

Committee: Security Council (HS)

Delegation: Panama



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

Panama is deeply concerned by the continuing violations against women around the world and seeks measures to prevent these violations and promote gender-equality. Reflecting on the past 25 years after the resolution passed, Panama highlights that there has been drastic improvement in the WPS situation, but it also acknowledges that there is still a lot of work ahead.

Panama acknowledges that it is yet to meet the standards set by the resolution 1325. Looking at the gender situation in the country from the perspective of all four pillars of WPS — participation, prevention, protection, relief & recovery — we observe several areas requiring improvement. In terms of participation of women in governmental processes, there is still a huge gender imbalance, which undermines the influence of women on global decisions. As an example, women make up only 21.7% of the national assembly.¹ Regarding protection, Panama is struggling with high levels of GBV, and as a marker of the severity of GBV in a country we can compare rape rates. Panama's rape rate is still among the highest in the world: 59.6 per 100K.² COVID-19 pandemic significantly complicated the process of reporting domestic GBV. Women subjected to violence had less opportunities to seek help, and, as a result, domestic GBV drastically rose, and so did the number of unwanted pregnancies.³ In the area of prevention, Panama has mostly worked on improving the legal framework. However, the legal framework alone cannot prevent crimes against women, but rather only bring justice after a crime has been committed. Lastly, because Panama has been in a state of peace since the resolution passed, the last pillar – relief and recovery, has not been a relevant issue in the country.

Panama has not adopted a National Action Plan, but there have been certain changes to the national framework after the country adopted the Resolution 1325. One of those

¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union. (n.d.). *Panama: Data on women*.
<https://data.ipu.org/parliament/PA/PA-LC01/data-on-women/>

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World Population Review. (2025). *Rape statistics by country*.
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/rape-statistics-by-country>

³ Ministerio de Salud de Panamá. (2020). *Violencia 2020* (Informe).
https://www.minsa.gob.pa/sites/default/files/programas/violencia_2020.pdf

changes was the establishment of the National Institute of Women in 2008.⁴ The aim of the institute is to promote equality and collaborate with different organisations to create opportunities for women; it is also responsible for monitoring and evaluation of those gender policies.⁵ The institute worked with the Ministry of Public Security to train the police forces to deal with cases of sex-based violence. Subsequently a service that specialises in GBV was created as a part of the police force.

An array of more concrete measures has been implemented as well. Firstly, the extension of paid maternity leave in 2017 and the inclusion of sexual harassment into the Penal Code in 2018, greatly improve the working conditions for women. In 2017, the Congress approved Law 56, which established quotas for the participation of women in state boards of directors. Article 2 requires that any institution supported by the Central government, including decentralized, public companies, should assign at least 30% of seats on their administrative councils, boards of directors, or similar entities to women.⁶ However, as we can see from the composition of the Panamanian parliament, that condition has not been met. Another remarkable measure was the introduction of rape protocols into the medical framework. In June of 2022, the Ministry of Health issued an order that states that all female survivors of sexual violence should receive appropriate care at any medical institution, including physical, psychological and legal support. However, the implementation of this order remains inconsistent, undermining the intentions of the Ministry of Health.⁷

Panama has also shown consistent engagement in the WPS agenda on the international level. It has ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Belém do Pará Convention). This convention recognises offences against women as offences against human dignity and a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men.⁸ It has also hosted the 2025 National Action Plan (NAP) Academy for delegates from Costa Rica, Bolivia, Ecuador and Panama. NAP Academy is an annual conference organised by UN Women

⁴ WIIS Global. (2020). *Panama summary report*.

<https://www.wiisglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Panama-Summary-Report.pdf>

⁵ República de Panamá. (2008). *Ley No. 71 de 30 de diciembre de 2008*.

<https://docs.panama.justia.com/federales/leyes/71-de-2008-dec-30-2008.pdf>

⁶ WIIS Global. (2020). *Panama summary report*.

<https://www.wiisglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Panama-Summary-Report.pdf>

⁷ Ministerio de Salud. (2022, June 10). *Resolución No. 371*.

https://www.minsa.gob.pa/sites/default/files/normatividad/resolucion_no_371_de_10_de_junio_de_2022.pdf

⁸ Organization of American States. (n.d.). *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), A-61: Signature and ratification by country*. <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>

that brings together officials and civilian representatives to design concrete roadmaps to achieve the NAPs of countries that have adopted them.

In order to further strengthen the WPS agenda, Panama proposes: a) improving GBV reporting systems to make it easier for women to seek help; b) promoting MUN or other activities which simulate political conferences among middle/high-schoolers to get young girls interested in politics; c) for the UN to provide funding for rape-kit-related medications in countries lacking resources.

Topic B: THE DISPROPORTIONATE EFFECTS OF ARMED CONFLICTS ON CHILDREN

Panama is deeply concerned with the horrible effects of armed conflicts on children around the world, including the six grave violations: recruitment and use, sexual violence, killing and maiming, abduction, and attacks of hospitals and schools⁹. These crimes against humanity have been continuously used as tools of intimidation.

An armed conflict is defined by the European parliament as: 'An armed conflict is said to exist when there is an armed confrontation between the armed forces of States (international armed conflict), or between governmental authorities and organised armed groups or between such groups within a State (non-international armed conflict). Other situations of violence, such as internal disturbances and tensions are not considered to be armed conflicts.'¹⁰ Therefore, the current situation in Panama does not fall under the definition of an armed conflict. However, the issues children in Panama are currently facing are classified as armed violence, which is rooted in high levels of organised crime and the proliferation of small arms.¹¹ The name may be different, but the symptoms are essentially the same. Local gangs have recruited children as young as 8, with the average age between 12 and 14. If a child wishes to withdraw from a gang, they tend to face threats and violence¹², and often entire families have to flee their communities.¹³ Therefore, Panama deeply emphasizes with the children around the globe who face similar challenges and wishes to strengthen the international laws protecting children.

Throughout the years Panama has taken multiple steps to protect children, measures that should as well work in case of an armed conflict. There have been a few changes to the national framework that aim to strengthen the rights of children. Firstly, Panama abolished its military forces in 1990 in favour of maintaining peace and democracy. That decision was

⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross. (2018). *Children and armed conflict annual report summary 2017*. United Nations.

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Children-Armed-Conflict-Annual-Report-Summary-2017-web.pdf>

¹⁰ European Parliament. (2023). *EU strategies on armed conflicts and children* [Report].

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)757582_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS_ATA(2023)757582_EN.pdf)

¹¹ UNICEF. (n.d.). *Armed violence: Impact on children and adolescents*.

<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/armed-violence-impact-children-adolescents>

¹² Vanderbilt University. (2016). *Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI): Panama report* [PDF]. https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/carsi/CARSI_Panama_v3_FinalV_W_02.17.16.pdf

¹³ UNICEF & UNHCR. (2021, April 28). *Death threats and gang violence forcing more families to flee northern Central America: UNHCR and UNICEF survey*.

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/press-releases/death-threats-and-gang-violence-forcing-more-families-to-flee-northern-central-america-unhcr-and-unicef-survey/>

greatly influenced by the recognition of dreadful humanitarian consequences of war, including its disproportionate effects on children. Secondly, in 2007, Panama adopted a new Penal Code, which greatly evolved from the previous 1982 Penal Code. The new Penal Code emphasized the severity of crimes against children.¹⁴

The country also confirmed its involvement in solving the issue internationally. Firstly, Panama has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989, which ensures the fundamental rights of children such as the right to live. Secondly, Panama has ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), which forbids the mobilisation of minors.¹⁵ In the report that Panama submitted after the ratification of OPAC it is stated that there have been appropriate amendments to the legal framework.¹⁶ And lastly, Panama has endorsed the last resolution of the Security Council on Children in Armed Conflicts (Resolution 2427) adopted in 2018.

One of the specific measures Panama has implemented was signing Decree No. 5 of 16 January 2018. This decree includes a chapter on the protection and care of children and adolescents seeking recognition of refugee status in Panama thus ensuring the best interests of the child. This way the country highlights that since it is not in a state of war itself, it is open for migrant children and adolescents coming from countries which are.¹⁷

Panama is committed to respecting human rights in armed conflict, and considers strengthening child protection legislation the best way to protect children. It stresses that violence against children should be addressed not only in armed conflicts but also in broader contexts such as armed violence.¹⁸ Panama's perspective aligns with the perspectives of other Central and Latin American countries as they too condemn crimes against children in any context and link the issue of children in armed conflicts with the issue of armed violence.

Panama proposes for all UN states to a) extend the jail sentence for any of the six grave violations against children to life-long; b) make the presence of a therapist/psychiatrist at any institution for children mandatory so their mental health can be continuously monitored; c) send psychological support for children in conflict zones as part of humanitarian aid.

¹⁴ WIPO. (n.d.). *Panama: Penal Code*. <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/legislation/details/7203>

¹⁵ United Nations. (n.d.). *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC)*. <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/tools-for-action/opac/>

¹⁶ Panama. (2018). *Report submitted by Panama under article 8(1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/PAN/1)*. United Nations. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1662598>

¹⁷ Republic of Panama. (2021). *Statement by the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations*. United Nations Security Council. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3938228/files/S_2021_617-EN.pdf

¹⁸ Republic of Panama. (2021). *Statement by the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations*. United Nations Security Council. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3938228/files/S_2021_617-EN.pdf