Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)

Women, Peace, and Security is the first legislation of its kind with a whole of government strategy that responds to a domestic law (WPS Act) and inspired by an internationally recognized framework about WPS. The WPS Strategy recognizes the diverse roles women play as agents of change in preventing and resolving conflict, countering terrorism and violent extremism, and building post conflict peace and stability. The Strategy seeks to increase women’s meaningful participation in political and civic life by helping to ensure they are empowered to lead and contribute, equipped with the necessary skills and supported to succeed, and supported to participate through access to opportunities and resources. U.S. Strategy on WPS (2019)

“Above all, we value the dignity of every human life, protect the rights of every person, and share the hope of every soul to live in freedom. That is who we are.” President Donald Trump, July 2017

U.S. National Security Strategy (Nov 2017)

“There can be no moral equivalency between nations that uphold the rule of law, empower women and respect individual rights and those that brutalize and suppress their people… Governments that respect the rights of their citizens remain the best vehicle for prosperity, human happiness, and peace. In contrast, governments that routinely abuse the rights of their children do not play constructive roles in the world. For example, governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their potential... We must empower women and youth. Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful. We will support to advance women’s equality, protect the rights of women and girls, and promote women and youth empowerment program.”

The Evolution of WPS

President Trump signed the WPS Act in October 2017 and the U.S. Strategy on WPS in June of 2019.

The Department of Defense has to complete a WPS Strategy Implementation Plan.

U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security End State and supporting Objectives

The Strategy defines women's political empowerment and equality as an end state whereby women can meaningfully participate in preventing, mediating, and resolving conflict and countering terrorism, in ways that promote stable and lasting peace, including in conflict-affected areas. To work toward this end state, the WPS Strategy identified three separate, yet interrelated, strategic objectives that must be achieved. These strategic objectives aim to make demonstrable progress by 2023:

1. Women are more prepared and increasingly able to participate in efforts that promote stable and lasting peace
2. Women and Girls are safer, better protected, and have equal access to government and private assistance programs, including from the U.S., international partners, and host nations
3. United States and partner governments have improved institutionalization and capacity to ensure WPS efforts are sustainable and long-lasting

Line of Effort 1: Seek and support the preparation and meaningful participation of women around the world in decision-making processes related to conflict and crisis
Goal: Increase women's participation in political, civic, and military processes

Line of Effort 2: Promote the protection of women and girls' human rights; access to humanitarian assistance; and safety from violence, abuse, and exploitation around the world
Goal: Women and girls' security, human rights, and needs are protected

Line of Effort 3: Adjust U.S. international programs to improve outcomes in equality for, and the empowerment of women
Goal: The U.S. maintains its role as a leader on the world stage in promoting the meaningful participation of women in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict, and efforts in post-conflict relief and recovery

Line of Effort 4: Encourage partner governments to adopt policies, plans, and capacity to improve the meaningful participation of women in processes connected to peace and security and decision-making institutions
Goal: Partner governments are reforming policies, programs, and plans to increase women's meaningful participation in processes connected to peace and security and decision-making institutions

Conflict Affects Women and Children Disproportionately

Women:
- Domestic violence
- Rape & sexual assault
- Trafficking
- Social marginalization
- Kidnapping/"bride napping"
- Lack of legal protection
- Honor-related threats
- Lack of reproductive health services

Men:
- Torture
- Abductions
- Forced recruitment
- Gang violence
- Organized crime
- Stress due to inability to protect family
- Alcohol abuse
- Sexual violence

Girls:
- Rape/sexual assault
- Abductions
- Forced marriage
- Early pregnancies
- Lack of access to education
- Forced recruitment

Boys:
- Abductions
- Forced recruitment
- Lack of access to education
- Rape/sexual harassment
- Drugs

United Nations WPS Agenda

- UNSCR 1820 (2008) Sexual violence as a war crime
- UNSCR 1888 (2009) Strengthen efforts to end sexual violence, woman as actors
- UNSCR 2106 (2013) Sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict, includes men & boys
- UNSCR 2122 (2013) Women's role in conflict prevention/resolution
- UNSCR 2242 (2015) Countering violent extremism and terrorism
- UNSCR 2272 (2016) Sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations *
- UNSCR 2331 (2016) Trafficking in persons *

*Indicates additional UNSCRs related to WPS

The following publications include WPS content:

- Joint Publication 3-29, Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
- Joint Publication 3-07, Stability
- Joint Publication 3-07.3, Peace Operations
- Army Techniques Publication 3-07.6, Protection of Civilians
- PKSOI SOLLIMS Lessons Learned Samplers: "Operationalizing WPS" (NOV 2017) "FHA: The Complexity of Considerations" (SEP 2018)
- Multinational Force SOP (USINDOPACOM)

Current online training available on JKO: https://jkodirect.jten.mil/Atlas2/page/login/Login.jsf

- “Improving Operational Effectiveness by Integrating Gender Perspective”
- “Role of Gender Advisors”

For more information contact the Strategic Studies Institute at U.S. Army War College