

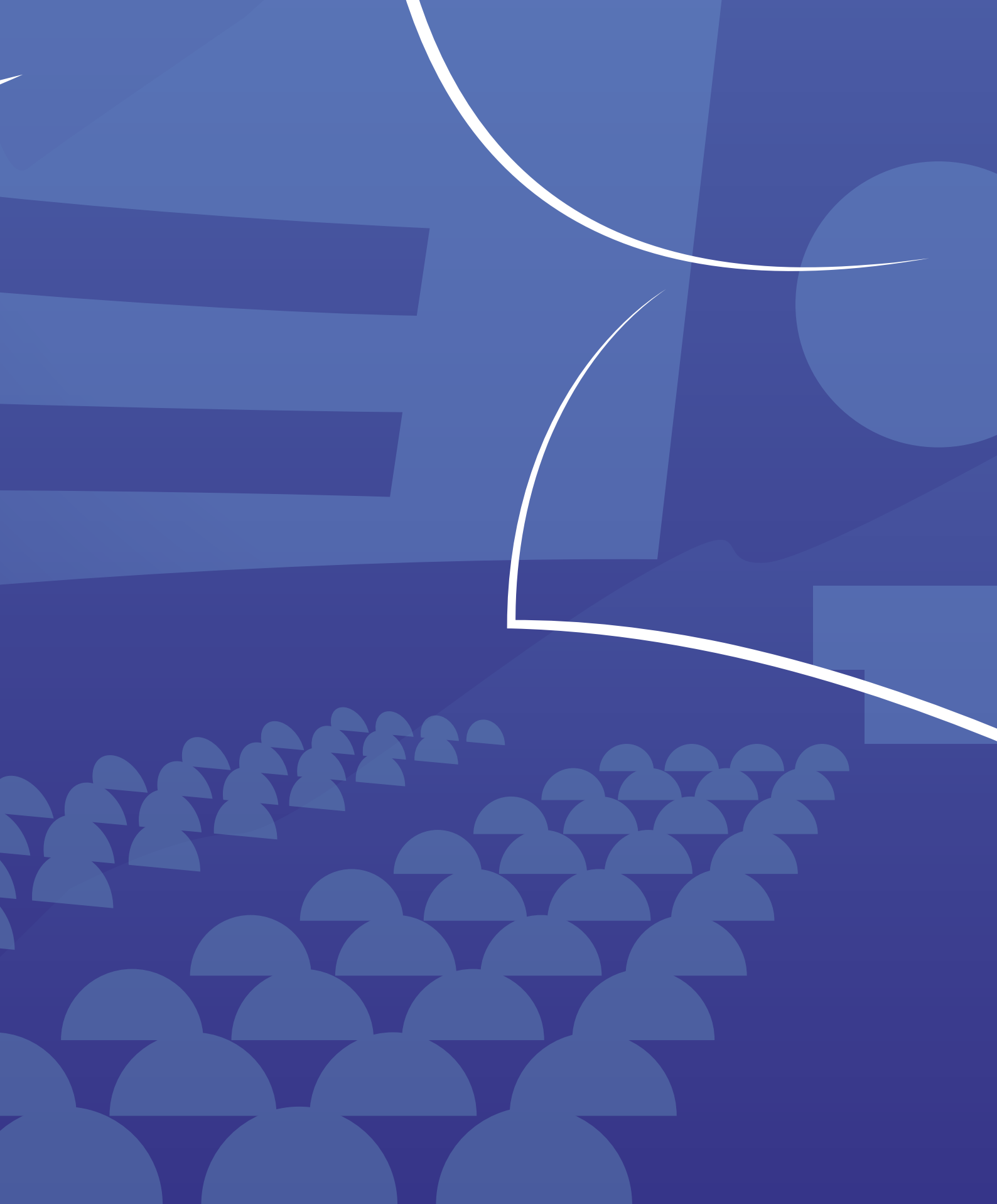


Norwegian Ministries

Norway's National Action Plan

# Women, Peace and Security

(2023-2030)



# Innhold

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Thematic priorities</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1 Peace processes and implementation of peace agreements</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Peace and reconciliation processes .....	9
Implementation of peace agreements .....	12
<b>2 Security policy and operations</b> .....	<b>14</b>
The gender perspective and women's participation in the security sector .....	14
Conflict-related sexual violence .....	17
Radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism .....	20
Women and climate, peace and security .....	22
<b>3 Humanitarian efforts, protection of civilians and protection of human rights</b> .....	<b>27</b>
A gender perspective in the humanitarian response .....	27
The gender perspective and protection of the population in Norway .....	29
Women and conflict: protection and asylum policy .....	31
Women human rights defenders .....	32
<b>Implementation of the action plan</b> .....	<b>36</b>

## Introduction

*The women, peace and security agenda<sup>1</sup> is a key element of Norway's efforts to promote peace and security. This is Norway's fifth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and builds on experience from previous action plans. Earlier thematic priorities in areas where Norway is in a particularly good position to promote the women, peace and security agenda internationally are retained in this plan, but it also reflects the growing importance of national implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in the field of civil protection and security.*

Since the previous action plan was published in 2019, the world has been changing in many ways. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of global climate change, NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine have all had implications for Norway's international peace and security efforts. Women, peace and security was one of Norway's four thematic priorities<sup>2</sup> during its two-year term on the UN Security Council, and experience gained during this period has also influenced Norway's work on this agenda in multilateral forums.


The trends of the past few years have shown the continued clear need to intensify work on the women, peace and security agenda, whether in the context of prevention, during ongoing conflicts, or when new crises arise. We have witnessed backsliding on and resistance to women's and girls' rights at both global and regional level. The importance of integrating the gender perspective into national defence and security work has also become clearer. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated how a conflict can mobilise and affect an entire population. It has shown how the impacts on people may vary depending on their gender and sexual identity, and also that war is still an arena dominated by masculine influence. Norway's international efforts to promote the women, peace and security agenda will be improved by fuller implementation at national level. Moreover, Norway's resilience to crises and conflicts depends on women's full, equal and meaningful participation and on protection of women's rights.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/the-un/wps/id660488/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/the-un/norge-i-sikkerhetsradet/unsc\\_priorities/id2701066/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/the-un/norge-i-sikkerhetsradet/unsc_priorities/id2701066/)

<sup>3</sup> Women's participation in political processes and in peace and security efforts are closely related topics and interdependent. Norway's international efforts to support women's political participation will also be described more fully in the new Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy for 2023–2030.



This action plan makes it clear that Norway's work on the women, peace and security agenda is to be intensified at both national and international level, and links Norway's national and international efforts more closely together than previously. At national level, the gender perspective is to be integrated into the security sector, asylum policy and climate policy. The new action plan also takes a more ambitious approach to forging closer links between women, peace and security efforts, climate action and international work on climate, peace and security. Internationally, Norway will continue its work on women, peace and security in multilateral forums, and the number of priority countries will be increased across regions. Norway will make use of the comparative advantages it has built up through systematic work in the field of women, peace and security since the first action plan was published in 2006. We will exchange experience of national action plans with other countries in both bilateral and multilateral forums. We will also actively support other countries' in developing and implementing national action plans.

The main objective of the work described in this action plan is to promote sustainable peace and security at national, regional and global level.

The most effective way of creating lasting peace is to ensure that peace settlements are inclusive and take into account the rights, priorities and needs of the entire population. It is important to recognise that women are not a homogeneous group with a uniform set of perspectives and priorities, but include people of differing sexual orientation, ethnicity, functional ability and religion. People who do not fit norms for gender and sexuality (LGBT+)<sup>4</sup> are often differently and disproportionately affected by the consequences of conflict, and are frequently excluded from peace and security work. This is why an intersectional gender perspective must be integrated into all Norwegian work related to peace and security, in other words a gender perspective that takes the possibility of multiple discrimination into account.<sup>5</sup> This approach also underlies all the thematic *priorities* included in this action plan, and is an integral part of the plan even where only women are explicitly mentioned.

This action plan focuses on three thematic priorities: peace processes and implementation of peace agreements; security policy and operations; and humanitarian efforts, protection of civilians and protection of human rights. The plan applies to the period up to 2030, thus making it possible to coordinate work on the action plan with efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>6</sup> particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.<sup>7</sup>

The action plan was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Culture and Equality, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Climate and Environment. In addition, Norwegian and international civil society organisations and Norwegian research institutes and other experts have provided input and advice during its preparation.

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<sup>4</sup> LGBT+ is an inclusive term representing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender/transsexual people, plus people exhibiting variations in sex characteristics, intersex (I) people, those identifying as queer (Q) and others who do not fit the usual norms for gender and sexuality. The plus sign indicates that variations in sexual orientation (LGBQ), sexual identity (T) and sex characteristics (I) are all included.

<sup>5</sup> The term intersectionality is used to explain how inequalities and discrimination based on different aspects of people's identity, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, functional ability and social class can intersect and influence their living conditions and quality of life.

<sup>6</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>7</sup> *S/RES/1325. Security Council Resolution on women and peace and security | UN Peacemaker*

## **Norway will**

- integrate the women, peace and security agenda and a gender perspective into Norwegian peace and security efforts nationally and internationally, and into relevant national policy planning;
- support action to strengthen women's participation and influence in all areas discussed in the action plan;
- play a leading role in developing, integrating and implementing the women, peace and security agenda internationally;
- promote mutual learning by intensifying the exchange of experience and competence-building activities with other countries that have reached different stages in the development and implementation of national action plans.





## Thematic priorities

# 1 Peace processes and implementation of peace agreements

### Peace and reconciliation processes

*Peace agreements can provide the political and institutional foundation for a country's reconstruction, stability and development. It is therefore crucial that peace agreements are inclusive and take account of the rights and needs of all citizens. This can strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of an agreement and give the population a stronger sense of ownership. Women's participation and direct influence are of key importance in this connection, but everyone who is involved in a peace process should work towards integrated, non-discriminatory solutions.*

Norway is involved in a number of peace initiatives in different parts of the world, from exploratory talks with the goal of bringing the parties to the negotiating table to formal peace processes and agreements that can reduce or halt fighting and conflict. Norway will continue to work systematically to increase the direct participation of women in peace negotiations, as mediators, facilitators and negotiators. Norway will lead the way by ensuring a good gender balance in its own delegations to peace negotiations and to international meetings where peace and security efforts are discussed.

Ensuring a sound gender balance in our own teams is important in itself, but also important when Norway is advising other parties and as a way of encouraging others to do the same. Where Norway is involved, we will encourage parties to include women in their delegations in a meaningful way, and to involve a broader section of the population than just the parties to a conflict in peace negotiations. Norway has a vital role to play in ensuring that facilitator teams, embassies, partners and international organisations have the necessary capacity and knowledge to promote inclusive processes tailored to the specific context.

The parties appoint their own delegations to negotiations. The small number of women included is partly a reflection of the fact that women are often underrepresented in prevailing power structures, both in the political system and in armed groups. During crises and intensive negotiations, it is also easy to lose sight

of the importance of inclusive approach as part of the political agenda. In specific processes, Norway will focus on raising the parties' awareness of the importance of a reasonable gender balance in their delegations, and support the women taking part in the processes if this is wanted and needed.

Norway will identify women who could be suitable participants and contributors at the early, exploratory stages of peace processes, and will actively support relevant bodies and organisations that can promote inclusion and women's perspectives. Norway will do this both directly and through partners such as NGOs and international organisations involved in awareness raising and capacity building. Secrecy and closed-door negotiations can be important means of achieving progress in peace processes, but may at the same time they may make an inclusive approach more difficult. During sensitive phases, it can be difficult to include more actors in the process. Norway has to accept the framework the parties decide on for a process, but should also seek opportunities to promote inclusion and active participation.

A facilitator can play a part in raising awareness and enhancing knowledge about the value of an inclusive approach among those involved in a process, and at the same time boost the capacity of civil society. Unless the ground is prepared in the preliminary phases, civil society and local women may be excluded when a formal process is started. This is particularly true of civil society organisations that represent marginalised women's groups or people who do not fit norms for gender and sexuality. In many societies, women play a considerable role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution at local level. It is an important goal for Norway to strengthen the link between peace and reconciliation initiatives at the grassroots level and formal peace processes, and in many cases Norway endeavours to build bridges between these levels. Where relevant, Norway will seek to ensure that women's experience at local level is included in peace processes at national level.

In formal peace processes in which Norway plays a role, we encourage the parties to listen to civil society organisations that promote a range of women's perspectives, experiences and input concerning the different issues discussed during the negotiations, and to integrate a gender perspective into the text of the agreement. Norway can also build up its own capacity and that of its partners to promote the gender perspective in negotiations and to build bridges between civil society and the negotiating table. We can also share our expertise in this field with the parties, and where appropriate, assist in the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that women and women's organisations have access to the parties and to the negotiating table. Such mechanisms can improve contact between civil society and formal processes, but they cannot be equated to full participation.

Norway considers it important for a gender perspective to be incorporated into peace agreements and peace processes, and will take a strategic approach to promoting gender issues in negotiations. There are few peace agreements that adequately integrate a gender perspective and safeguard the rights and needs of different groups of women properly. This may be due to various factors. The parties or the peace mediators may see these matters as less important than other

issues on the agenda. The mediation team and the parties may have only limited knowledge of the issues, or relevant expertise may be used to a variable extent and unsystematically, or civil society may not be adequately consulted. Norway therefore offers expert assistance and seeks to raise awareness and build expertise in negotiating parties and mediators. One example of the latter approach is the annual UN High-Level Seminar on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes, to which Norway contributes-

Conflict-related sexual violence is a widespread problem and it therefore has a central place in peace and reconciliation processes. It is important to ensure that the scale of the problem is investigated and analysed, and to urge the parties to conflicts to refrain from using this method of warfare. People who have been affected by conflict-related sexual violence must if they so wish be involved in a meaningful way. Men who have been affected by conflict-related sexual violence are often overlooked as a group. It is necessary to approach these issues from a gender perspective, and to recognise that gender may interact with other aspects of people's identity.

In recent years, Norway has been involved in further developing the Norwegian and Nordic networks of women mediators.<sup>8</sup> In 2017, within the framework of the Nordic network, Norway took the initiative for cooperation with other regional women mediator networks. Norway will continue the Nordic cooperation and support women from relevant regional networks, promote relevant Norwegian and international candidates to roles in peace negotiations – as participants, facilitators and experts – and demonstrate the value of networks of women mediators.

### **Norway will**

- promote inclusive peace processes and work systematically to encourage more women to take part in peace processes, dialogue initiatives and work on de-escalation and ceasefire agreements, both at grassroots level and in formal processes;
- ensure a good gender balance in Norway's own delegations to peace negotiations and to international meetings where peace and security work is discussed, and promote relevant Norwegian and international candidates for roles in the UN and other international forums for peace and security.



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<sup>8</sup> See *Nordic Women Mediators*

## Implementation of peace agreements

*The implementation phase of a peace agreement is a critical part of the peace and reconciliation process, which involves putting what has been negotiated into practice. This phase signals the end of an armed conflict, and also provides opportunities to initiate structural changes and develop institutions based on the principles of the rule of law and respect for democracy and human rights. Research shows that the implementation of a peace agreement may influence the level of gender equality in the future and thus how rights and needs are safeguarded in both the short and the long term. Progress will not be achieved if half the population is excluded and their rights, needs and expertise are not safeguarded.*

Women are often marginalised in the bodies tasked with monitoring a peace agreement, in legislative bodies whose job is to turn a peace agreement into practical politics, and in the budget discussions that make follow-up possible. Coalitions of women that have grown stronger during the negotiating phase are often split up once a peace agreement has been signed. This is natural if that they represent different interest groups, but can undermine women's voices and influence. Support for women's organisations and for action to promote inclusion should therefore continue after the end of negotiations. Work with coalitions and networks should be given priority when needed.

In many cases, insecurity and violence, including gender-based violence, persist after a formal peace agreement has been signed. Sometimes the level of violence increases, particularly violence against women.<sup>9</sup> The role played by women and their active participation are directly linked to a higher risk of being subjected to violence. Higher risk and a lack of protection can undermine women's opportunities to contribute to lasting peace.<sup>10</sup> There should therefore be a focus on prevention, protection and the rule of law during the implementation phase. Norwegian police advisers can play an important role in this context, for example through capacity building, monitoring and advisory services for local and international actors in the police and justice sector.

When women human rights defenders are targeted using violence and detention, their ability to make a difference to their societies is undermined. This is a growing problem. It is therefore important to be particularly aware of their needs and support their activities. Women's participation in decision-making processes and in gender-sensitive reintegration programmes is crucial in ensuring that women who have been members of rebel groups have the same opportunities as men in similar situations. Awareness-raising work relating to gender roles is important. People who have belonged to rebel groups and return to their local communities may find that power structures are to some extent renegotiated. Norway can provide various forms of support and competence building in such situations.

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<sup>9</sup> See *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325*

<sup>10</sup> Kishi, Roudabeh & Louise Olsson (2022) *Violence Targeting Women in Politics: Implications for the UN Security Council*, GPS Policy Brief, 2. Oslo: PRIO; Olsson, Louise. (2022) *Peacekeeping operations and women's security* in Han Dorussen (Ed.) *Handbook on Peacekeeping and International Relations*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.



Norway is not working on its own. Our aim is primarily to provide assistance in the form of resources and policy input on partner countries' own terms and in accordance with their needs. Norway often works through civil society organisations, other states and multilateral organisations, including the UN Secretariat, UN funds and programmes, and various regional organisations. Many of them have a key role in implementation at country level.

In cases where peace negotiations have been inclusive and have resulted in an agreement that provides substantial safeguards for women's rights, Norway will continue to support civil society and cooperate with the parties in order to contribute to implementation of the agreement. In cases where the negotiations were not inclusive, we will endeavour to ensure an inclusive implementation phase. Norway will seek to ensure that women participate in key decision-making processes in post-conflict situations, at both local and national level. Electoral and constitutional commissions are particularly important, but women also need to have a place in the mechanisms established to monitor follow-up and implementation of a peace agreement. There should also be a good framework for legitimate and representative security structures that meet the security needs of women and girls.

### **Norway will**

- take a strategic approach to promoting gender issues in negotiations and peace processes, build bridges between civil society and the parties to negotiations, and work systematically to ensure that there are inclusive structures for the implementation of peace agreements;
- in connection with the implementation of peace agreements, facilitate women's participation and seek to ensure that women's rights, needs and priorities are safeguarded, and that any provisions on women's rights in the agreement are implemented in practice;
- contribute to the protection of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders who are taking part or have taken part in peace processes and peace efforts in which Norway is involved.

## 2 Security policy and operations

### The gender perspective and women's participation in the security sector

*Armed conflicts, natural disasters and humanitarian crises affect different segments of the population in different ways. All military and police operations and missions aim to build peace and security for everyone. Adopting a gender perspective in this work, at both national and international level, can be an important instrument for achieving this.*

A gender perspective must be a key element of all work within the Norwegian defence and justice sectors towards implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. This approach involves analysing whether a conflict or crisis affects different segments of the population in different ways and whether our actions have different consequences for different groups in an operating area, regardless of where a crisis or war takes place. Other socio-cultural factors in addition to gender may affect the opportunities available to people, and whether they can enjoy peace and security. These include ethnicity, religion or belief, disabilities, sexual orientation, sexual identity and age. The gender perspective adopted by the Armed Forces and the police must therefore take into account how multiple identities intersect.

These requirements have implications for planning and implementing operations and missions, for education and training, for procuring equipment, and for managing personnel and expertise, both nationally and internationally. It is particularly important to ensure that Norwegian personnel receive proper training and adequate knowledge about women, peace and security and the gender perspective.<sup>11</sup> Establishing and developing a network of gender advisers in the Armed Forces will be instrumental in ensuring a high level of expertise and effective integration of a gender perspective in the defence sector.

<sup>11</sup> The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) is one of the institutions used by the Norwegian Armed Forces for training purposes, and is NATO's Department Head for Gender. The police use courses organised by the UN, while the prison and probation services use courses provided through the Norwegian Refugee Council's programme on human rights, democracy and peace, NORDEM/NORCAP.



Adopting a gender perspective contributes to compliance with obligations under international law, including those relating to human rights and international humanitarian law. Modern conflicts often have severe consequences for the civilian population, and civilians frequently become targets. Whenever Norway participates in operations and missions, there is therefore a focus on safeguarding the security and safety of the civilian population in the area of operations. The Armed Forces

have a special role to play in creating security, and are required to pursue an integrated approach to human security in operations at all levels.

The police and other civilian organisations involved in emergency preparedness play a similar role in civilian contexts. In international operations, Norwegian personnel are expected to play a part in ensuring that local authorities and international forces respect everyone's rights in the area of operations.

In addition to safeguarding people's rights, a gender perspective improves situational awareness and can be an important tool for achieving the objectives of a mission.<sup>12</sup> During operations and missions, it is vital to gather as much information as possible on the operating environment. This includes using gender analysis to identify factors that apply to the entire population, including women and girls. This is one way of improving both the quality and the effectiveness of contributions to peace and security made by the Armed Forces and the police.

Another important tool for implementing the women, peace and security agenda is increasing participation by women in security policy decisions, both military and civilian. This can encourage the integration of a gender perspective, and improve the extent to which women's and girls' security needs are met. Greater participation by women is also a goal in itself. For example, it is often easier for women to establish contact with and gain access to local settings that are dominated by women and thus help to develop broader situational awareness. Norway has achieved positive results by posting women police officers and personnel from the prison and probation services to make it easier to establish and maintain contact with local women and women's organisations.

<sup>12</sup> Kvarving, Lena. «FN-resolusjon 1325 og Forsvaret» i *Gender i Forsvaret – fra teori til praksis [UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Norwegian Armed Forces, in Gender in the Armed Forces: from theory to practice]*, edited by Anita Schjølset, Abstrakt Forlag, 2014, pp. 125-148.

## Norway will

- ensure that Norwegian military and civilian personnel have a sound knowledge of the women, peace and security agenda, including how to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence and to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH);
- integrate a gender perspective into the planning, implementation and evaluation of education, training, exercises, operations and missions nationally and internationally, when applicable;
- play a part in developing the international framework for women, peace and security in international forums, and in implementing UN and NATO policy and operational guidelines relating to women, peace and security;
- play a part in international expertise and capacity building relating to women, peace and security in the security sector;
- work towards a good gender balance in the Armed Forces and the police, especially in operational and leadership positions.



## Conflict-related sexual violence

*Sexual and gender-based violence may take many different forms, including conflict-related sexual violence and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), which can undermine the prospects of sustainable peace and security. When such violence is perpetrated by the authorities, it constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights. Conflict-related sexual violence is also a violation of international humanitarian law, and may, depending on the circumstances, constitute a war crime or a crime against humanity. In certain situations, conflict-related sexual violence may also be a constituent element of genocide. The parties to an armed conflict must comply with their obligations by refraining from and protecting people against this type of abuse, and perpetrators must be held accountable.*

Conflict-related sexual violence is acknowledged to be one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. It has long been recognised as a tactic of war used by both state and non-state actors to achieve strategic, military and organisational goals.<sup>13</sup> Who commits sexual violence, when, why and how, varies from one context to another, and it is important for the defence and justice sector to have a thorough understanding of the interplay between these elements. In order to identify, prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, it is essential that this issue is an integral part of planning and operations, both nationally and internationally. Capacity building in the Armed Forces, the police and the justice system is therefore crucial for preventing and responding to such cases.

Sexual violence is largely perpetrated against women and girls, and people who do not fit social norms for gender and sexuality. Women and girls with disabilities or with other intersecting identities may be particularly vulnerable. Men and boys are also subjected to sexual violence to a greater extent than has previously been recognised. Applying a gender perspective that takes into account a range of social identities is therefore important in identifying, preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence.

Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment perpetrated by personnel involved in operations is also a persistent and serious problem. Such abuse increases the burden on individuals and local communities that are already affected by conflict. In addition, it damages trust in all operations and the personnel involved in them. It is essential to professionalise military and civilian actors and hold them accountable in order to stop such abuse. The Armed Forces and the police must therefore have good systems in place for preventing, reporting and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment perpetrated by Norwegian personnel, and must always take action when they are informed of such cases.

The Norwegian police play a part in ensuring that parties are held accountable for crimes involving conflict-related sexual violence, both nationally and internationally.

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<sup>13</sup> Skjelsbaek, Inger. *Sexual violence and war: Mapping out a complex relationship*. European Journal of International Relations 7(2) (2001): pp 211-237; S/RES/1820. *Security Council Resolution on women and peace and security. Conflict-related sexual violence*. | UN Peacemaker



The National Criminal Investigation Service is the body in Norway responsible for investigating war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity committed abroad by people who are in Norway. The Norwegian police also contribute to the investigation of war crimes internationally, for example by seconding personnel to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

*Norway has provided support for and contributed to the production of the first **Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**.<sup>14</sup> The handbook was developed by the UN with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Target groups are leaders of all peace operations, all Women's Protection Advisors (WPAs) who support the mission leadership, UN regional training centres, and police, military and civilian personnel who are to be deployed in peace operations.*

The scale of conflict-related sexual violence and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in operations is influenced by the level of sexual and gender-based violence and systematic gender inequalities before and after a conflict. This will also continue to be relevant in the Norwegian context as long as a substantial level of violence and abuse persists in the Norwegian population. Preventing and combating domestic violence and serious sexual crimes is therefore a high priority. Sexual harassment within military and civilian organisations is one example of the forms sexual violence may take during peacetime. Public trust in the Armed Forces and the police may be influenced by the ability of these institutions to prevent and respond to peacetime cases of sexual harassment and abuse. Sexual harassment in the security sector must therefore be prevented and considered in conjunction with work on and the goals of the women, peace and security agenda.

## Norway will

- integrate measures to identify, prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence into operational planning nationally and internationally, when applicable;
- promote understanding of conflict-related sexual violence through multilateral forums, and advocate international action to prevent, respond to and prosecute conflict-related sexual violence;
- ensure that there are good guidelines and systems in place for preventing, reporting and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the security sector;
- have a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the security sector, in line with national and international guidelines and legislation.

<sup>14</sup> 2020.08-UN-CRSV-Handbook.pdf

## Radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism

*Violent extremism and terrorism are persistent threats, both to people in Norway and internationally, and the Norwegian Government is giving high priority to efforts to prevent and combat radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. This is a long-term process, and includes both national and international cooperation and knowledge exchange as key elements of the work.*

The threat picture is continually changing, and must be closely monitored. The changes are exemplified by the way the internet and social media can now function as arenas for radicalisation. Furthermore, international factors and conflicts outside Norway may have implications for the domestic threat situation. The risk of growing polarisation between groups in society is another trend that is relevant to work in this field.

Some preventive work targets larger groups. However, when targeting individuals it is necessary to tailor the approach to the specific person. This makes it necessary to recognise that there are various different drivers of radicalisation, and a number of routes to an extremist mentality. Some types of action are for example suitable when working with young people, whereas others are more relevant to adults. We also know that different factors may be involved when women and men are radicalised or take part in extremist groups.<sup>15</sup> A gender perspective must therefore be applied and assessed when preventive work is being carried out. It is important to develop the knowledge base, both on how extremism arises and on the types of action that may be effective in preventing and counteracting radicalisation and extremism. The Norwegian Government has appointed a commission on extremism to consider these issues in more depth.

In November 2022, the Government presented a revised national counterterrorism strategy.<sup>16</sup> This provides the basis for a coherent approach across all relevant

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<sup>15</sup> See *What role does gender play in the far right?* - C-REX - Center for Research on Extremism (uio.no)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/a74960882df34d28a5e272071b4e7d80/national-counterterrorism-strategy.pdf>

sectors to prevent radicalisation and terrorism. The strategy describes level of ambition and the thrust of counterterrorism work for the years ahead, with a broad cross-sectoral approach and public and private sector involvement. Its focus areas are regulatory development, technology development, threat communication, knowledge and expertise, and cooperation. The overall goal is to prevent, protect against, avert and respond to terrorism through a coherent and coordinated approach.

Efforts to counter radicalisation and violent extremism are broad based and target all forms of extremism. Norway's first action plan against radicalisation and violent extremism in was published 2014. It has since been updated several times, and was most recently revised in 2020. The revised plan contains 30 measures grouped under five priority areas. There is a particular focus on early preventive efforts through channels such as child day care, schools, the police and the health services, involving building knowledge and expertise among front-line practitioners. Nine ministries and many directorates are involved in work against radicalisation and violent extremism in Norway, and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security is responsible for coordination.

At international level, Norway focuses on cross-cutting issues in counterterrorism and on efforts to prevent violent extremism. A gender perspective and promotion of the women, peace and security agenda are key elements of this work. Norway takes the role of women both as perpetrators and as victims of violent extremism very seriously. Women's participation in counterterrorism can build bridges between local initiatives and ongoing international processes. Within the UN, Norway emphasises that a gender perspective must be included at all stages of counterterrorism work – prevention, protection, prosecution, reintegration and rehabilitation. Norway considers it important to ensure that counterterrorism measures do not violate women's and girls' rights, including the rights of women human rights defenders and peace mediators. Norway promoted these principles during its 2021–2022 term as a member of the UN Security Council. During negotiations on the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Norway seeks to retain, and if possible strengthen, wording referring to the responsibilities of the UN and its member states in this area. Norway also promotes a gender perspective in all forums where it is represented, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum and projects and programmes related to counterterror and the prevention of violent extremism that receive Norwegian support.

### **Norway will**

- include women and integrate a gender perspective into national efforts to prevent and combat violent extremism;
- promote the integration of a gender perspective and women's participation in counterterror efforts and in the prevention of violent extremism internationally.

## Women and climate, peace and security

*The world is facing a climate crisis. To succeed in the transformation process ahead of us, we must understand how the climate crisis will affect people and who will be hardest hit, and these groups must be able to take part in all phases of the planning and implementation of climate action. We know that climate change may have different impacts on women and men, and that it may exacerbate inequalities, but also that it may have consequences for traditional gender roles and existing power structures. Climate policy may also have different consequences for women and men. The climate crisis therefore includes a clear gender component.*

Women and men often have differential access to economic, political, social and cultural resources that make it possible for them to deal with the impacts of climate change. In the Global South, women are more dependent on natural resources and play a substantial part in agricultural production, which is often a mainstay of the economy. This means that it is women who are hardest hit when crops fail because of flooding or drought, and that climate action may also have the greatest consequences for women.

Climate change may aggravate already existing, underlying tensions in society, indirectly worsen local and regional conflicts, and be one of the factors driving migration. Climate change is thus a 'threat multiplier', which may undermine states' ability to cope with climate change, their adaptive capacity, and risk reduction efforts. Climate-related internal displacement may also increase the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. It is therefore essential to be aware of how the impacts of climate change and climate policy may vary between population segments, including marginalised groups and people who are subject to multiple forms of discrimination. These factors must be taken into consideration when Norway supports activities such as local climate action and nature management as part of its development cooperation. Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights<sup>17</sup> is another important part of this picture, and is supported for example in connection with rainforest protection in Central Africa.

In many countries, women have limited opportunities to take part in public and private decision-making processes that have a strong influence on their prospects and welfare. As a result, important knowledge and women's perspectives are excluded from policy development and the implementation of measures. This may be instrumental in maintaining a pattern of inadequate response to climate change, a focus on climate action that is weighted towards men's priorities and areas where they play a dominant role, or the use of inappropriate adaptation measures. Omitting women's perspectives makes it harder to achieve integrated, sustainable solutions for climate, peace and security. A number of studies have also shown that women's networks and women peacebuilders play an important role at local level in preventing and mitigating climate-related conflict.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See the *Norwegian guidelines for sexual and reproductive health and rights* ([regjeringen.no](http://regjeringen.no))

<sup>18</sup> *The-Climate-Gender-Conflict-Nexus.pdf* ([georgetown.edu](http://georgetown.edu))

Women may have a particular need and desire to take part, and also be in a particularly good position to influence policy and action to address and find solutions to climate and environmental problems and their impacts on women, whether in peacetime or in conflict and post-conflict situations. Environmental defenders are some of the human rights defenders who are at highest risk from threats and intimidation, harassment, violence and murder. Women environmental defenders therefore face even greater challenges, in addition to the general problems encountered by women in many societies. Women's role as environmental defenders should therefore also be highlighted as part of efforts to increase women's participation and influence locally, regionally and internationally. The aims are to benefit from women's knowledge and experience, avoid situations that make them particularly vulnerable, and meet their needs.

At the same time, climate change may have positive effects on traditional gender roles and power structures, so that women take greater financial responsibility and acquire more power to make decisions. This has for example been observed in North Kordofan in Sudan, where women gain greater financial responsibility when men have to travel further with their livestock. Such developments can open up opportunities to strengthen the role and participation of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In addition, women at grassroots level are often in a good position to identify and develop solutions for sustainable nature management and for building up resilience to climate change. Their knowledge gives women an important role to play during and after conflicts and as first responders after natural disasters. Management of natural resources, water resources and vegetation and climate change adaptation efforts can be suitable areas for cooperation, confidence building and peacebuilding locally and regionally, as Norway's work in the UN



Security Council has shown. It is vital to break down barriers to women's full, equal and meaningful participation as a basis for such work.

There is growing recognition that nature-based solutions will be a vital part of efforts to address the climate crisis, while at the same time, a climate that supports life on earth is an essential basis for maintaining the biodiversity on which we all depend. Natural resource management will therefore be a key element of economic policy in the years ahead. We must create a more circular economy that uses resources more effectively. Women, particularly indigenous women, often possess a great deal of traditional knowledge on the management of scarce resources and ecologically marginal areas. At the same time, indigenous women's traditional knowledge of and relationship with nature is an underutilised resource in national climate and biodiversity plans. The complex challenges society is facing in this connection make it vital to ensure that the resources both women and men have to offer are fully utilised in strategies for peace, security and welfare.

There has been relatively little research in Norway on how climate policy and women's roles are interlinked at national level. Norway is one of the countries that has made most progress in gender equality, and it pursues a progressive climate policy. In 2021, a report on interactions between climate policies and gender in the Nordic countries was drawn up, commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers.<sup>19</sup> The report identifies several links between climate policy and gender equality in the Nordic countries. For example, men are in the majority in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) studies, which may give them an advantage in workplaces that have been identified as important in the green transition. At the same time, men dominate in the oil and gas industry, where there is a need for restructuring and emission reductions. The report concludes that Nordic climate policies lack an adequate gender perspective, and that more knowledge in this field is needed to remedy the situation.

The Norwegian Government recognises the importance of gender-specific data in developing in designing good strategies for climate, peace and security. Gender differences related to climate change must also be interpreted in conjunction with other factors such as age, ethnicity and so on. The Government is gathering more information on the links between climate change and gender equality, and has in recent years started or taken part in several initiatives focusing on this topic. There are studies that show synergies between the work of women's networks and peacebuilders' local efforts to prevent or reduce climate-related conflicts.

In autumn 2021, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and LGBTI (MR-JÄM)<sup>20</sup> decided that the Nordic countries should undertake a multi-year effort under Feminist Action for Climate Justice, an action coalition which is part of the Generation Equality initiative convened by the UN. The purpose is to promote gender equality and women's rights in responding to the challenges of climate

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<sup>19</sup> See *How climate policies impact gender and vice versa in the Nordic countries* ([norden.org](https://norden.org))

<sup>20</sup> *About the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and LGBTI (MR-JÄM) | Nordic Co-operation* ([norden.org](https://norden.org))



change. In January 2022, Norway hosted a Nordic roundtable convened by FOKUS, UN Women and the Nordic Council of Ministers, which was entitled Gender Equality and Climate Justice. This resulted in a joint Nordic declaration on climate change and gender equality, which was presented to the UN Commission on the Status of Women later in 2022 (CSW66).<sup>21</sup> As an elected member of the UN Security Council, Norway organised a first informal meeting of the Council on climate, peace and security in November 2022. The meeting discussed opportunities for the UN peace and security architecture, including using climate, peace and security efforts to support women in taking on leading roles in climate adaptation work, peace and security work and mediation, and recognising women as partners in efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

## Norway will

- build and share knowledge about the links between the women, peace and security and climate, peace and security agendas, and seek to ensure that a gender perspective is an integral part of the basis for making decisions in national and international forums;
- seek to ensure coordination of work on the women, peace and security and climate, peace and security agendas, and that they are dealt with as two interconnected and cross-cutting issues in Norway's multilateral and international cooperation on peace and security;
- work towards greater participation and more direct influence by women and girls on national and international decision-making processes relating to climate and environment;
- support the UN's work on climate, peace and security internationally, regionally and at country level, and advocate the integration of a gender perspective and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in this work.

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<sup>21</sup> *A Green and Gender-Equal Nordic Region (norden.org)*



### **3 Humanitarian efforts, protection of civilians and protection of human rights**

#### **A gender perspective in the humanitarian response**

*Armed conflicts have severe consequences for civilians. Many people are forced to flee, both within their own countries and across national borders. This makes them more vulnerable. Violations of humanitarian law and human rights result in great human suffering and critical humanitarian needs, especially where conflicts are prolonged.*

Norway will maintain its efforts to ensure compliance with international law during humanitarian crises and to ensure that protection is a key part of the humanitarian response. A gender perspective must be an integral part of all Norwegian efforts, from preparatory analyses to planning, implementation and reporting. It must be possible for those affected by crises to hold humanitarian organisations accountable, and to influence the planning and implementation of international humanitarian efforts. Norway will seek to ensure that women participate and are heard on equal terms with men. Our contribution is intended to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence and play a part in holding the parties accountable where such violence takes place in connection with armed conflicts, and to meet the needs and priorities of survivors in full.

The women, peace and security agenda is important in connection with several elements of the humanitarian response. Norway's humanitarian efforts will always be based on its humanitarian strategy. It will not be possible to achieve the goal of providing effective humanitarian assistance unless a gender perspective is integrated into this work. Norway will seek to ensure that the humanitarian response meets the needs of the whole population for protection and basic services, including the needs of people who do not fit with norms for gender and sexuality.<sup>22</sup> Women play an important role in the humanitarian response, and women of all ages must be able to take part in needs analyses and in designing the humanitarian response on equal terms with men. Norway will therefore maintain the requirement for organisations that receive funding from the humanitarian budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to integrate a gender perspective into their work.

Sexual and gender-based violence is a serious problem in humanitarian crises, both during peacetime and during armed conflict. Women and girls are most at risk, but other segments of the population may also be affected. Men and boys

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/the-norwegian-government-bolsters--efforts-for-gender-and-sexual-diversity-in-new-action-plan/id2963498/>

may face other problems and have different needs from women and girls in the same situation. People who are forced to flee or are displaced may be more vulnerable. People who are subjected to these types of violence are also actors and survivors, not just victims in need of protection, and have a right to play a part in defining their own needs and priorities. Sexual and gender-based violence often leads to stigmatisation and exclusion, undermines stability and breaks down social structures. Children who are conceived through rape during armed conflict, and other children of war who have parents from opposite sides of a conflict, are particularly vulnerable.

*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) have introduced a zero-tolerance policy towards failure to take action concerning sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in the grant management sector. Recipients of grant funding are therefore required to prevent, detect and respond to SEAH, in line with international recommendations.<sup>23</sup>*

## Norway will

- maintain efforts to ensure compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights, and play a part in holding the parties to conflicts accountable;
- promote women's participation in planning and implementing the humanitarian response, and help to ensure that women's voices are heard;
- work to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict, post-conflict situations and during humanitarian crises in peacetime;
- continue efforts to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into work on arms control and humanitarian disarmament, for example through follow-up of the political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA).

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<sup>23</sup> [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/about\\_mfa/guidelines\\_sexual\\_exploitation/id2946561/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/about_mfa/guidelines_sexual_exploitation/id2946561/)

## The gender perspective and protection of the population in Norway

A gender perspective should also be an integral part of national efforts at all levels, including the preparation and revision of relevant emergency preparedness and crisis plans. This is particularly important during the preparation and revision of concepts and plans intended to ensure that the whole population receives protection, evacuation plans and planning of shelters. In this context, it is of crucial importance that other important characteristics of people are also taken into account, for example age, gender identity and disabilities. The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection has been tasked with further developing civil protection measures, and a gender perspective should be incorporated into this work.

Different groups are affected differently by war and conflict, and this applies both to the population generally and to operational personnel. The police are responsible for making decisions on whether it is necessary to evacuate people, and together with other civilian emergency services, for ensuring that evacuees reach safety. They need to be aware that the decisions they make have different consequences for different segments of the population. Gender roles may influence the results of mobilisation of operational personnel. For example, more women than men are single parents, which can make mobilisation more difficult.

In peacetime, the Norwegian Civil Defence provides extra personnel and equipment when the emergency services need support to deal with major incidents and disasters. In wartime, the Civil Defence is responsible for protecting the civilian population during hostilities and major incidents. A Swedish study<sup>24</sup> related to the total defence concept found considerable differences between the situations of women and men. This is something that must be included in analyses of the population's needs, behaviour and patterns of mobility, and of what action needs to be taken. The study found that a larger proportion of women than of men would be economically more vulnerable in the event of a prolonged crisis and/or evacuation (less access to resources, transport options, cash).

### Norway will

- strengthen implementation of the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security nationally, and integrate a gender perspective into national and local crisis and emergency planning;
- strengthen research and develop knowledge on how war, conflict and serious crises can affect different groups of women and men in different ways, in Norway as well as elsewhere, and how the emergency planning and response system can be made more gender sensitive.

<sup>24</sup> See Olsson, Louise, Erika Toivonen, Camilla Lönngrén and Gustav Friis (2021). *Toward an enhanced analysis of the human terrain in Sweden. Men's and women's willingness to defend, mobilization, resilience, and safety in the context of National Defense*. Uppsala University: <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1640501/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.



## Women and conflict: protection and asylum policy

*In the asylum system, a gender-sensitive approach must be taken at all stages of case processing.*

Asylum seekers must be informed that gender-related persecution, including persecution related to sexual orientation and sexual identity, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, may be a basis for a right to protection in Norway. The asylum interview must be conducted in such a way that the applicant feels that it is safe to provide information. For example, women should be asked whether they want the interviewer and/or interpreter to be a woman. Other special needs should also be met as far as practicable.

Reception centres for asylum seekers are required to ensure that single women are offered accommodation that is physically segregated from accommodation for men. Centres must also do everything possible to ensure that women are not subjected to violence, harassment or sexual abuse, and must have written routines for their response in the event of violence and abuse targeting women. People who do not fit the norms for gender and sexuality may also need special arrangements at reception centres, for example a single room or transfer to another reception centre.

Reception centres must report all cases of violence and crime to the police. Residents who are the victims of criminal offences, for example rape or aggravated violence, must be given assistance to report the matter if they wish to do so. They must also be given help to contact a doctor or specialist. In such cases, the reception centre must in cooperation with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration assess the security situation, including whether the need for transfer to another reception centre. It may also be appropriate to obtain assistance from the police to ensure that safe accommodation can be provided.

The staff at reception centres must take steps to prevent discrimination, and must seek to ensure equal treatment regardless of people's gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, nationality and ethnicity. There are also requirements for identifying and following up women and other vulnerable groups who may have been subjected to human trafficking, domestic violence or conflict-related sexual violence. This makes it possible, for example, to organise safe accommodation and take steps to ensure that victims receive necessary assistance from other bodies.

Each reception centre must have a member of staff with the relevant expertise who can follow up women with special needs. These women must be offered individual advice and information. There are also requirements to ensure that the services and help provided to people staying at reception centres are adapted to varying needs; this could for example involve facilitating the establishment of a separate women's group or enabling women to take part in practical activities at a centre. The Directorate of Immigration provides training for all personnel at reception centres to ensure that they are run satisfactorily. The courses include training in how to detect and prevent domestic violence.

## Norway will

- integrate a gender-sensitive approach into all stages of the asylum process, and integrate a gender perspective into the design of measures;
- ensure that relevant personnel have a high level of expertise on integrating a gender perspective into issues relating to protection and asylum.

## Women human rights defenders

*There are clear links between the life situation of women, the extent to which their human rights are upheld and women's opportunities to take part in peace and security efforts. Work on the women, peace and security agenda and work on human rights and gender equality are therefore closely connected.*

Intensifying unrest and conflict often puts pressure on women's rights and security. Violence against women can undermine women's participation in and influence on key processes. Women in conflict-affected countries often have less access to land rights than women in other countries. Without access to vital economic resources, women's influence on peacebuilding is weakened.

Women human rights defenders play a key role in protecting everyone's human rights, both in peacetime and in conflict situations. They may be involved in a personal capacity, as representatives of women's and human rights organisations, or as politicians and representatives of public authorities. Through their efforts, they are also influential in strengthening women's positions and voices in their communities and internationally. There are close links between women who promote human rights and women who take part in peace and security efforts. Some women may act in both roles at the same time.

Women human rights defenders often become the targets of threats and harassment as a result of their engagement, both because they are human rights defenders and because they are women. When women speak up in the public room or are engaged in politics and social issues, they may be perceived as challenging established gender roles. Women human rights defenders receive different types of threats from men. They more frequently experience violence, harassment and physical attacks.

It is important to strengthen the capacity of women's organisations to put women's rights and needs on the agenda in relevant processes and thus ensure that women's protection needs are taken into account during these processes. Norway's contributions include supporting the capacity of women and women's organisations to take part in relevant peace and reconciliation processes, including multilateral forums and arenas.





Norway is also seeking to strengthen the normative protection framework for women human rights defenders in the UN.<sup>25</sup> In spring 2022, Norway put forward a resolution on human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict situations in the UN Human Rights Council. In the resolution, UN member states recognise the important role that human rights defenders and civil society play in conflict situations, including their role in cooperating with UN organisations and mechanisms. Member states also express their concern at the threats disproportionately faced by women human rights defenders in conflict situations.<sup>26</sup>

During its 2021–2022 term as a member of the UN Security Council, Norway worked systematically to promote participation by women human rights defenders and representatives of civil society in the Council's work, and to raise awareness of the importance of protecting them against reprisals so that they can take part in this work safely. During its presidency of the Security Council, Norway organised a ministerial-level open debate on this topic. Norway also contributes to various arrangements, for example through the UN and civil society, to provide protection for human rights defenders who are at risk. People who are at risk of persecution because of their role and activities as human rights defenders in their home countries may meet the conditions for protection under Chapter 4 of the Norwegian Immigration Act.

Human rights defenders in exile can be an important voice for women's rights in states where women lack a voice in the public domain. In Norway, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion has broadened the criteria for allowing leave of absence from the obligatory introduction programme, including Norwegian language training and social studies. This enables newly arrived immigrants to take part in peace and reconciliation efforts at national and international level, including work to promote women's rights. The purpose of these changes was to enable human

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<sup>25</sup> [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/human-rights/ny-struktur/rights\\_defenders/id2339808/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/human-rights/ny-struktur/rights_defenders/id2339808/)

<sup>26</sup> A/HRC/RES/49/18

rights defenders who are settled in Norway to continue their work and take part in international processes. The Ministry has also made it clear that the introduction programme is flexible, and that it is possible for municipalities to include the activities of human rights defenders as part of the programme.

### **Norway will**

- seek to ensure that women human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict situations have access to protection mechanisms through the UN and civil society;
- work to enable women human rights defenders from areas affected by conflict and who receive protection in Norway to continue their engagement;
- promote the participation of women human rights defenders in multilateral forums and international meetings on peace and security, and work towards stronger guidelines for protecting participants and preventing reprisals.



## Implementation of the action plan

Implementation of this action plan will take place at many different levels and in different forums – nationally, bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally. In third countries, the focus will continue to be on selected priority countries where Norway has a presence or plays a special role that makes effective engagement possible. The list of priority countries will be dynamic and can be adjusted as conditions change. For 2023, the list is as follows: Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen. The new action plan also follows up some of the recommendations in Norad's evaluation of Norwegian work on women, peace and security for the period 2000–2020,<sup>27</sup> which focused mainly on efforts funded through Norway's aid budget. At the same time, the action plan retains the approach of integrating the women, peace and security agenda into the whole breadth of peace and security work rather than creating budget items specifically for this area.


Regional and multilateral forums will continue to be given priority. These include NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the EU, the Council of Europe, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the UN. As regards the UN, there will be a special focus on Norway's membership of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2023–2024 and its candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the period 2028–2030. The processes in connection with NATO accession by Sweden and Finland have highlighted the importance of Nordic cooperation. Cooperation, competence building and the exchange of information with civil society organisations and research institutes will continue to be key elements in the implementation of this action plan and the development of the global Women, Peace and Security Index.<sup>28</sup>

This action plan has a longer time frame, up to 2030, to give more predictability and encourage a long-term strategic approach to integrated implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. An interministerial review of the plan will be carried out by 2027. This will include an assessment of whether updates or adjustments are needed, based on preliminary results and relevant knowledge generation. The end of the time frame for the action plan coincides with the 2030 deadline for achieving the SDGs and the 30-year anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325. It also corresponds to the time frame for the new action plan for women's rights and gender equality in Norway's foreign and development policy.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.norad.no/en/toolspublications/publications/2022/evaluation-of-norwegian-efforts-for-women-peace-and-security/>

<sup>28</sup> Norway has for several years provided support for the global Women Peace and Security Index (WPS Index), which is published by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security. *Countries Archive – GIWPS* ([georgetown.edu](http://georgetown.edu))



The thematic priorities for the action plan were identified as areas where Norway's efforts and the potential impact of these efforts are considered most significant. The lead ministries for the different action points are listed in the table below. Lead ministries for one or more action points are required to prepare their own documents for following up the action plan and for integration of a gender perspective into their work relating to peace and security by the end of 2023. The lead ministries will also be responsible for providing annual reports on their efforts, results, and any problems related to implementation of the plan in their areas of responsibility.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be responsible for synthesising the information and publishing the annual reports by 1 August of the following year. In the course of 2023, the Ministry will develop a reporting tool in connection the process of updating its *Guide to the Foreign Service's Work on Women, Peace and Security*. The Ministry will obtain reports on results from relevant missions. Norad will provide assistance in obtaining aid statistics and reports and analyses from Norwegian civil society organisations. The implementation process will also include annual meetings with other ministries that are involved, civil society and relevant research institutes.

The table below lists the lead ministries for all the action points in the plan. Other ministries, subordinate agencies, civil society and research institutes may also be involved in implementation and development of the action points during the plan period.

Norway's National Action Plan	Ministry
Integrate the women, peace and security agenda and a gender perspective into Norwegian peace and security efforts nationally and internationally, and into relevant national policy planning.	MFA, Defence, Justice
Support action to strengthen women's participation and influence in all areas discussed in the action plan.	MFA, Defence, Justice, Equality, Inclusion, Climate
Play a leading role in developing, integrating and implementing the women, peace and security agenda internationally.	MFA, Defence, Justice, Inclusion
Promote mutual learning by intensifying the exchange of experience and competence-building activities with other countries that have reached different stages in the development and implementation of national action plans.	MFA, Defence, Justice
Promote inclusive peace processes and work systematically to encourage more women to take part in peace processes, dialogue initiatives and work on de-escalation and ceasefire agreements, both at grassroots level and in formal processes.	MFA
Ensure a good gender balance in Norway's own delegations to peace negotiations and to international meetings where peace and security work is discussed, and promote relevant Norwegian and international candidates for roles in the UN and other international forums for peace and security.	MFA, Defence, Justice
Take a strategic approach to promoting gender issues in negotiations and peace processes, build bridges between civil society and the parties to negotiations, and work systematically to ensure that there are inclusive structures for the implementation of peace agreements.	MFA
In connection with the implementation of peace agreements, facilitate women's participation and seek to ensure that women's rights, needs and priorities are safeguarded, and that any provisions on women's rights in the agreement are implemented in practice.	MFA
Contribute to the protection of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders who are taking part or have taken part in peace processes and peace efforts in which Norway is involved.	MFA, Defence, Justice, Inclusion
Ensure that Norwegian military and civilian personnel have a sound knowledge of the women, peace and security agenda, including how to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence and to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).	MFA, Defence, Justice
Integrate a gender perspective into the planning, implementation and evaluation of education, training, exercises, operations and missions nationally and internationally, when applicable.	MFA, Defence
Play a part in developing the international framework for women, peace and security in international forums, and in implementing UN and NATO policy and operational guidelines relating to women, peace and security.	MFA, Defence, Justice
Play a part in international expertise and capacity building relating to women, peace and security in the security sector.	Defence, Justice
Work towards a good gender balance in the Armed Forces and the police, especially in operational and leadership positions.	Defence, Justice
Integrate measures to identify, prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence into operational planning nationally and internationally, when applicable.	Defence, Justice

Norway's National Action Plan	Ministry
Promote understanding of conflict-related sexual violence through multilateral forums, and advocate international action to prevent, respond to and prosecute conflict-related sexual violence.	MFA, Defence, Justice
Ensure that there are good guidelines and systems in place for preventing, reporting and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the security sector.	Defence, Justice
Have a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the security sector, in line with national and international guidelines and legislation.	Defence, Justice
Include women and integrate a gender perspective into national efforts to prevent and combat violent extremism.	MFA, Defence, Inclusion
Promote the integration of a gender perspective and women's participation in counterterrorism efforts and in the prevention of violent extremism internationally.	MFA, Justice
Build and share knowledge about the links between the women, peace and security and climate, peace and security agendas, and seek to ensure that a gender perspective is an integral part of the basis for making decisions in national and international forums.	MFA, Climate
Seek to ensure coordination of work on the women, peace and security and climate, peace and security agendas, and that they are dealt with as two interconnected and cross-cutting issues in Norway's multilateral and international cooperation on peace and security.	MFA, Climate
Work towards greater participation and more direct influence by women and girls on national and international decision-making processes relating to climate and environment.	Climate, MFA
Support the UN's work on climate, peace and security internationally, regionally and at country level, and advocate the integration of a gender perspective and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in this work.	MFA, Climate
Maintain efforts to ensure compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights, and play a part in holding the parties to conflicts accountable.	MFA, Justice
Promote women's participation in planning and implementing the humanitarian response, and help to ensure that women's voices are heard.	MFA
Work to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict, post-conflict situations and during humanitarian crises in peacetime.	MFA, Justice
Continue efforts to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into work on arms control and humanitarian disarmament, for example through follow-up of the political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA).	MFA
Strengthen implementation of the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security nationally, and integrate a gender perspective into national and local crisis and emergency planning.	Justice
Strengthen research and develop knowledge on how war, conflict and serious crises can affect different groups of women and men in different ways, in Norway as well as elsewhere, and how the emergency planning and response system can be made more gender sensitive.	Defence, Justice
Integrate a gender-sensitive approach into all stages of the asylum process, and integrate a gender perspective into the design of measures.	Justice
Ensure that relevant personnel have a high level of expertise on integrating a gender perspective into issues relating to protection and asylum.	Justice

Norway's National Action Plan	Ministry
Seek to ensure that women human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict situations have access to protection mechanisms through the UN and civil society.	MFA
Work to enable women human rights defenders from areas affected by conflict and who receive protection in Norway to continue their engagement.	MFA, Justice, Inclusion, Equality
Promote the participation of women human rights defenders in multilateral forums and international meetings on peace and security, and work towards stronger guidelines for protecting participants and preventing reprisals.	MFA, Equality

The lead ministries for each action point in 2023 are abbreviated as follows in the table above:

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Defence – Ministry of Defence

Justice – Ministry of Justice and Public Security

Equality – Ministry of Culture and Equality

Inclusion – Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion

Climate – Ministry of Climate and Environment





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