



# LEVERAGING UNSCR 1325 NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR LOCAL CHANGE

Civil Society Opportunities in the MENA Region

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
**PEACE & FREEDOM**



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Cover photo: The girl with the balloons is one of the most famous pieces of the artist Banksy. It is often followed by the words:

"There is always hope."

Photographer: Kthtnr/ Flickr



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# Summary

How can civil society take action to promote women's participation, protection, and rights in conflict affected situations? Building on PeaceWomen's National Action Plan (NAP) Development Toolkit, this research brief provides background and good practice options or modalities that civil society can draw in in the first phase of planning their NAP advocacy planning. The brief will outline different modalities of engagement, their challenges and opportunities, and suggest how women peace activists in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region can build on existing lessons learned in leveraging the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda for impact. Recommendations will draw on experiences from eight countries: Nepal, Philippines, Australia, Finland, Sierra Leone, Ireland, Estonia, and Nigeria.



# Tools for Change: UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, and 2122) is an international policy framework developed by the Security Council beginning in 2000 which recognizes the importance of strengthening women's participation, protection, and rights in conflict prevention through post-conflict reconstruction processes. As of August 2014, forty-six states have taken it upon themselves to implement the WPS Agenda by creating National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325. NAPs articulate specific ways in which a state will address the WPS pillars - Participation, Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery. NAPs can provide tools to implement the global WPS commitments through concrete national policies and programmes by coordinating work within governments, mobilizing and engaging governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders in a variety of policy areas, promoting accountability and transparency by creating regulations for regular and transparent monitoring and evaluation, and strengthening efforts to empower women and promote peace and security for all.

## MENA Context

Despite almost 15 years of commitments on the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, there are still major gaps in moving from commitments to accomplishments. In the MENA region, WILPF partners report few actions to include women's perspectives on peace-making, even in the presence of a UN peacekeeping operation such as UNSMIL in Libya. Nor are women seen as serious participants in peace-making, mediation, mitigation, conflict resolution and other diplomatic efforts to end ongoing crisis, for example in Syria. Instead, WILPF partners report that women activists are routinely excluded from, or overlooked in conversations on security sector reform (SSR), demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), small arms control, military budgeting and other security-related issues.



In early 2014, Iraq became the first country in the MENA region to create a National Action Plan. Led by the Iraqi 1325 NAP Initiative, a group of civil society organizations of which WILPF was a part of, the Iraqi NAP included segments of the Iraqi Government and Kurdistan Government. Civil society's imprint can be seen in Iraq's NAP by the comprehensive analysis of the status of women in Iraq's society politically, socially, and legally. Although the NAP falls short of adequately including civil society in the implementation process, Iraq's NAP is a good example for MENA countries such as Jordan, which is set to release a NAP this year or next. As with every area of the world, the MENA region has a particular set of challenges it must face. While countries such as Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia may have greater success at formal engagements with government, Yemen and Egypt may have a more difficult time given the current political situation and corruption. In addition, Syria, Libya, and Iraq are in the midst of conflict and have their own challenges to overcome.

The League of Arab States, UN Women, and Arab Women Organization published a report in 2012 entitled "Regional Strategy Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security" outlined necessary preparatory steps for a National Action Plan in the MENA region. These five steps can help guide countries in the MENA region to successfully develop a NAP:

1. Building Political Commitment and Raising Awareness. Build a political will and creating awareness campaigns through media channels, publications, workshops, discussion groups and other effective methods and initiatives that increase awareness and support for women, peace and security issues.
2. Organizational Preparedness. Build a network among the various organizations at official and civil levels.
3. Describing the Situation of Women. Identify the major challenges and difficulties faced by women and those that might hinder the implementation of programs and projects.
4. Evaluation. Assess the status of women in the state concerned and in all areas. Review the legal regional and international instruments, and identify the priority areas and urgent initiatives.
5. Planning Meetings or Workshops. Separate consultation workshops can be held for each department or sector to put their respective priorities that are then incorporated into the plan of action at the national scale of that state concerned.

## Policy Imperative

National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325 are a tool which civil society can leverage to strengthen global commitments into local impact. Japan, for example, has changed its traditional approach to policy development to strengthen ongoing collaborations with civil society as a result of developing its first 1325 NAP. In the Philippines, civil society successfully leveraged the NAP to support a women-led Filipino negotiating team that established a truce with Islamist rebels. In Sierra Leone, localization programs strengthened accountability mechanisms for NAP implementation by creating the Comprehensive Local Government Performance Assessment. These are a few ways in which civil society has used NAPs as a tool to achieve WPS goals.

To leverage NAPs for change, civil society should engage in an ongoing fashion, either formally or informally as possible, from NAP development through implementation processes. They should use the NAP as a tool to leverage change in how government and civil society work together for peace and gender justice, and to strengthen women's participation, protection and rights in a wide range of areas from women's engagement at peace processes to militarized institutions to development aid.

Formal participation, such as through an intergovernmental committee, funded implementation project, or technical monitoring task force, increases the opportunity for civil society recommendations to have an impact. However, informal participation, such as through consultations, grassroots mobilization, and shadow reports and report cards, increase the opportunity for dedicated civil society space and independent voices. To balance these concerns, it is useful to ensure a dedicated civil society space while also coordinating with supportive governmental stakeholders to ensure civil society voices have meaningful results.

Civil society can also leverage coalitions for change. Building diverse coalitions, including across regions (local, national, or international), themes (women's, peace, youth, indigenous, or ethnic), and sectors (advocacy, academic, policy) can strengthen support and buy-in. While movement building is important, ensuring dedicated feminist space is also critical to ensuring strong women's rights perspective and outcomes in policy and practice.

Opportunities for civil society engagement are outlined below, with particular cases for illustration following.

## Civil Society Matrix of Examples

	NAP Development	NAP Implementation	NAP M&E
Examples of formalized civil society leadership roles in NAP processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Government directed Inter-Departmental Working Group (Australia) or Follow-Up Group (Finland)</li> <li>❖ Joint Govt-CSO Partnership (Ireland) or CSO Network consultations (Philippines)</li> <li>❖ Civil society directed Steering Committees (Nepal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Government funded CSO activities (Philippines)</li> <li>❖ Govt-CSO coordinated Localization programs (Sierra Leone)</li> <li>❖ Civil Society Consultative Groups (Ireland)</li> <li>❖ Specific civil society NAP activities (Nepal, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Estonia)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Joint Govt-CSO Technical Monitoring Task Force (Nigeria)</li> <li>❖ Independent consultant report (Ireland)</li> </ul>
Examples of informal civil society input to NAP processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Government-led consultations with civil society participation (Australia)</li> <li>❖ Working Groups that provide input upon government request (Estonia)</li> <li>❖ Civil society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Facilitate a government Peace and Security Fund to implement trainings and empowerment programs (Nigeria)</li> <li>❖ Grassroots mobilization and activism on 1325 and broader WPS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Shadow Reports and Report cards (Australia)</li> <li>❖ 1325 Action Group for strategizing and unifying civil society (Nepal)</li> </ul>





	led outreach, reports, events, advocacy (Estonia, Australia, Philippines)	(Nigeria, Sierra Leone) ❖ Civil society leveraging the NAP to influence related policy processes (Philippines)	
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## Key Take-Aways

1. Civil society can be a key partner in NAP development by:
  - a. providing civil society input on steering and other committees
  - b. organizing with other networks and groups around key messaging and policy recommendations to promote broad civil society input
2. Civil society can be a key implementing partner by:
  - a. providing policy recommendations on how to effectively carry out comprehensive strategies
  - b. mobilizing support and generating buy-in for stronger implementation across a range of constituencies (e.g., international, national, local, and grassroots organizations; women's groups, peace groups, indigenous or youth movements, or other)
  - c. building local capacity for implementation by conducting localization programs and initiatives including trainings, especially if provided government funding
  - d. contributing to fundraising campaigns to support NAP initiatives
3. Civil society can lead independent monitoring and evaluation for greater accountability on commitments by:
  - a. engaging in independent and well researched data-gathering during the monitoring and implementation process
  - b. conducting critical analysis and reporting to push governments to overcome shortfalls and rethink strategies and national priorities more holistically and from a gender and militarism perspective



# Case Overview

This research brief provides eight good practice examples where states have to some degree integrated civil society engagement in NAPs processes. The eight countries analyzed are: Nepal, Philippines, Australia, Finland, Sierra Leone, Ireland, Estonia, and Nigeria. For each, the brief analyzes three main issues: 1) the extent to which civil society is included in the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages of the NAP, 2) evidence of CSOs impact, and 3) gaps to be improved either in the future or by other countries.

## Country Exemplars in NAP Development

While many NAPs have multiple positive attributes, we found the Nepal, Philippines, and Finland NAPs are particularly exemplary in institutionalizing civil society engagement in a formal way during NAP development.

### Nepal

#### Civil Society Engagement

During the NAP development process, Nepal went to great lengths to incorporate civil society in its High Level Steering Committee and District Level Committees. Uniquely, their NAP includes pictures from various direct district consultations - from areas such as Nepalgunj in the South to Panchthar District in the East. In total, there were 52 district level consultations, 10 regional consultations, and special consultations with women and girls directly affected by conflict. The outcome of these consultations were also extremely rich: 3000 participants attended and produced over 1500 action points for the NAP.<sup>1</sup>

Implementation similarly incorporated civil society effectively. Nepal's NAP designates formal roles to many CSOs: The Women's Welfare Society, Institute of Human Rights

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<sup>1</sup> Miller, Pournik, & Swaine, 2014.

Communication Nepal, Shanti Malika, Beyond Beijing Committee, Women's Peace Group, Women Security Pressure Group Member, Women's Network for Peace, Power, Democracy and the Constituent Assembly, Rural Women's Development and Unity Centre, Saathi, Women for Human Rights, Single Women's Group, and the Nepal Society Development Centre. They will be responsible for local implementation for specific actions outlined in the NAP's matrix that have "civil society" as having a supportive role.

The monitoring and evaluation process, as with the entire NAP, is coordinated by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, with supportive roles given to other ministries and CSOs. For example, Saathi, a women-led NGO in Nepal, published a monitoring report with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) in 2011 that highlighted progress and challenges in the implementation of Nepal's NAP and urged continued action.

## Impact of Civil Society

- Nepal's NAP is for the period 2011 to 2016, and therefore no comprehensive review of its impact can be assessed at this time.
- Participation and access to justice and repatriation were actions points put into the NAP.
- Women's rights previously not addressed were discussed during local consultations.

## Points to Take Away

- Include civil society in formal leadership positions within working groups, consultations, and steering committees.
- Conduct numerous direct consultations with CSOs, women and girls, and municipalities.
- Give roles to specific civil society groups to implement local programs and initiatives.
- Incorporate civil society into monitoring and evaluation for increased accountability.

# Philippines

## Civil Society Engagement

The Philippines was the first country in Asia to launch a NAP, and its inclusion of civil society has been regarded as a shining example for others to follow suit. In the development of Philippine's NAP, Filipino civil society formed Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE ACT 1325) made up of a national network of women's organizations, headed by the Sulong Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the Center for Peace Education. WE ACT 1325 aided the government throughout the NAP process for more effective implementation and government accountability for SCR 1325.

Within the Philippine's NAP itself, particular CSOs are not given a role. However, it does list CSOs as "key actors" for specific actions and mentions the critical importance of civil society and non-government organization (NGO) advocacy, campaigns, programs, and projects to the fulfillment of the NAP's objectives. In addition, the Steering Committee pledged to partner with civil society and disbursed funds to particular CSOs to support with implementation. Uniquely, indigenous groups have also been included to implement various provisions of the NAP.

Civil society is also a key actor in the monitoring and evaluation process, especially to help with data and fact gathering operations that the government alone may not be able to do effectively. WE ACT 1325 and GNWP teamed up to publish a shadow report in 2011, one year after the NAP's release, as designated in the NAP itself.

## Impact of Civil Society

- CSOs highlighted the need for women's participation in peace processes.
- From 2010 to 2013, the conflict in Mindanao has been eased by the appointment of Teresita Quintos Deles, lead negotiator for the Filipino government. With the help of a Filipino woman professor, they were able to get Islamist rebels to negotiate and ease tensions between both sides. This accomplishment fits with the NAP's participation pillar.



## Points to Take Away

- Coordinate a network of CSOs such as WE ACT 1325, and build a joint-partnership with government to aid in a comprehensive drafting and implementation of a 1325 action plan.
- Have civil society as “Key Actors” for specific roles in the implementation process.
- Partner the Steering Committee with civil society for continued input.
- Support civil society with funding for successful implementation.
- Include indigenous or other related groups or movements in NAP advocacy and civil society cooperation for enhanced support and buy-in.
- Civil society can be a great resource for data and fact gathering during the monitoring and implementation process.

## Finland

### Civil Society Engagement

Civil society had a formal role during the development of Finland's NAP. CSOs were able to participate in the Follow-Up Group and the Inter-departmental 1325 Steering Committee. This committee had civil society representation through the 1325 Network that was set up in 2006 to lobby for Women, Peace and Security agenda issues. In addition, the steering committee sent out mass appeals for submissions and input for a comprehensive drafting of the Finnish action plan. This allowed civil society to push for critical Women, Peace and Security issues to be included in the final NAP.

During implementation, the 1325 Network, which included UN Women, Amnesty International, Finnish League for Human Rights, Feminist Association Union, Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network, and many more, assisted by disseminating funds, research and publications, and conducting seminars and trainings on the WPS agenda. However, the NAP did fall short of assigning specific key actions for CSOs to carry out.

The 1325 Network remains active in the monitoring and evaluation process of Finland's NAP. In 2010, the network reviewed Finland's first NAP, outlining successes and concerns. Among the successes was Finland's promotion of NAPs internationally and

including gender in crisis management operations, but points of concern included lack of a budget, financing, and indicators. In its revised NAP, civil society is involved in the Follow-Up Group and produces yearly reports to Parliament.

## Impact of Civil Society

- Civil society was not able to push through a budget into the NAP, but they were able to get gender and crisis management training, funding for Women, Peace and Security research and evidence-based practice, and support for women's organisations in conflict affected areas.
- The 1325 Network led a final review of Finland's first NAP that highlighted achievements and concerns to be addressed in Finland's revised action plan.

## Points to Take Away

- Civil society can have a formal role during NAP development, organize into networks and groups, have representation on the steering committee, encourage broad civil society involvement in drafting submissions, and push popular demands.
- Civil society representation can consist of international, national, local, and grassroots organizations working together.
- A network of CSOs can take the lead in monitoring and evaluation, and recommending ways to revise an action plan to cover areas not previously addressed adequately.



# Country Exemplars in NAP Implementation

For most country NAPs, civil society engagement during implementation is typically the most difficult. Sierra Leone, Ireland, and Estonia provide good practice illustrations of how civil society can engage in both formal and informal ways to strengthen implementation and impact.

## Sierra Leone

### Civil Society Engagement

Through pre-draft lobbying, advocacy, and representation on the Government-Civil Society Task Force, civil society played an extensive role during the development of Sierra Leone's NAP. There was diverse civil society representation, covering areas such as peace, labor, and women's organizations.

Sierra Leone's implementation incorporates a government-civil society partnership as well. The task force is specifically mentioned in Pillar IV of the NAP that discusses participation and representation of women, but in addition civil society will have an independent role from government actively engaged in advocacy and oversight. Women's groups are also given specific actions in the NAP, including areas such as prevention of conflict, legal protection, and policies to prevent violence against women.

Civil society does not have a formal role in the monitoring and evaluation process, but women's organizations have partnered with GNWP to publish a review of the action plan. In April 2014, a training was conducted in the city of Bo that convened local leaders and CSOs to establish guidelines for integration of the NAP into development planning processes.

## Impact of Civil Society

- After a bloody conflict, Sierra Leone's civil society has been widely hailed as producing stability, peace, reconciliation, and electing the nation's first woman president. There is currently no in depth report on the achievements of Sierra Leone's NAP, which expires in 2014.
- Through localization programs, the government is committed to ensure the inclusion of WPS as an indicator in the Comprehensive Local Government Performance Assessment System, incentivizing local implementation of the NAP.

## Points to Take Away

- Civil society can play both a formal and non-formal role by being represented on the task force and being committed to grassroots lobbying and advocacy.
- Diverse segments of civil society can work together for a common goal and take the lead in the integration of the NAP on the local level.
- Civil society and government can work as partners in carrying out specific actions in the action plan, including particular roles for women's groups.
- Pre-evaluations by civil society can put the NAP on the right track for implementation.

## Ireland

### Civil Society Engagement

Civil society was instrumental in the development of the Irish NAP. Through the creation of a Consultative Group on Women, Peace and Security, a broad range of CSOs and women's organizations, including those affected by conflict, were able to have a voice in the drafting of Ireland's first NAP. Uniquely, an Irish Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence (government-civil society partnership) organized a conference that included activists and CSOs from Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, and Liberia that greatly informed and shaped initiatives outlined in Ireland's action plan.



Many CSOs were mentioned in Ireland's NAP as part of the consultative group, which also plays a role in the implementation process. Civil society is given tasks such as helping to create codes of conduct on how Ireland operates on gender issues abroad, and provide gender balance in Irish humanitarian operations, for example. This ongoing role formalizes civil society and creates lively debate and participation from broad segments of Ireland's population.

Lastly, Ireland also specifies civil society roles through inclusion in the Monitoring Group, which meets twice a year and addresses any concerns regarding the NAP's progress. Specifically mentioned for inclusion in this group are women affected by conflict, which is a unique and important characteristic of the Irish action plan. Led by an independent consultant, at the end of three years, there will be a final report on the Irish NAP.

## Impact of Civil Society

- Effectively advocated and included the participation of women affected by conflict.
- Successfully pushed for the drafting of a second Irish NAP.
- Guided Irish policy to good practices on Women, Peace and Security.

## Points to Take Away

- Civil society can include not only national groups, but international perspectives, especially on how women have been affected by conflict. This is especially important for developed countries that have more of an international focus.
- Civil society can actively participate in policy during the implementation process by offering government officials and policy-makers recommendations on how to effectively carry out comprehensive strategies.
- Civil society can lead monitoring and evaluation independent of government, and report its findings publicly to government bodies to provide accountability and critical analysis on progress.

# Estonia

## Civil Society Engagement

Civil society actively participated in development of Estonia's NAP through an inter-departmental working group formed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through the working group, CSOs were engaged in an analysis of Estonia's activities related to Women, Peace and Security and how best to go about implementing SCR 1325.

The working group also aided in the implementation of Estonia's NAP. Within the context of bilateral development cooperation, the action plan specifically mentions the country's dependence on the role of CSOs to actively deal with women and Estonia's development projects in order for success. In addition, civil society is incorporated into most activities at the national level on development, increasing the number of experts on gender, humanitarian assistance, and initiatives for women in post-conflict situations.

The inter-departmental working group will also meet once a year to monitor and evaluate Estonia's implementation. Civil society will work with government to adapt to changing international contexts and including activities at the European Union, NATO, and United Nations.

## Impact of Civil Society

- Civil society has been critical of Estonia's implementation of development aid cuts and bilateral development cooperation which, in one report, said was motivated more by "daily politics than strategy."<sup>2</sup> Civil society pressure could help shift Estonia's priorities.

## Points to Take Away

- Civil society can provide in-depth analysis that provides valuable insight to government policy, priorities, actions, and strategy on Women, Peace and Security.

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<sup>2</sup> Estonia's Development Cooperation from a Civil Society Perspective

- A government-civil society partnership can operate in development operations abroad, and be a key actor in increasing experts and initiatives in post-conflict areas.
- Critical analysis by civil society is useful to put pressure on government to overcome shortfalls and rethink strategies and national priorities when it comes to development.

## Country Exemplars in NAP Monitoring and Evaluation

Most NAPs include civil society in the monitoring and evaluation process. The Australian and Nigerian NAPs stand out for their inclusion of civil society in leadership roles during the monitoring process.

### Australia

#### Civil Society Engagement

Throughout the development process, the Australian government consulted and provided funding for civil society led consultations and the development of a discussion paper. In the lead up to the discussion paper for the Australian NAP, about 90 grassroots and national organisations participated in consultations that led to the draft of the NAP. Following the NAP's drafting, the Australian Government invited CSOs to the national capital to provide written submissions and a roundtable discussions to finalize the action plan.

During the implementation phase of its NAP, Australia committed itself to collaborate with NGOs in order to achieve its goals and objectives outlined in the NAP. The action plan also commits Australia to support civil society to improve equality and women's participation, but falls short of assigning specific actions to CSOs.

The monitoring and evaluation process integrates civil society back into the NAP by inviting organisations to meet with the Government's Inter-Departmental Working Group that is responsible for discussing women, peace and security issues each year. Moreover, the Steering Committee includes organisations such as WILPF and UN Women, and a Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security was formed to support implementation of the NAP and come out with annual report cards on Australia's progress. Six of these reports will make up the full shadow report on Australia's National Action Plan implementation by the end of 2018.

## Impact of Civil Society

- In 2013, Australian civil society published their first report card on the first-year progress of Australia's NAP. The report holds the Australian government accountable to achieving its strategies, and shows "some action" on activities outlined in the NAP. One area where there has been "extensive action" is in getting NGO representation into the Women, Peace and Security Inter-departmental Working Group. Civil society has also outlined recommendations for each strategy in the Australia NAP with its report.<sup>3</sup>

## Points to Take Away

- Organize a broad coalition of grassroots and national CSOs to encourage written submissions and consultations for comprehensive drafting of a NAP.
- Civil society can improve equality and encourage women's participation during implementation.
- Monitoring and evaluation can be led by CSOs to keep government accountable.

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<sup>3</sup> Annual Civil-Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. August 2013.

# Nigeria

## Civil Society Engagement

Nigeria's NAP development was led by a Steering Committee that was inclusive and participatory. As part of the committee, CSOs helped organize six consultations that led to the drafting of Nigeria's NAP, and helped motivate the inclusion of women in peace processes internally and, where Nigeria is active, regionally.

Throughout implementation, CSOs and NGOs are listed as "Key Factors" and are even referred to as "foot soldiers" for activities outlined in the NAP. Humanitarianism, promoting a culture of peace, conducting more research, and training women as conciliators in post-conflict situations are among the many activities outlined for civil society to take initiative. In fact, for every action civil society is included as a lead agent, sometimes even emphasising youth CSOs.

Nigerian civil society also has representation on the the Technical Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force, helping provide participatory analysis, review, and needs assessments, as well as facilitating annual fundraising activities to the Peace and Security Fund that will be used for trainings and empowerment projects.

## Impact of Civil Society

- While recent events related to the kidnapping of 300 girls by militant group Boko Haram has setback progress of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Nigeria, it is important to notice that due to an active civil society led by women's groups, a global campaign was initiated to "Bring Back Our Girls" and initiate discussion on militarism, development, and women's rights in Nigeria and the region.
- Despite being referred to as "foot soldiers" in Nigeria's NAP, civil society has been very critical of the Nigerian government's handling of women's issues and inclusion, particularly related to the kidnapping crisis, bringing much attention to the WPS Agenda.

## Points to Take Away

- Nigeria's NAP is unique in its continued emphasis on the integration of civil society into each process and action laid out in the action plan.
- Civil society can assist with fundraising campaigns to support NAP initiatives.
- In order to cultivate women's participation in peace processes, civil society is able to do grassroots advocacy to mobilize local populations and conduct trainings.

## Conclusion

Since its inception in 2000, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 has both been both a symbol of civil society success and call to action. As we can see with these eight examples from around the world, there is no one way of enhancing civil society engagement. Nor is it the case that by including civil society, a country will automatically have better outcomes for Women, Peace and Security. Nigeria and Finland, for example, have too many other differences affecting the successful implementation of an action plan than merely the inclusion of civil society.

What we can say is that the more active civil society is in a NAP, the more likely it will be comprehensive, locally supported, and used as a platform for social change. Civil society should use NAPs through formal and informal channels to leverage change in gender, security, and related areas, build opportunities for shaping governmental policy and action, and mobilize diverse coalitions to support peace and gender justice. Although NAPs are a means to the end of peace and gender justice rather than an end in themselves, they provide one useful tool for leveraging international commitments on Women Peace and Security (WPS) for local change.

# Key Resources

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4. Mikdashi, Maya. Legal Violence Against Women in Lebanon. Kafa, kafa.org.lb. 2010.
5. PeaceWomen of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan Development Toolkit. New York, 2013.



The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations (UN).

Since our establishment in 1915, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means and promoting political, economic and social justice for all.

Our approach is always non-violent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

Our strength lies in our ability to link the international and local levels. We are very proud to be one of the first organisations to gain consultative status (category B) with the United Nations, and the only women's anti-war organisation so recognised.



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