



Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Perspectives for Turkey on the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325ⁱ

The Women in Foreign Policy (WFP14-DPK) Initiative of Turkey was established in 2014 to promote women's voices on security issues; and to encourage female participation in foreign policy decision-making at all levels, with bottom-up and non-hierarchical approaches. WFP14 aimed to promote the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Turkey. It was the 14th year of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, setting the WPS agenda as a first resolution to address the issue of women's inclusion in peace and security matters.

The Resolution 1325 that was adopted in the Security Council in October 2000, along with the subsequent nine Resolutions adopted since then, have established the global WPS agenda. With the WPS Resolutions, the international community recognised that violent conflicts and emergencies are not gender-neutral. Rather women and girls are disproportionately affected and shoulder the heaviest burden due to the pre-existing and newly emerging inequalities and discriminations during conflicts and humanitarian emergencies. These landmark Resolutions also acknowledged that women are not just victims but also indispensable actors having crucial roles and contributions in peacebuilding processes.

The four pillars of UNSCR 1325, which are strengthened by subsequent resolutions, are prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery.

The prevention pillar aims to prevent relapse into conflict and all forms of structural and physical violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence. The protection pillar aims to protect and promote the human rights of women and girls and ensure their physical safety, health and economic security. The participation pillar promotes

increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional and international institutions; in mechanisms that prevent, manage and resolve conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police and civilians; as UN Special Representatives and in UN missions. The relief and recovery pillar aims to ensure that women's and girls' specific needs and priorities are addressed during the relief and recovery phase after conflict.

By 2021, 89 countries have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to operationalise and implement UNSCR 1325. Major international organisations such as the UN, EU, OSCE, NATO, African Union and leading international non-governmental organisations and agencies have embraced and integrated the normative framework and pillars of the WPS agenda into their policies. The WPS agenda is also integrated into the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set in 2015, and especially endorsed by SDG 5 on gender equality.

In 2020, on the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, a group of women from the WFP¹⁴ embarked on a project that is motivated not only by intellectual curiosity to learn 'where women are' in certain Turkish foreign policy areas but also by a will to enlarge the perspective to look at Turkish foreign policy, through linking foreign policy with the global WPS agenda. Four thematic reports written for the project supported by the Centre for Applied Turkish Studies (CATS) reveal where women are in (1) the diplomatic corps, (2) the army and international peace operations, (3) refugee and asylum policies and (4) international humanitarian aid. Each of these reports speaks to multiple pillars of Resolution 1325. For instance, women's inclusion in the army and international peacekeeping operations is not only relevant for the participation pillar, but also for the relief and recovery pillar since gender-sensitive personnel would ensure that women's and girls' specific needs and priorities are addressed during the relief and recovery phase after conflict.

The reports include specific, applicable recommendations to include more women and gender-sensitive policies in these prioritised areas of Turkish foreign policy. These recommendations include, among others, to increase women's leadership in decision-making positions in the diplomatic corps, humanitarian aid agencies, refugee and asylum policies, and Turkey's peacekeeping missions. Turkey's promotion of a WPS agenda in these areas would have a positive effect on its international standing, aligning its policies with

international organisations such as the UN, NATO, OSCE and the EU institutions that all have specific policies on gender mainstreaming and UNSCR 1325.

ⁱ This paper was funded by the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin as part of a joint endeavour of CATS and Women in Foreign Policy (WFP14) on “Twenty Years of UNSCR 1325 ‘Women, Peace and Security’: Perspectives from Turkey“. CATS is funded by Stiftung Mercator and the Federal Foreign Office.

The Project consisted of two online workshops and four thematic reports. We are grateful to all those who attended the workshops, replied to our questions candidly and talked and thought with us during the process.

We would also like to thank Aslı Hürcan Aksoy from the CATS at SWP for her valuable support.