

Report of the UN Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security 2026

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

GLOBAL CONTEXT IN 2025



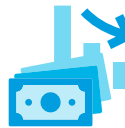
Double the amount of active **armed conflicts** compared to 15 years ago - and the highest number since 1945



Global military expenditure reached almost **USD 2.9 trillion**, more than double compared to 2000 levels



Nearly **19% of women and girls** in the world lived **within 50km of armed conflict** - this is more than 756 million women and girls in total



Official development aid (ODA) **dropped by 23%** compared to 2024** - the largest annual drop in the history of ODA

→ The highest number and share since the 1990s



1 in 4 civilian deaths was a **woman or a girl***



A **woman giving birth** in a conflict-affected country was **5 times more likely to die of maternal causes** than a woman giving birth in a stable country



UN-verified conflict-related sexual violence cases more than **doubled** compared to 2024 and have almost quadrupled since 2022



Almost 40% of the estimated **426 million women and girls** living in extreme poverty lived in conflict-affected countries



Girls in crisis-affected settings are **2.5 times more likely to be out of school** than girls in non-crisis settings



In conflict-affected countries, women and girls devoted **5 times as many hours to unpaid domestic and care work** as men and boys

→ Substantially higher than the global average of 2.5 times more

*In 2025, the United Nations (UN) documented more than 37,000 civilians killed across 20 armed conflicts; one in four deaths was a woman or a girl.
 ** Based on preliminary data for 2025, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and associates provided USD 174.3 billion ODA in 2025, 23 per cent less than in 2024.

POWER REMAINS IN THE HANDS OF MEN



For every country led by a woman, **six others** are led by men



Legislated quotas in conflict-affected countries make a difference

- Women hold **25% of parliamentary seats** where quotas exist, compared with just 11% in countries where they do not
- Women hold **22% of local seats** in countries with quotas, compared with just 6% in countries without quotas



In conflict-affected countries,

- only **20% of cabinet ministers** are **women**, below the 22% global average
- only **20% of parliamentary seats** are held by **women**, lower than the 27% global average
- a mere **11% of seats in local deliberative bodies** are held by **women**, less than a third of the 36% global average



In conflict affected countries, **men overwhelmingly head ministries** responsible for home affairs (97%), finance (94%), defence (91%), justice (90%), and foreign affairs (85%)

WHILE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE IS ESCALATING



Evidence from recent elections shows that **women candidates experience staggering levels of violence**, both online and in-person



In many countries, **coordinated online smear campaigns, misogynistic harassment, and threats** have been used to intimidate and deter women's participation in public and political life*



Mis- and disinformation campaigns, amplified by artificial intelligence (AI), are being used to foment gender-based violence, delegitimize gender equality, and discredit women leaders



70% of women human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and media workers across the world reported having experienced **online violence** in the course of their work

- 24% reported online violence assisted by AI

* With potentially fatal consequences, as illustrated by the targeted killings of Iftihan Al-Mashhari in Yemen in September 2025, and of Yanar Mohammed in Iraq in March 2026.

COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL PEACE PROCESSES REMAIN UNFULFILLED



Only 5% of negotiators
in peace processes on average were women*, down from 7% in 2024

Four in every five
peace process did not have any women as negotiators*

14% of mediators
in peace processes on average were women*

The space for the United Nations to lead or co-lead peace processes has shrunk from 14 processes 15 years ago to three in 2025

In the three processes led or co-led by the UN in 2025**, women accounted for **22% of the negotiators** on average

→ **This is more than four times the global average**

Only 19% of peace agreements in 2025 included a reference to women, girls, gender, or sexual violence in 2025***

None of the 13 ceasefire agreements named conflict-related sexual violence as a prohibited act***

EVEN AS WOMEN REMAIN EFFECTIVE PEACEMAKERS

For example:



In 2025, women averted or addressed **nearly one million community and individual-level conflicts**, with the support of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)



In the Central African Republic, 35% of the members of the 66 local **peace and reconciliation committees** across the country are women and **community violence has been reduced by 40%** since 2021



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, women mediators secured **commitments from armed groups to end retaliatory violence** against women and children



In Lebanon, women-led organizations (WLOs) **mitigated aid-related conflicts** in collective shelters and **mediated disputes** between displaced and host communities

*These are global averages in 2025 across the reviewed 57 processes with negotiations or negotiation attempts.

** Cyprus, the Geneva International Discussions (GID), and Libya.

*** Based on 53 peace agreements signed in 2025 (excluding local agreements) and accessible through PA-X Peace Agreements Database Version 10.

HISTORIC DECLINE IN FOREIGN AID AS NEEDS AND MILITARY SPENDING KEEP RISING

776 x



Global military expenditure was **776 times** the UN's regular budget in 2025*



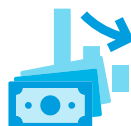
In 2025, the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund saw the **third consecutive year of decline** in both the volume and share of gender-focused funding



42% of UN entities reported **actual or anticipated weakening of their gender architecture** in 2025-2026

Historic decline in foreign aid in 2025

- Forced closure of nearly a third of UNFPA-supported facilities for women and over 250 safe spaces for women and girls
- Nearly two-thirds of women's organizations were forced to cut services for women and girls in remote, conflict-affected, and hard-to-reach communities**
- 45% of women's organizations have less than six months of funding left**



In 2024, bilateral assistance to contexts with high and extreme fragility **declined for the fifth consecutive year**

→ USD 21.7 billion supported gender equality, compared to USD 24.6 billion in 2023

→ Only USD 2.5 billion was dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective

Official development assistance (ODA) **supporting women's rights organizations and movements** in contexts of high and extreme fragility **declined by 22% in 2024*****



ODA for sectors with gender equality **objectives** is expected to decrease further in 2025

→ 35% to 53% decline to aid for population and sexual and reproductive health

→ 17% to 20% decline to funding for programmes aimed at ending violence against women and girls

A further 6.9% drop in the net ODA is projected for 2026 - even before accounting for additional strain due to the crisis in the Middle East

*In 2025, the United Nations regular budget was USD 3.72 billion and the world military expenditure almost USD 2.9 trillion.

** According to UN Women's global survey of 855 local and national women-led and women's rights organizations operating across 52 countries and contexts conducted between April-June 2026.

*** From USD 215.4 million in 2023 to USD 167.9 million in 2024.

GOOD PRACTICES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD DEMONSTRATE THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

For example:



The growing recognition of **gender persecution, reproductive violence, and other gender-based crimes** across recent national and international investigations



Germany has made **women's participation a requirement** for its financial support to **third-party mediation**



The UN Country-Based Pooled Funds' **funding to women-led organizations** grew from **8% in 2023 to 17% in 2025**



117 countries have adopted at least one **national action plan** on women, peace and security*



38% of UN entities provided **direct funding to local women's organizations** in peace and humanitarian contexts in 2025, compared to 25% in 2024



Canada and Ireland **exceeded** the target of **channelling 1% of ODA to women's organizations** in conflict-affected countries



Canada's target is set at 4.8%



This covers more than two billion women and girls



In 2025, the European Union's (EU) Human Rights Defenders Mechanism assisted almost **5,800 women human rights defenders**



In Australia, all new investments of more than three million dollars **are required to include gender equality objectives**



Australia's expenditure on gender equality increased by 13% in the last year



In Somalia, Jubaland **criminalized female genital mutilation** in 2025, following the example set by Galmudug a year earlier



The EU has also **more than tripled** its support for women's rights organizations during the past three years



In Bangsamoro, the government adopted an **executive order** mandating the **integration of WPS into development plans** and the **budgets** of the ministries and agencies**



Countries like Uruguay and Brazil **appointed women as guarantors of peace talks** in Colombia between the government and different armed groups



Over 40 peace actors have adopted the UN Secretary-General's Common Pledge for Women's Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes

* As of May 2026. The cumulative impact of these plans has helped increase the percentage of women in the security and justice sectors, the appointment of women to key decision-making positions, and the adoption of new laws and policies favorable to gender equality and women's rights. National action plans can also help generate spaces of interaction and dialogue between women's organizations, peacebuilders, and government entities responsible for peace and security issues.

** The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines.

THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

THE SECURITY COUNCIL

- Ensure that its decisions on every country situation clearly signal that women's participation is imperative, that the protection of civilians, including women and girls, is a central tenet of international humanitarian law, and those who kill, rape, or persecute them shall be sanctioned and held accountable.

THE UNITED NATIONS

- Every peace process led or co-led by the UN should meet the minimum one-third target for women's participation, with parity as the goal.
- All new multi-partner trust funds should establish a 40% target for gender equality programming and coordination.
- Every UN Country Team should meet the minimum financing targets on gender equality, establish a coordination mechanism for the protection of women human rights defenders, and promote temporary special measures for women's participation in politics, national dialogues, and processes related to peace, security, and justice.

MEMBER STATES

- Every member of the OECD should earmark at least 15% of official development assistance to conflict-affected countries for gender equality as a principal objective, including at least 1% for women's organizations working in these settings.
- Every country should hold accountable every perpetrator of sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, gender persecution, and reproductive violence.
- Every country should consistently demonstrate a zero-tolerance approach to any form of attack, retaliation, or reprisals against women in all their diversity for their political participation, human rights, peace-building, development and humanitarian work, or cooperation with the UN.
- Signatories to the UN Secretary-General's Common Pledge on Women's Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes should apply the one-third minimum target for the peace negotiations they are involved in.

The United Nations Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security was prepared pursuant to the presidential statement dated 26 October 2010 (S/PRST/2010/22), Security Council resolution 2122 (2013), and resolution 2493 (2019), and was issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2026/758. This infographic was produced by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).