

Committee: Security Council

Delegation: Canada



TOPIC A: MARKING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 (2000)

Twenty-five years after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which set a global precedent as the first international recognition that peace and security cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women and attention to the gendered impacts of war, Canada approaches this anniversary with both conviction and concern.

Canada played a significant role as it was one of the original supporters of Resolution 1325 and has since championed its implementation through multilateral institutions reaching every continent. In the late 1990s, Canada was a leading promoter of the “human security” agenda under Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, advocating for the protection of civilians and gender-sensitive peacekeeping, and clarifying its relationship to national security and human development.¹ Canada also financially supported civil-society organizations, including those that directly influenced the drafting and advocacy around Resolution 1325, and later became one of the first states to begin integrating Women, Peace and Security (hereinafter: WPS) principles, laying the groundwork for its first National Action Plan (hereinafter: NAP), and its later leadership through initiatives, such as the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations. For more than two decades now, the government has chaired the Group of Friends of WPS at UN (all 5 regional groups and the EU included) and was the first country in the world to appoint an ambassador for WPS.²

For Canada, the WPS agenda continues to serve as an essential framework, but one whose credibility now depends on renewed political will, sustained resourcing, and a collective determination to match its ambition with real-world impact. As gender equality is the foundation for a more peaceful world and the absence of it has a negative effect on both domestic and international security, Canada is directly affected by how effectively the WPS agenda is implemented internationally.³ Canada’s third National Action Plan on WPS, *Foundations for Peace* (2023-2029), confirms that WPS is a long-term government priority and a lens that shapes how Canada engages in diplomacy, defence, development, and humanitarian action. The NAP brings federal partners together to work strategically on six focus areas: 1. building and sustaining peace (by providing women and gender diverse peacebuilders, organizations and feminist movements the support they need to carry out their work), 2. security, justice and accountability (particularly for women, girls and gender-

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. (1999, April). *Human security: Safety for people in a changing world*. Government of Canada. <https://www.summit-americas.org/canada/humansecurity-english.htm>

² Global Affairs Canada. (2023). *Foundations for Peace: Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2023-2029*. Government of Canada. <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/assets/pdfs/women-peace-security-femmes-paix-securite/2023-2029-foundation-peace-fondation-paix-en.pdf>

³ Department of National Defence. (2025, October 8). *The Defence Team’s support for the Women, Peace and Security agenda*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/women-peace-security-in-defence/women-peace-security-defence-team-support.html>

diverse people, in Canada and abroad), 3. crisis response (with vision that peace and security crisis are responsive to the needs of women, girls and gender-diverse people), 4. sexual and gender-based violence (with a focus on reducing such violence in conflict, post-conflict, online and humanitarian contexts, while ensuring perpetrators, including actors working in peace, humanitarian, international development and security sectors, are held accountable), 5. leadership and capabilities (strengthening the ability of government institutions and partners to fully implement the NAP, and positioning Canada as a recognized leader and trusted partner in advancing the WPS agenda), and 6. inclusion (ensuring that the WPS agenda reflects a diversity of needs and experiences, particularly those under-represented, marginalized and underserved communities, and meaningfully integrating diverse, intersectional and anti-racist perspectives throughout all of the government's efforts on WPS).⁴ Taken together, Canada's NAP clearly recognizes that peace and security abroad cannot be separated from the pursuit of justice and stability at home.

In a moment defined by rising authoritarianism, the highest number of armed conflicts recorded since 1946 (over 185 in 2024), democratic challenges, and a growing backlash against gender equality, reflected for example, in an 87 per cent increase in conflict-related sexual violence between 2022 and 2024 and severe levels of gender-based violence in 22 of 25 humanitarian crisis settings⁵, Canada views this anniversary not as a time for celebration but as a moment to reflect on whether WPS commitments are keeping pace with contemporary realities, and as a test of the international community's willingness to honour them with tangible action.⁶ A quarter century after the adoption of Resolution 1325, Canada's priority is to reaffirm the integrity of the WPS agenda and strengthen accountability for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, a concern underscored by the Secretary-General's latest report documenting widespread impunity in multiple conflict settings.⁷ While committed to constructive cooperation with all delegations, Canada will oppose any efforts to weaken established WPS protections, emphasizing that sustainable peace depends on safeguarding women's rights and meaningful participation. Canada's recent statement on behalf of 63 Member States reaffirmed this commitment, warning that rising gender-based violence and the exclusion of women from peace and political processes undermine global security.⁸ For this reason Canada continues to prioritise accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, gender-responsive mandates, and reliable support for women's rights organizations – principles that will guide its objectives for a Security Council outcome focused on strengthening, rather than renegotiating, agreed WPS norms.

⁴ Global Affairs Canada. (2023). *Foundations for Peace: Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2023-2029*. Government of Canada. <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/assets/pdfs/women-peace-security-femmes-paix-securite/2023-2029-foundation-peace-fondation-paix-en.pdf>

⁵ UN Women. (2025, October 20). *Facts and figures: Women, peace and security*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-women-peace-and-security>

⁶ Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada. (2025). *WPS at 25 and Canada's CNAP3: Feminist reflections on progress and gaps*. https://wpsn-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Chapter-1_WPSN-C-Publication-2025_November-2025.pdf

⁷ U.N. Secretary-General, *Women and Peace and Security*, U.N. Doc. S/2025/556 (Sept. 5, 2025).

⁸ Global Affairs Canada. (2025, October 10). *Statement by the Delegation of Canada – Women, peace and security*. Government of Canada. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/un-onu/statements-declarations/2025-10-10-women-femmes.aspx

TOPIC B: ADDRESSING THE DISPROPORTIONATE EFFECT OF ARMED CONFLICTS ON CHILDREN

Canada views the situation of children harmed in armed conflicts with profound concern and deep sense of urgency, as a quarter century after the establishment of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), global protection environment for children living in or fleeing conflict, has deteriorated at an alarming pace.

According to the latest UN Secretary-General annual report on children and armed conflict, 41,370 grave violations in 2024 have been verified, representing the highest figure since the mandate was established and a 25 per cent increase in comparison with 2023.⁹ Additionally, UNICEF reported further that by late 2024, more than 467 million children, one in six globally, are living in conflict zones, the highest number in almost three decades. With that 2024 has been one of the most devastating years on record for children in conflict in UNICEF's history, in both – the number of children affected and the level of impact on their lives.¹⁰ Children are undoubtedly affected disproportionately, with a higher incident of injuries (57 per cent), nearly double the adults are (24.8 per cent, often requiring complex interventions, including amputation.¹¹ These trends confirm that children continue bearing a disproportionate burden of modern conflict, while the protection regime designed for them is increasingly strained by geopolitical fragmentation, intensified urban warfare, and deliberate targeting of civilian populations.

For Canada, the CAAC agenda is not merely a thematic issue but a core pillar of its humanitarian, human rights and peacebuilding diplomacy. In 1999-2000, when Canada was on Security Council, it introduced the first thematic debate on children in armed conflict, hosting the first International Conference on War-Affected Children in 2000 and being one of the earliest supporters of the OSRSG-CAAC. As a country that has long been recognized as a leading advocate on children and armed conflict, Canada must even more remain committed to working with international community to ensure children around the world are protected, to end the use both boy and girls in hostilities, and, last but not least, to guarantee that all children have safe spaces in which to grow and learn.¹² It therefore participates in peace operations, training missions and stabilization initiatives where grave violations against children are widespread, including recruitment and hospitals. Canada's approach is grounded in its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, as well as its commitments to human rights and WPS. Based on these obligations, The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers was adopted in 2017. Set of political commitments, which are focused on child protection

⁹ United Nations Secretary-General. (2025). *Annual report on children and armed conflict: Covering 2024*. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Secretary-General-Annual-Report-on-Children-and-Armed-Conflict-Covering-2024.pdf>

¹⁰ UNICEF. (2024, December 28). "Not the new normal" – 2024 "one of the worst years in UNICEF's history" for children in conflict. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/not-new-normal-2024-one-worst-years-unicefs-history-children-conflict>

¹¹ Audei, W., & Lakhoo, K. (2025). *The primary victims of war—A commentary on: "The disproportionate surgical burden borne by children in regions of armed conflict."* *World Journal of Surgery*, 49(7), 1846-1847. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wjs.12652>

¹² Government of Canada. (2022, August 24). *Children and armed conflict*. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/armed_conflict-conflicts_armes.aspx?lang=eng

in peacekeeping, comprising 17 principles with aim to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers by armed forces and armed groups, what is critical for achieving overall UN peacekeeping mission success and the setting of conditions for lasting peace and security. As former prime minister Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau said, “the use of child soldiers has no place in our world”, and further, that “by bringing the countries together, and putting the Vancouver Principles into action, we can make sure children remain children, and build a safer, more just future for all.” Over hundred states have now endorsed the Vancouver Principles, reflecting international support for child protection standards in peace operations. They are also given implementation guidance, which consists of a core for development or amendment of policies, doctrine, training and education on child soldier in the UN peace operations context and was created through a collaborative process.¹³

Canada also works closely with the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security, a Canadian based institute that partners with security forces, governments and communities worldwide to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups. Further it provided \$2 million to UNICEF’s Children, Not soldiers campaign, which aims at ending recruitment and use of children by state armed forces, and also established and continues to chair the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict at the UN, international networks of countries which advocate for ongoing attention and action on the issue, while participating all around the world. In UN SC Resolutions 1882, 1998, and 2225 have been adopted with Canada’s co-sponsorship in 2009, 2011 and 2015. They expanded the list of violations that trigger a monitoring and reporting mechanism, consequently meaning that all five grave violations trigger the establishment of a country team to monitor and report on the situation.¹⁴

At the same time, Canada remains concerned about growing geopolitical polarization affecting consensus on CAAC issues. Recent Security Council negotiations have seen attempts to dilute references to the six grave violations, weaken monitoring provisions, restrict the role of the OSRSG-CAAC, or politicise the listing mechanism, trends highlighted by the Special Representative as undermining two decades of progress.

Canada will therefore firmly oppose efforts to weaken established CAAC norms and will work constructively with a broad coalition of states, including through the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict, to uphold the neutrality, independence and effectiveness of the CAAC agenda.

¹³ Government of Canada. (2023, May 24). *The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers*. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng

¹⁴ Government of Canada. (2022, August 24). *Children and armed conflict*. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/armed_conflict-conflits_armes.aspx?lang=eng