portalterritorial.dnp.gov.co/PlanMarcoImplementacion/>

127 Grupo de Género en la Paz – GPAZ, LA PAZ AVANZA CON LAS MUJERES. III Informe de observaciones sobre los avances en la implementación de enfoque de género del Acuerdo de Paz, 2021, **online at:** [gpaz_informe_2021.pdf \(generoy paz.co\)](#)

128 National Planning Department, *Op. Cit*

129 Id.

130 Id.

Solution to the Problem of Illegal Drugs: which promotes “a new vision in which a distinct and differentiated approach is taken to the problem of the consumption, the problem of crops for illicit use, and organized crime associated with drug-trafficking.”¹³¹

Victims of the Conflict: which provides for the transitional justice system (Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition) and a commitment to promote, respect, and ensure human rights.¹³²

Each of these points gives rise to policies, programs, projects, and measures with a gender perspective aimed at fulfilling the human rights of women and girls in the post-conflict period. These are summarized in the following table.

| Topic | Description of the gender lines |
|--|---|
| Integral Rural Reform | There are no lines of action related to (sexual) violence against women under this point. |
| Political Participation | It includes lines of action geared to promoting and strengthening the role of women in positions of political and social representation, and promoting a democratic and participatory political culture. There is a commitment to prevent violence directed against persons engaged in politics, but this section only mentions violence against women specifically in relation to citizen participation. |
| End of the Conflict | It includes measures for the social, political, and economic reincorporation of the former members of the FARC-EP; and protection for women, girls, and adolescents vis-à-vis the specific risks they face to their life, liberty, integrity, and security. It encourages judicial reform that guarantees effective administration of justice in cases of gender violence and also provides for guarantees of non-repetition that clarify the paramilitary phenomenon and prevent its repetition, and guarantee the dismantling of the criminal organizations and the conduct responsible for systematic violence, in particular against women. |
| Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs | It includes measures to strengthen the participation and capacity of rural women's organizations to secure support (technical, financial, human, etc.) for their projects in the context of programs to substitute crops for illicit use; measures for women, girls, and adolescents who face gender violence in contexts of problematic consumption of illicit drugs; and measures to confront stereotypes related to drug-trafficking that incite gender violence. |
| Victims of the Conflict | It recognizes the differential impact of human rights violations on women, and considers that the end of the conflict presents an opportunity for women victims, in their capacity to transcend the pain caused by the victimizing act, to become peacebuilders. Accordingly, it includes measures with a differential approach in the Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (Truth Commission, Special Peace Courts, Unit for the Search for Disappeared Persons); as well as opportunities to participate in defining priorities for implementing collective reparation measures; psychosocial measures for emotional recovery, especially for victims of sexual violence; and collective return programs with a territorial and gender perspective. |

131 Id.

132 Id.

Annex 2

Women's participation and training in the National Action Plans

| Country | Women's participation | Gender training |
|--|--|---|
| Argentina  | Broad. In both security institutions and peace operations, and at different levels within the State. | Broad. For all public employees (and not just those in the security sector), and for the population through the formal and non-formal education system. |
| Chile  | Limited to public employees in peace operations and peace diplomacy. | Limited to public employees in peace operations and peace diplomacy. |
| Canada  | Limited to public employees in peace operations and the population of receiving countries. | Limited to public employees in peace operations and the population of receiving countries. |
| United States  | Limited to public employees in peace operations and the population of receiving countries. | Limited to public employees in peace operations and the population of receiving countries. |
| Peru  | Limited to public employees in peace operations. | Limited to public employees in peace operations. |
| Brazil  | Limited a to security forces and public employees in peace operations and peace diplomacy. | Limited to public employees in peace operations and peace diplomacy |
| Paraguay  | Limited a to security forces and public employees in peace diplomacy and emergency management. | Very broad. For all public employees (not just those in the security sector) and the population at large through the formal and non-formal education system. |
| El Salvador  | Broad. Both in security institutions and for public employees in peace operations and at different levels in the State. | Very broad. For public employees in security and the population, through campaigns. |
| Guatemala  | Very broad. Both in security institutions and for public employees in peace operations, as well as at different levels in the State. It promotes the electoral participation of women in public office. | Very broad. For public employees and the population at large. |
| Mexico  | Very broad. In both security institutions and peace operations, as well as at different levels of the State. It also promotes the social participation of women. | Broad. For public employees in security as well as other public employees. |
| Colombia  | Very broad. In different parts of the agreement. | Broad. In various settings. |



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