

NP  
Core Competencies  
*Summary*

Women, Peace and  
Security

2021



The alarming number of conflicts and associated civilian casualties worldwide emphasizes the need to find a solution through peaceful means. The many methods of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) often prove successful in solving or calming conflicts with the long-term benefit of strengthening communities, infrastructure and ongoing dialogue that are needed to sustain hard-earned peace. Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is a global civilian protection agency, working in some of the world's most troubled zones to promote peace through civilian protection, reduction of community violence, and self-protection, as well as conflict prevention & management and capacity development. Currently, NP has approximately 300 protection officers deployed in our programs in Iraq, Myanmar, the Philippines, and South Sudan and we are collaborating with more than 50 implementing community organizations in 24 countries. To interrupt cycles of violence and facilitate sustainable peace, we work in 5 specific areas, one of which is women, peace and security.

\* \* \*

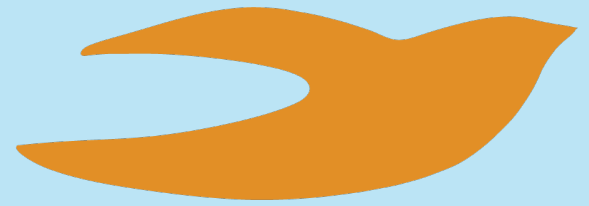
**This summary is based on the full version of the NP core competency program document “Women, Peace and Security” that contains additional examples of interventions, methods, and guidance as the basis of work in this field by NP, partners, and other collaborating bodies.**

### **Head Office**

Rue de Lausanne 82  
1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: +41 (0)22 552 66 10  
[headoffice@nonviolentpeaceforce.org](mailto:headoffice@nonviolentpeaceforce.org)

### **U.S. Office**

P.O. Box 14386  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
Tel: +1 (612) 871-0005  
[info@nonviolentpeaceforce.org](mailto:info@nonviolentpeaceforce.org)



# Women, Peace and Security

**Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** is a mechanism to promote peace by protecting women and girls who are heavily impacted by conflict and to balance power relations. It views conflict through the lens of power relations, gender norms and institutions that foster violence and militarism. It calls on all actors and stakeholders to address the gender inequality that is often at the root of conflict or occurs as part of it.

The WPS framework is modelled on a series of UN Security Council resolutions, based on four pillars: *participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery*. Women must be able to participate in efforts to break cycles of violence and to rebuild, and particularly, be encouraged and empowered to lead such efforts. Peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflict, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts, and in the forging of lasting peace.

Working with women to bring about peace and security also entails working with youth – the girls who are the women of tomorrow – and the men and boys who can be stewards of change. While the WPS framework focuses on women, we recognise that gender is not binary and that different gender identities have their own vulnerabilities and offer unique capabilities in conflict and peace.

## How Women, Peace and Security is implemented in general

There are different ways in which the Women, Peace and Security framework is being implemented:

- **Participation** is increased through gender quotas and eligibility requirements for participation in peace processes, formal arrangements for observer status, and training of women delegates, among other means. Most attention is given to women's representation at high-level peace negotiations, though numbers remain low. More attention is needed to make participation more meaningful and to strengthen the participation of women at the grassroots levels.
- **Protection** is primarily provided through laws and policies, including technical or financial support to human rights defenders and women activists, advocacy on arms control, and gender equality ceasefire provisions. Specific attention is provided to sexual violence. However, there are protection concerns about efforts being misused to override women's rights. NP pays special attention to these concerns.

- **Prevention** argues for the inclusion of gender perspectives in violence prevention, the needs of women in disarmament, measures to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) or challenge discriminatory norms. Strategies include media campaigns, sensitisation programmes about sexual or GBV and alliances of women between different religious groups or political parties.
- **Relief and recovery** aim to ensure that women and girls are given equal access to relief and recovery after conflict. Strategies include humanitarian assistance initiatives that provide victim assistance or material support and gender mainstreaming, data collection and risk analysis.

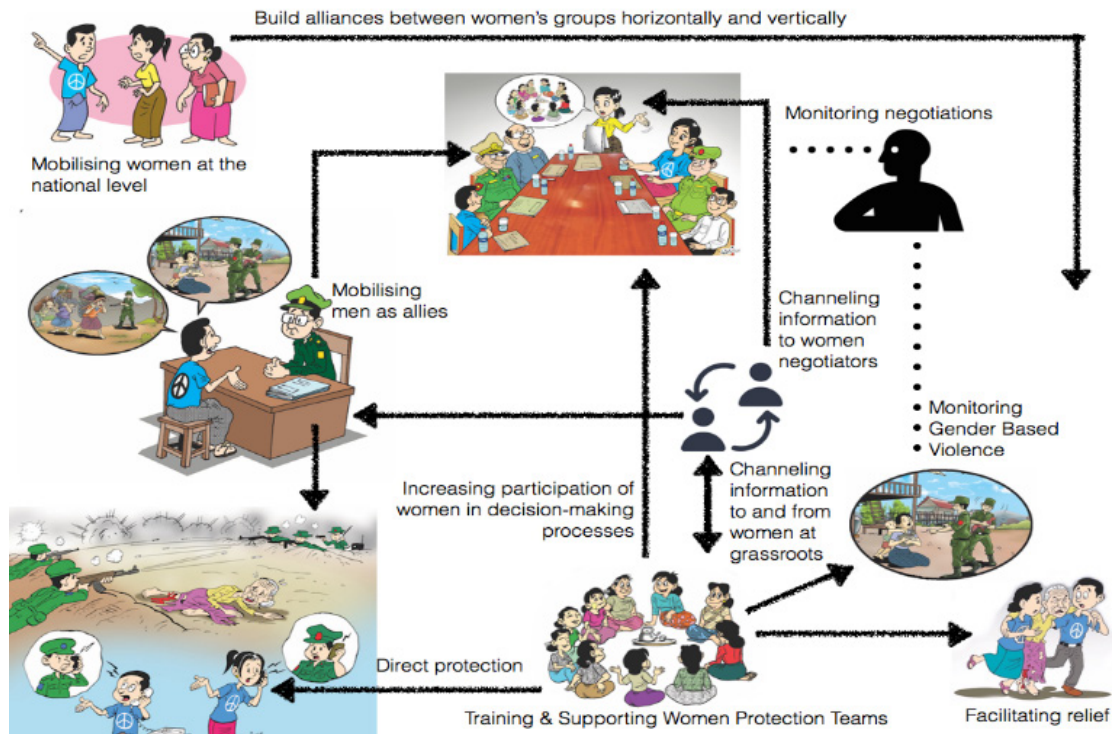


Fig 1: Women, peace and security

## NP's niche in Women, Peace and Security

The niche of Nonviolent Peaceforce in Women, Peace and Security lies with its application of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) and its unique feature of direct physical protection. We combine this with more commonly known WPS strategies such as fostering alliances between women's groups, training emerging women leaders or facilitating assistance regarding sexual violence. However, we deliver projects on all 4 pillars of the WPS agenda.

**Participation of women from civil society in security processes:** Complementing WPS efforts that focus on the participation of women into police, military, or peacekeeping forces, we support women and girls from civil society to become ceasefire monitors or form women protection teams. As UCP relies on relationships rather than weapons or physical strength to protect civilians, it provides an entry point for women to participate in security processes.

**Moving attention to informal areas of participation:** Complementing efforts to increase women's representation at high-level peace negotiations, we support and validate informal peace and security efforts by women in front lines communities and draw the attention of decision makers to these spaces.

**Direct physical protection and self-protection:** We use our physical presence strategically by positioning ourselves in insecure locations for extended periods of time. Where authorities are unwilling or unable to intervene, we may establish a 24-hour protective presence. We also invite women to participate in these direct protection efforts and support them to organise themselves. Thus, we rebalance power in security processes and share it with the most vulnerable groups.

**Strengthening grassroots movements across conflict divisions:** In South Sudan, NP has worked to bring various Women Protection Teams (WPTs) across the country together to form alliances and influence decision making processes at the national level. These WPTs promote collective action and individual agency, which can enhance the participation and decision-making power of women and girls to challenge discriminatory norms and policies.

**Integrating protection and relief efforts:** Together with Women Protection Teams in South Sudan we have initiated patrols in areas where WASH partners discontinued water services, to protect women that were forced to venture into insecure areas to fetch water. We have combined these patrols with awareness raising activities about available humanitarian services. We have also supported aid agencies by mitigating community tensions about relief operations and providing crowd control at food distribution points.

*“It’s not just society that does not favor women, it is also the women themselves who think they only deserve to be the supporters, but not the main characters... training can make women realize that they are not inferior to men and they are equally capable to be monitors.”*

(Peace observer in Shan State, Myanmar)

## NP’s work in the field

Activities of our teams in the field may include the following:

### *Participation*

- **Organising community security meetings between UN peacekeepers, police and women** from communities in high-risk areas of South Sudan, in which the women directly engaged about their security and the security of vulnerable individuals and groups in their communities.
- **Supported the implementation of the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325** in Georgia and trained civil society groups from around the South Caucasus region (as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan) on how they can support the implementation of 1325 in their own areas.



- **Enhancing the capacity of women's organisations in ceasefire monitoring** in the Philippines, Myanmar, and Thailand, and supported them in establishing community-based networks that support formal peace and ceasefire processes. Of the 740 local ceasefire monitors we trained and coached across Myanmar between 2014 and 2018, 34% were women.

### *Protection*

- **Community patrols and protective presence** in areas or during periods when the risk of GBV is high in order to prevent rape, sexual abuse and harassment, among other possible mistreatment. In many cases patrolling happens when trends in incidents of violence occur between two or more locations, and where the visibility of teams is difficult to maintain e.g., forested areas, markets and transit points.
- **Protective accompaniment** is most often provided to prevent sexual violence, for example of displaced women in South Sudan that were regularly raped at check points, water points or in forests, when they collected fruits or firewood.
- **Safety walks and participatory security mapping** exercises, which bring a women-led, shared perspective of security in communities.



*Third National South Sudan's Women's Conference, NPSS 2020*

## *Prevention*

- **WPTs or Youth Protection Teams engaging in GBV prevention** and supporting women's participation in peace processes. These are usually community-based, volunteer led groups which promote local solutions to local problems.
- **Supporting state-level women's rights networks** that provide human rights advocacy and promote best practices about GBV prevention.
- **Capacity building of law enforcement, judiciary on GBV** to make institutions responsible for managing and preventing GBV in the community more responsive to the needs of survivors

## *Relief and recovery*

- **Accompaniment of survivors of gender-based violence** to access post-incident support services, including medical facilities, police stations, local NGOs, courts, or community leaders.
- **Facilitating access to justice** for women, sexual and gender minorities, or survivors of GBV
- **Supporting IDP women leaders to become intermediaries** between communities and humanitarian service providers.

*"We learned how peace could be made. Now, if there are any issues in our community or a community nearby, we know how to respond. Everyone, the community members and the soldiers, respect us when we are in the Women's Protection Team uniforms, because they know that we were trained to bring peace. Through our training with Nonviolent Peaceforce, we learn how the cycle of violence starts, and how it must be stopped before it builds."*

(Grace, participant at the Annual Women's Conference in South Sudan)