



Marking the 25th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

The French Republic considers the WPS Agenda not only as a diplomatic commitment, as a starting point for further progress, but as a central, defining element of France's multilateral identity. As a proud founding member of the UN and a Permanent Member of this Council, France views UNSC Resolution 1325 as a turning point, an irreversible step towards greater inclusivity and awareness of gender roles in peacebuilding and mediation efforts and the indisputable role that women play in safeguarding international peace and security, as well as development, justice and the rule of law - the four pillars of the United Nations. When the WPS Agenda was first adopted in 2000, France underscored that our efforts should not be limited to recognizing women and girls as simple victims of conflict, but rather active participants and contributors to peace. This belief stems from both historical evidence and France's persistent belief that sustainable peace, grounded in human security, cannot be met without equality and representation. Most recently, France reaffirmed this commitment by joining the 2024 Statement of Shared Commitments on Women, Peace and Security, a collective pledge by Security Council members to strengthen gender integration, civil society participation, and accountability across all Council work.

The importance of the agenda is not symbolic. In regions like Sahel and the Levant, where French peacekeepers operate, the lack of women's involvement has had notable implications on the longevity of peace and its efforts.¹ The problem is apparent - political deals tend to leave out of their scope the very participants who hold whole societies in unity. This has been reflected in statistics that reveal that women are just 19 percent of the peace processes participants and just 6 percent of the mediators in the world. This poor inclusion echoes in the

¹ UN Women. "Facts and Figures: Women's Participation in Peace Processes." UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>

foreign and security policy of France. Contributing to shaping migration dynamics, humanitarian planning, and the operational conditions in areas where France maintains commitments.

As a measure to these challenges, France has appointed to uplift gender equality to one of the five pillars of its foreign policy. Additionally, this position was reaffirmed by President Emmanuel Macron when he disclosed a Feminist foreign policy in 2019.² The theoretical background is principled and strategic as evidence shows that social systems who protect women's rights are less prone to conflict and, substantively, tend to be more resilient.³ Subsequently, France's *Third National Action Plan* on Women, Peace and Security (2021-2025)⁴ prioritizes across sectors gender acknowledgments throughout diplomacy, development, and defence. It highlights the importance of women's leadership in conflict prevention. Equally important, it strengthens protections against gender-based violence, and insists that gender perspectives shape every policy decision.⁵

French leaders continue to affirm their commitment to the WPS agenda. This has been highlighted at the 2021 Generation equality forum where President Macron argued that feminism is not merely a battle between men and women but rather, a motivating force that must support democracy and peace. In addition, former foreign minister Catherine Colonna reiterated this view, underscoring that active engagement and fostering must remain foundational to any peace agreement. Jointly, these statements demonstrate a long lasting political consensus in the French government.

Since France reliably translates its principles into concrete action, the country has integrated gender advisers in peace operations like MINUSMA and UNIFIL. Additionally it has also decided to expand gender-sensitivity training for peacekeepers, and, more significantly, directed substantial resources toward women's organisations—including €120 million through the Fonds de Soutien aux Organisations Féministes for 2023–2026. Despite challenges pertaining to data collection, coordination amongst international actors, and the durable development of funding in fragile areas, these steps have fortified operational outcomes. As of today, the French Republic is firmly reinforced by a set of international commitments and it has co-sponsored each major WPS-related Security Council resolution. In

² France. Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. "Feminist Diplomacy." *France Diplomacy*, 8 Mar. 2024, <https://se.ambafrance.org/Feminist-Diplomacy>.

³ France. Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. "Feminist Diplomacy: The Simone Veil Prize of the French Republic for Gender Equality." *France Diplomacy*, 2019, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/feminist-diplomacy/feminist-diplomacy-the-simone-veil-prize-of-the-french-republic-for-gender/?lang=en>

⁴ France. *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021–2025*. Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2021, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/pna_eng_vf_cle0c99c8.pdf.

⁵ "France – National Action Plan." *WPS Focal Points Network*, 2024, <https://wpsfocalpointnetwork.org/france/>

addition, France is still a persistent supporter of CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and the EU's Gender Action Plan III.⁶

Prospectively to the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325, France proposes to undertake a higher-level subjective evaluation of the process made until now and renew political will. Furthermore, it calls for establishing a Special Trust Fund Women in Peace to strengthen grassroots organisations and demands the systematic use of gender advisers in all peace operations. Beyond this, France also strives to base the WPS agenda into broader UN principle focuses. Including, climate action, human rights, and sustainable development—pursuant to the guiding principle that human security includes the security of all women.⁷

In the forthcoming Security Council resolution France aspires to attain more secure accountability mechanisms, sustainable funding structures and the continual integration of women's gender perspectives in missions across mandates. Having regional partners in Africa and the Middle East, combined with engaging in close cooperation with the European Union, Canada and the Nordic states, France once more underscores that the empowerment of women is a necessary condition for global stability, not a geopolitical imposition.

Addressing the Disproportionate Effects of Armed Conflicts on Children

In 2003 France publicly aided the adoption of the *Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict*.⁸ This set in motion the support for the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*⁹ and a firm commitment to protect children in armed conflicts. Even so, children remain the most defenceless victims of ongoing conflicts. From Gaza to Sudan, immense numbers of kids are killed, recruited by armed groups, displaced and/or denied access to education. For the French republic, these violations are dehumanizing and a threat to both long-term international security and human dignity.

Insecurity in areas like Sahel and the Middle East have a tangible impact on France. Instability, radicalization, and humanitarian crises are fuelled by a generation of lost, traumatized, displaced and unstable children. These circumstances frame migration flows, humanitarian priorities, and the broader geopolitical environment in which France acts. Therefore, sustainable peace can only be obtained if the protection of children begins to be viewed not only as a strategic necessity but also as a moral imperative.

⁶ European Commission. "The French Support Fund for Feminist Organisations (FSOF)." *Capacity4Dev*, 2022, https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/groups/public-gender/info/french-support-fund-feminist-organizations_en

⁷ Elysée. "Make Gender Equality a Global Cause – G7." *Présidence de la République Française*, 2019, <https://www.elysee.fr/en/g7/2019/01/01/combating-gender-inequality>

⁸ *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*. United Nations General Assembly, 25 May 2000.

⁹ *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. United Nations General Assembly, 20 Nov. 1989.

This understanding is exemplified in the 2023-2027 strategy of locating education in emergencies and protection of children at the core of its humanitarian agenda¹⁰. Guaranteeing that children in areas of conflict have access to schooling and safety promotes long-term recovery and disrupts cycles of violence. Initiatives like the allocation of 15% of its humanitarian funding to these priorities and the support of psychosocial rehabilitation programmes for children formerly associated with armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo and across the Sahel, have produced measurable progress. Even if challenges do persist, especially the difficulty of compiling data in conflict zones and safeguarding the proper funding of reintegration programmes.

France's leadership meaningfully broadens into the multilateral sphere. Actions such as the co-chairmanship of the UN Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict¹¹; the support of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism¹² under the UNSC Resolution 1612¹³ and the active promotion of the Paris Principles and the Safe Schools Declaration¹⁴, guide the country's effort to enhance child protection and accountability on the international scale. Concurrently, France is aware that enforcing these standards remains challenging noting that, violations like recruitment, sexual violence, and attacks on schools often go unpunished. In order to respond to this gap most appropriately, France advocates the use of targeted sanctions and international judicial cooperation. Also including via the ICC, to hinder and respond to grave violations.

As a final point, the French Republic argues that the international environment must embrace a more coordinated and aspirational approach. This includes, but is not limited to, increasing funding for the *Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism*, embedding child-protection advisers in all UN peacekeeping and political missions, limiting the use of explosive weapons in populated areas especially since it is where children represent over 40% of civilian casualties.

¹⁵Moreover, growth of reintegration programmes that aim at education, vocational training, and psychosocial support is also a major aspect of this plan. France is another country that puts to the center the important role that civil-society and humanitarian organizations play, as the main guardians of vulnerable children. In the resolution to be issued, France intends to position at the core of its agenda integrating child-protection considerations in all mission mandates, the creation of a Child Protection Coordination Unit, yearly reporting on progress, and a multi-donor trust fund specifically supporting emergency education.

¹⁰ France. Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. *Humanitarian Strategy 2023-2027*. Paris, 2023.

¹¹ United Nations. "Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups." UNICEF / United Nations, 2007.

¹² "Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)," *Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/monitoring-and-reporting-mechanism/>

¹³ United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 1612 (2005)*. United Nations, 26 July 2005.

¹⁴ United Nations. *Safe Schools Declaration*. Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2015.

¹⁵ UNICEF. "Children in Armed Conflict: Annual Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations*, latest edition.

France favors a collaborative and capacity building approach due to its joint engagement with partners such as the European Union, Canada, Germany, and UNICEF. France expresses its aspiration to reiterate the UN's moral authority in addition to encouraging all Member States to act with concrete action using their commitments in order to create a peace that can both protect and empower future generations of children by placing the issue of Addressing the Disproportionate Effects of Armed Conflicts on Children at the center of peace and security.