

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Challenges and Opportunities for the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

by Irene Fellin



ABSTRACT

This paper, developed within the framework of the New-Med Research Network, aims to examine the state of implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), along with its related resolutions, and its potential in the six OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation – namely, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – 17 years after its adoption. A central goal of the research is to identify new ways and means by which to enhance the role of the OSCE in advancing the 1325 agenda in the Mediterranean region.

*Algeria | Egypt | Israel | Jordan | Morocco | Tunisia | Women | Armed forces
| UN Security Council | OSCE | Mediterranean*

keywords

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Executive Summary

This paper was developed within the framework of the New-Med Research Network, a project led by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and supported by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Secretariat in Vienna, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Compagnia di San Paolo of Turin and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

It aims to examine the state of implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), along with subsequent related resolutions (hereafter, UNSCR 1325+), and its potential in the six OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs) – namely, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – 17 years after its adoption. A central goal of the research is to identify new ways and means by which to enhance the role of the OSCE in advancing the 1325 agenda in the Mediterranean region.

To understand the specific challenges facing UNSCR 1325+ in each of the six OSCE MPCs, a series of interviews was conducted as a key part of the research. Interviewees included female and male academics, activists, government officials and non-governmental leaders.

The report on these interviews offers lessons and recommendations that are applicable to the Partners for Co-operation, but also more broadly to the entire Mediterranean region. At the same time, the report places special emphasis on the linkages between advancing gender equality and building a sustainable peace, as clearly stated in UNSCR 1325. It also identifies possible areas of cooperation

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within the Mediterranean region, between the OSCE and the six MPCs on one side, and between the OSCE and other regional or national organizations working on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) issues, including on conflict mediation, on the other.

UNSCR 1325 on WPS was adopted in October 2000. After 17 years, its implementation at global level is still rather inconsistent and requires an acceleration process. As of July 2018, only 75 out of 193 UN member states had adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on 1325 (equal to 38.9 per cent of the total).

Some states that have not developed formal NAPs have pursued the commitments embedded in UNSCR 1325+ in other ways. The rationale behind this decision may vary: from the security situation of the particular country to a lack of political will, and from a lack of awareness about the agenda and its potential to scarcity of resources (human or financial).

The disparity in implementation exists not only among the six countries examined but also within each of them, particularly between urban and rural areas. Inhabitants of remote areas are less aware of their rights and opportunities than their urban compatriots and are mostly under the influence of community leaders. Therefore, their involvement in policy formulation is essential in order to reach out to all segments of the population – including women – and to have a real and sustainable impact on the whole of society.

The limited engagement of men in the implementation of the WPS agenda remains one of the key obstacles hindering full recognition of the values embedded in UNSCR 1325+. Efforts and responsibilities to introduce a gender perspective into national-security policies should become normal practice for everybody, and be taken as a priority for preventing conflicts and building sustainable peace for the whole of society, not just for half of it.

The research findings show impressive similarities with other research and works commissioned by the OSCE on this subject: despite many differences existing among the OSCE participating States and MPCs, the challenges that they face with the implementation of this agenda are quite similar.

Even though the responsibility for UNSCR 1325+ implementation remains with national governments, international and regional organizations also have an important role to play in supporting national efforts – with the development of awareness-raising campaigns, support for capacity-building and training initiatives, and assistance for all other activities that can accelerate the process towards full implementation of the WPS agenda. Coordination and collaboration among international and regional organizations in this arena is vital in order to avoid the risk of possible duplication and overlapping of efforts.

Introduction

The OSCE is committed to promoting the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ through various projects and activities in the field of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and gender equality through various branches of the OSCE “tree”.

At the Secretariat level, the work of the OSCE is guided by the principles embedded in the WPS agenda, which recognizes the pivotal role that women play in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Thanks to the support of its Gender Section, the OSCE focuses on issues such as early-warning mechanisms, conflict management and mediation, and women’s equal participation in reconstruction efforts. The activities undertaken can vary from technical briefings to governments and technical support in implementing the Resolution, which can include providing inputs for drafting and monitoring 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs), publishing material to promote a higher and more meaningful level of participation of women throughout the entire conflict cycle, to ensuring that women’s grassroots organizations are included in conflict-resolution and reconciliation processes. Moreover, since 2016, the OSCE Gender Section has been supporting capacity-building initiatives and the exchange of practices among OSCE participating States that have developed relevant legislations and policy guidelines for the implementation of the WPS agenda. Thus far, however, representatives of the six OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs) – namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – have not had the chance to participate in regional training or frameworks for dialogue on WPS organized by the OSCE.

In Warsaw, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides support, assistance and expertise to participating States and civil-society organizations (CSOs) in order to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and tolerance, and non-discrimination. The promotion of gender equality is a key component of the ODIHR’s overall activities, which range from strengthening gender-equality institutions and identifying discriminatory laws and policies up to increasing women’s participation in politics and electoral processes. Among the activities supported by the ODIHR, there are gender-equality training events for parliamentarians, and civil-society and security-sector personnel. Encouraging women’s recruitment and promotion within the security ranks is one of the core activities of the ODIHR, and it reflects the principles and values of equality and non-discrimination embedded in the OSCE; the security sector, like others, must reflect the diversity of the community that it serves and protects.

Last, but not least, within the OSCE’s field-operation missions there are Gender Advisors in charge of promoting effective gender mainstreaming throughout all activities – which includes, among other tasks, the establishment of a Gender Focal Point network and the roll-out of specific training activities.

This paper analyses the progress made in promoting women's leadership and participation at all decision-making levels and in the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ in the six OSCE MPCs, and attempts to shed light on the main limitations preventing women from having a greater role within their societies. It also looks at the role that civil society and women's organizations play in the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ in the countries concerned, and how governmental institutions can support their activities and cooperate with them. There is, indeed, a need to understand the successes of and challenges to UNSCR 1325+ in each of the Partner States – examining, in particular, the relevant legislation adopted and the policy initiatives implemented, in order to better describe how the main pillars of UNSCR 1325 (prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery) are implemented. By doing so, this paper aims to contribute to raising awareness about existing gaps that could prevent a full implementation of the WPS agenda.

On 31 October 2017, UNSCR 1325 entered its seventeenth year. Every year, around this time, the United Nations Security Council meets in an open debate to take stock of the implementation of the WPS agenda. It assesses the successes and challenges facing a resolution that marked the history of women's role in peace and security. Female activists from conflict-affected countries – particularly women emerging from the horrific wars in Bosnia and Rwanda – have, for many years, strongly advocated recognition of the roles and responsibilities of women living in conflict-affected settings. In 1995, "Women, Peace and Security" was one of the 12 critical areas of concern addressed by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,¹ which paved the way for the adoption of UNSCR 1325 five years later. The resolution notes that war is no longer waged solely on some distant battlefield but increasingly also within our cities, villages and homes. Civilians, particularly women and girls, are disproportionately affected by the consequences of such conflicts. Therefore, today's security has become "everyone's business". While the principles embedded in UNSCR 1325 have been reiterated over the years by the subsequent, related resolutions, there are still major gaps in moving from words to deeds.

As the adoption of UNSCR 1325 was not followed by its concrete and meaningful implementation by the member states, in the 2004 report on WPS, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon called upon member states to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) detailing strategies to fulfil their commitments under the Resolution.² The objective was to create a framework for supporting any ongoing and future activities related to the resolution. As of September 2018, 76 NAPs had been adopted worldwide: Mozambique's was the latest.³

¹ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 15 September 1995, <https://shar.es/a1vxpR>.

² UN Security Council Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2004/40), 28 October 2004, <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2004/40>.

³ See the PeaceWomen website: *Member States (Action Plans)*, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/26>. Two member states (South Africa and Thailand) have also developed WPS implementation frameworks, which are not named National Action Plans; however, they serve the same purpose. Jordan adopted its 1325 NAP in December 2017.

While some countries have already adopted the second or even the third generation of NAPs, in many others the process has not yet started. However, it must be noted that some states that have not developed formal NAPs have pursued the commitments of UNSCR 1325+ in other ways. As confirmed by the most recent studies commissioned by the OSCE on this issue, such as the 2014 study on NAPs on implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the report of the 2016 NAP Academy, *Designing Inclusive Strategies for Sustainable Security: Results-Oriented National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security*,⁴ the rationale behind this decision may vary – from the security situation of the country concerned to a lack of political will, from lack of awareness about the agenda and its potential to lack of resources (human or financial). Also, the limited engagement of men in the implementation of the WPS agenda has often prevented a widespread recognition of the values embedded in UNSCR 1325+. The effort to introduce a gender perspective into national-security policies should become normal practice and taken as a priority for preventing conflicts and building sustainable peace for the whole of society, not only for half of it.

1. The Mediterranean and the implementation of UNSCR 1325+: Challenges in the post-Arab Spring societies

Social, political and cultural equilibria in the Mediterranean Basin have undergone a major reshaping in recent years. In several countries, the 2011 uprisings, in particular, have shaken the social order and called into question traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, a positive impact is observable in major urban centres, whereas in some rural areas the situation of women has actually worsened as a consequence of the protests.⁵ In some cases – as in Tunisia but also, to a lesser extent, in Lebanon and Jordan as well – new political structures have appeared, and new constitutions and laws have been adopted, bringing women's rights to the core of those countries' political agendas. Indeed, the role of women within societies is a crucial parameter for assessing social and political change. The complex political, cultural and demographic processes that are unfolding in the Mediterranean region represent a unique opportunity to reshape social norms and promote women's rights. In particular, women can play a strategic role in enhancing the security of their own countries and of the whole region in key fields – from gender and migration to peace-building and conflict mediation, from conflict prevention to political participation.

⁴ Christin Ormhaug, *OSCE Study on National Action Plans on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, Vienna, OSCE Secretariat, October 2014, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/125727>; Allison Muehlenbeck, *Designating Sustainable Strategies for Inclusive Security: Results-Oriented National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, Inclusive Security and OSCE National Action Plan Academy*, Vienna, OSCE Secretariat, December 2016, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/294731>.

⁵ Lorenzo Kamel and Maha Ezzat ElKholy, "Women Activism and Resistance in Rural Upper and Lower Egypt", in *The Hill*, 27 March 2014, <http://thehill.com/node/201830>.

In the Arab countries, the WPS agenda has not been acknowledged in a homogeneous way. As Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen, and Emily Parker point out in their research, the understanding of this agenda varies considerably, and the importance of the principles embedded in UNSCR 1325+ is often not recognized as a priority by some segments of society, including women themselves.⁶

Moreover, there is a certain scepticism about the actual utility of action plans as tools for enhancing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the national level: a widespread opinion among interviewees is that 1325 NAPs are mere “paper exercises” that do not provide the tools or procedures to ensure their implementation. It was underlined, in particular, that in open conflicts, when the priority is saving lives, nobody will have the time or the possibility to pay attention to an action plan.

However, according to Olivia Holt-Ivry and Miki Jacevic, this perception is not reflected in reality, since “more than 60 percent of [the 70 countries with a 1325 NAP] have grown more peaceful since adopting them, as measured by the Uppsala Conflict Database, and nearly 90 percent of the countries with action plans have seen their gender gap shrink, as measured by the World Economic Forum annual Gender Gap Report”.⁷

Few countries in the Arab region have adopted NAPs. Iraq adopted its first one in 2014.⁸ Palestine developed a NAP for the period 2017–19 through a national effort led by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs as the head of the Higher National Committee for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. The Palestinian NAP incorporates the directives of the Women, Peace and Security Advocacy Strategy developed by the National Coalition for Implementing UNSCR 1325 in 2015.⁹ Jordan finalized the process of adoption of its NAP in December 2017. Tunisia plans to complete the process in 2018. Despite the lack of NAPs in many of the countries concerned, some regional initiatives have been developed over the past few years, such as the regional strategy prepared by the Arab League with the support of the Regional Office of UN Women in 2013,¹⁰ followed by a Regional Action Plan (RAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS in October 2015 as part of the United

⁶ Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen and Emily Parker, “UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East and North Africa. Women and Security”, in *USIP Special Reports*, No. 388 (May 2016), <https://www.usip.org/node/91646>.

⁷ Olivia Holt-Ivry and Miki Jacevic, “How to Include Women in the Peace and Security Agenda”, in *News Deeply*, 27 November 2017, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/community/2017/11/27/how-to-include-women-in-the-peace-and-security-agenda>.

⁸ Iraq’s NAP was launched on 6 February 2014 for the period 2014–18. For more information, see the PeaceWomen website: *National Action Plan: Iraq*, <http://www.peacewomen.org/nap-iraq>.

⁹ For more information, see the PeaceWomen website: *National Action Plan: Palestine*, <http://www.peacewomen.org/action-plan/national-action-plan-palestine>.

¹⁰ UN Women supported the League of Arab States and the Arab Women Organization to develop a WPS regional strategy that provides a framework within which member states will operationalize their commitments through NAPs with the goal of addressing what has become a regional issue. See the website of UN Women Arab States/North Africa: *Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action*, <http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security>.

Nation's review of SCR 1325 fifteen years after its adoption.¹¹ Afflicted by armed conflicts and an alarming surge in terrorist extremism in several countries in the last few years, the Arab region has experienced some of the worst forms of sexual and gender-based violence used as a tactic of war, from the abduction and sexual enslavement of young girls under the self-styled Islamic State to early and forced marriages of displaced girls and women. Conflicts also exacerbate gender inequalities and the violation of women's rights by limiting their access to education and to adequate healthcare, and by worsening economic discrimination and domestic violence and abuse.

In accordance with UNSCR 1325+, the RAP calls in particular for increasing the meaningful participation of women and girls at all levels of decision-making as a way of building peace and preventing conflicts, and of enhancing the role of women in combating terrorism. The RAP has been developed in close cooperation with UN Women (the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women).¹² In 2018, UN Women and the Arab League will produce a report on the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ in the Arab world in partnership with the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding (CCCPA).

2. Israel

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000, Israel has repeatedly reiterated its commitment to the principles embedded in the WPS agenda at various levels of its society – locally, nationally and internationally. However, it has not yet adopted a 1325 NAP. Palestine, which holds only a non-member observer-state status at the UN, adopted its 1325 NAP in 2017. Some Israeli women's CSOs have constantly worked across party lines together with Palestinian women to promote peaceful solutions to the ongoing conflicts in the region. Recently, they have become vocal advocates of a full implementation of UNSCR 1325+.

Many steps towards the advancement of women's rights within Israeli society have been made in the last few decades. Gender equality is enshrined in Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence, and has been further entrenched in the country's society through subsequent laws and public policies, beginning with the milestone legislation known as the Women's Equal Rights Law of 1951, which asserts that

all female members of Israeli society have a right to equality in employment, education, health, environmental quality, and social welfare. The Women's

¹¹ UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace. A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, October 2015, p. 256, <http://wps.unwomen.org/resources>.

¹² UN Women Arab States/North Africa, *Arab League Presents Regional Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security*, 13 October 2015, <http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/arab-league-presents-regional-action-plan>.

Equal Rights Law also reinforces the Jewish religious belief that a woman has [the] right to be protected from violence, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and human trafficking.¹³

Israel ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1991; in July 2017, it presented its sixth periodic report on the implementation of the convention, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women released its recommendations.¹⁴ The country signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 18 December 2014. It is ranked 44th out of 144 listed countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Index (GGI),¹⁵ which shows an improvement compared to the previous year, when it was ranked 49th.

Despite its partnership with NATO, Israel did not align with NATO/EAPC policy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related resolutions, adopted in 2007 and later revised in 2014.¹⁶

Since its adoption 17 years ago, Israel has taken an active part in promoting the Security Council resolutions that are based on the principles of UNSCR 1325. In July 2005, for instance, it became the first UN member state to translate parts of UNSCR 1325 into law. The Knesset (Israeli Parliament) passed Amendment No. 4 to the Women's Equal Rights Law, which commits the government to including "appropriate representation" of women in all national policy-making committees, including those that deal with the peace process.¹⁷ This amendment is notable because it went beyond UNSCR 1325 to require representation of diverse groups of women,¹⁸ with the declared goal of ensuring them influential and decision-making positions – including in peace negotiations and deliberations about strategic national concerns in the security field.

In the years 2010–14 alone, Israel passed some 50 laws and amendments to further bolster gender equality and the empowerment of women.¹⁹ Furthermore,

¹³ Rachel Avraham, "Israel: A Pioneer in Woman's Rights", in *United with Israel*, 10 February 2013, <https://unitedwithisrael.org/?p=26584>.

¹⁴ OHCHR, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Reviews the Report of Israel*, 31 October 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22337>.

¹⁵ World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, November 2017, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>.

¹⁶ See NATO, *NATO/EAPC Policy for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Related Resolutions*, 1 April 2014, note 1, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_109830.htm.

¹⁷ Article 6.C(1) of the amended law establishes that a public committee and a team appointed by the Government (Prime Minister, a Minister, a Deputy Minister or Director General of a Government ministry) will give appropriate expression, under the circumstances, to the matter of representation of women from a variety of backgrounds within the greater population.

¹⁸ Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen and Emily Parker, "UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East and North Africa", cit., p. 3.

¹⁹ Personal correspondence with the Treaties Department, Office of the Legal Adviser, Israel Ministry

by endorsing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the country committed itself to promoting gender equality, and it has taken many steps towards the realization of Goal 5 related to the elimination of discrimination against women.²⁰ In addition to this, Mashav, Israel's Agency for International Development, has trained women from other countries in order to equip them with the leadership skills needed to hold senior positions in society.²¹

However, despite the fact that Israel is one of the countries in which a woman has already served as prime minister (Golda Meir held the post from 1969 to 1974), the current Israeli Government has only three female ministers out of a total of 21,²² and women hold only 28 per cent of seats in the Knesset.²³

When it comes to women and the armed forces, Israel is one of the few countries in the world with a mandatory military-service requirement for women: men serve for three years and women for two. Today, 85 per cent of (combat) positions are open to women, and female soldiers make up 7 per cent of the fighting ranks in the Israeli military.²⁴

Since UNSCR 1325 was adopted, women's civil-society organizations have strongly promoted the WPS agenda in Israel, with public campaigns to change legislation and petitions to the High Court. "UNSCR 1325 is nothing less than a revolution", Advocate Anat Thon-Ashkenazy, (former Project Director of the civil society 1325 Action Plan at Itach-Maaki) has declared, "The statement that women can be game changers in current conflicts is especially relevant in Israel."²⁵ In 2012, over thirty women's CSOs and feminist activists began a process – under the leadership of Itach-Maaki–Women Lawyers for Social Justice, the Center for the Advancement of Women in the Public Sphere (WIPS) at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and a non-governmental organization (NGO) called Agenda – to develop a comprehensive 1325 NAP and to persuade the Israeli Government to adopt it. The project was supported by several international donors, including the European Union, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung and the US-based National Council of Jewish Women.²⁶

of Foreign Affairs, 26 October 2017.

²⁰ OHCHR, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Reviews the Report of Israel*, cit.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Gila Gamliel, Minister for Social Equality; Miri Regev, Minister of Culture and Sport; Ayelet Shaked, Minister of Justice. See the Israel Prime Minister's Office website: *The Government*, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/IsraelGov/Pages/default.aspx>.

²³ Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS), *Women, Peace and Security Index: Israel*, <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/israel>.

²⁴ Yuval Ben-David, "Israel's Women Combat Soldiers on Frontline of Battle for Equality", in *Reuters*, 7 March 2017, <http://reut.rs/2mxn9wL>.

²⁵ Anat Thon-Ashkenazy and Netta Loevy, "Our Unique Journey to Implement UNSCR 1325 in Israel" (Video), in *Gunda-Werner-Institute website*, 13 July 2015, <https://www.gwi-boell.de/en/node/24461>.

²⁶ Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen and Emily Parker, "UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East and North Africa", cit., p. 3.

One of the most successful aspects of this initiative was the ability to bring together a very diverse group of women and organizations and to foster an inclusive dialogue. Round-table discussions were organized every second month across the country, reconceptualizing the term “security” and shaping women’s vision of change.²⁷ In October 2013, after two years of intense work, A Comprehensive Action Plan for the Application of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (CAP) – Israeli civil society’s 1325 NAP – was launched at an international conference, introduced by a welcoming video message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. The entire project was accompanied by a media campaign aimed at raising awareness of these issues among the public and decision-makers, as part of an attempt to persuade the Israeli Government to adopt an official 1325 NAP.²⁸ The CAP’s goals included the protection of women from violence, women’s participation in policy-making bodies, and the prevention of violent conflicts and racism.²⁹ The CAP also encompassed concrete steps and indicators for monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

The conflict in Gaza in summer 2014 highlighted once more the need for change, and the call to implement UNSCR 1325+ began to echo in the Knesset.³⁰ Women in parliament spoke out, underlining how national security was still too closely focused on the security of the state rather than on that of its citizens. The campaign also resonated among local authorities, resulting in the adoption of a 1325 NAP by Tel Aviv–Jaffa municipality, which thus became the first and only city in the world to formally adopt a 1325 NAP. This reaffirmed the importance of women’s equal participation in society, and of their full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. To commemorate this historic moment, the City Hall of Tel Aviv–Jaffa illuminated a giant “1325” from its windows, lighting up the night sky.³¹

At the political level, a significant breakthrough took place on 14 December 2014, when the Government of Israel passed Decision No. 2331 for the advancement of gender equality. According to the accompanying resolution, the Government of Israel committed itself, *inter alia*, to establishing an inter-ministerial team in order to develop a NAP to advance gender equality in the spirit of UNSCR 1325.³² This

²⁷ Anat Thon-Ashkenazy and Netta Loevy, “Our Unique Journey to Implement UNSCR 1325 in Israel”, cit.

²⁸ See the website of the Center for the Advancement of Women in the Public Sphere (WIPS), *Promoting an Israeli Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, <https://www.vanleer.org.il/en/node/1658>.

²⁹ Itach-Maaki, WIPS and Agenda, *A Comprehensive Action Plan for the Application of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, 31 October 2013, https://www.vanleer.org.il/sites/files/attachment_field/Israeli%20Action%20Plan%201325%2031%2010%202013.pdf.

³⁰ Lahav Harkov, “MKs Call to Put More Women in Key Defense, Diplomatic Positions”, in *Jerusalem Post*, 15 July 2014, <https://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/MKs-call-to-put-more-women-in-key-defense-diplomatic-positions-362904>.

³¹ Personal correspondence with the Treaties Department, Office of the Legal Adviser, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 October 2017.

³² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), *Consideration*

Decision was the result of joint efforts between women's NGOs and other civil-society organizations, and the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women. Several of the aforementioned NGOs and groups – including the Devorah Forum, the Center for the Advancement of Women in the Public Sphere (WIPS), women parliamentarian representatives and Women Lawyers for Social Justice – had been taking steps to advance the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ and to raise awareness about it. The team was composed of representatives from 15 government ministries and support units. The team, which held nine meetings between May and November 2015, benefitted from an action plan prepared by the NGO, Women Leaders for Peace and Security.³³ However, the inter-ministerial committee missed the deadline of summer 2015,³⁴ and the change in government following the national election further delayed the process. No 1325 NAP seemed to be in the pipeline at the end of 2017.

Recently, Israel joined the Group of Friends of WPS,³⁵ an informal network of 51 interested member states chaired by Canada, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations, which aims to raise awareness about UNSCR 1325+ and to strengthen the support for its implementation within the UN.³⁶ During the 2017 October Security Council open debate, Israel issued a statement reiterating its support for the WPS principles – without, however, making specific commitments towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325 or, more broadly, the WPS agenda.³⁷

While Israel has yet to adopt a 1325 NAP, Israeli women peace activists have continued their actions. They have created joint organizations with Palestinian women in a common effort to achieve a lasting peace. In 2016, the Freedom Flotilla Coalition – involving women peace activists from Palestine, Israel and other countries – attempted to break the Gaza blockade. Though the attempt was unsuccessful, it was presented as an example of the work that can be conducted jointly by Israeli and Palestinian women to promote peace between the two nations.³⁸

of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure. Sixth periodic report of States parties due in 2017. Israel (CEDAW/C/ISR/6), 14 July 2017, p. 6, <https://undocs.org/en/CEDAW/C/ISR/6>.

³³ Israel, *Annex I to State party report*, 15 June 2017, p. 9, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/ISR/INT_CEDAW_ADR_ISR_27759_E.pdf.

³⁴ Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen and Emily Parker, "UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East and North Africa", cit., p. 4.

³⁵ Personal correspondence with the Treaties Department, Office of the Legal Adviser, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 October 2017.

³⁶ Intervention by the Permanent Representative of Canada at the UN Security Council 2017 Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (S/PV.8079), New York, 27 October 2017, p. 104-105, <https://undocs.org/S/PV.8079>.

³⁷ See the PeaceWomen website: *Country / Region profile of: Israel*, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/551>.

³⁸ Ibid.

In October 2017, Palestinian and Israeli women reached Jerusalem after a two-week march to call for an Israeli–Palestinian peace deal. The initiative was undertaken within the framework of the Women Wage Peace movement: several thousand activists joined the march, including participants who had been personally affected by violence in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.³⁹ Women Wage Peace is the largest grassroots movement in the country – founded in the summer of 2014, following Operation Protective Edge (the Israel–Gaza conflict of that year), with the aim of encouraging peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and enforcing the implementation of UNSCR 1325+. The movement – inspired by similar women’s movements in Northern Ireland and Liberia,⁴⁰ within which women of different faiths had united to help resolve violent conflicts, and the “Four Mothers” movement, established in 1997, which pushed for Israel’s military withdrawal from South Lebanon – encompasses tens of thousands of members from across the political spectrum, both Jews and Arabs, religious and secular. Women come from both the centre of the country and its periphery, “from kibbutzim and from settlements”, and they are all united in demanding “a mutually binding non-violent accord, agreeable to both sides”.⁴¹

Israeli representatives are also members of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN), an initiative promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in collaboration with the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and Women in International Security (WIIS) Italy, within the Italian mandate as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC). The initiative combines Italy’s role in the Mediterranean area with its commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to the promotion of gender policies. The MWMN initiative, which was launched in Rome in October 2017, is also part of the III Italian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325).⁴²

3. Algeria

Since its independence in 1962, Algeria has worked for the promotion of women’s rights and their advancement within society. The role that women played during the independence war paved the way for the development of policies and programmes aimed at making them independent and at ensuring equality with men within the country’s society.⁴³ During the internal conflicts of the 1990s, Algerian women were targeted for abduction, rape and murder by extremist groups. In 2014, the

³⁹ “Thousands of Israeli, Palestinian Women March for Peace”, in *The Times of Israel*, 8 October 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/thousands-of-israeli-palestinian-women-march-for-peace>.

⁴⁰ Ruth Eglash, “These Israeli Women Marched from the Lebanese Border to Jerusalem. Here’s Why”, in *The Washington Post*, 19 October 2016, <http://wapo.st/2eHdaCO>.

⁴¹ See the Women Wage Peace website: *About Us*, <http://womenwagepeace.org.il/en/about-eng>.

⁴² For more information, see the MWMN official website: <https://womenmediators.net>.

⁴³ Algerian Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women, *Rapport national de la République Algérienne Démocratique Populaire: Beijing +20*, July 2014, p. 4, https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/Beijing20/NationalReviews/algeria_beijing_review_report.pdf.

state adopted Decree No. 14-26 recognizing that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence during the so-called “black decade” were victims of terrorist attacks, and hence entitled to full compensation by the state.⁴⁴ At the same time, women played an important role in countering violent extremism. At the national level, the government initiated a top-down strategy by taking advantage of the role of *Murshid*, a spiritual guide in Islam. Algeria had its first female *Murshida* in 1993, and since then women have been using the authority granted by this role to spread messages against violent extremism. Armed forces also have been relying on women to find a way to communicate with terrorists: mothers have been given a voice on national television to call on their sons to return home and lay down their weapons.⁴⁵

Similarly to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Algeria was involved in the “Arab Spring” and thousands of Algerians played an active role during these uprisings. While the country was not new to protests, an unprecedented wave of simultaneous demonstration and riots, sparked by sudden rises in staple food prices, erupted nationwide starting in January 2011. Over the course of the following year, some legal measures for enhancing the status of women were adopted. In December 2015, Algeria’s parliament adopted Law No. 15-19 into country’s penal code.⁴⁶ However, apart from this law there is a lack of more comprehensive legal measures, such as restraining orders to protect women from violence as well as law-enforcement measures to prevent and respond to domestic violence, assist survivors and prosecute offenders. Moreover, the new law makes women vulnerable to threats from the offender or their relatives, as it includes a provision that a pardon by the victim puts an end to prosecution.⁴⁷ While Algerian CSOs have continued to campaign for the protection of women from violence and for more gender equality through further and broader changes in the country’s legislation, the prevailing mentality and attitudes toward these rights remain a major obstacle.⁴⁸

A positive trend in politics has developed since 2012, when a 30 per cent quota⁴⁹ was introduced that led to the election of 146 women, equal to the 31.6 per cent of

⁴⁴ “Les Algériennes violées par les terroristes pendant la décennie noire seront indemnisées par l’Etat”, in *Algérie Focus*, 5 February 2014, <https://wp.me/p3OzUy-njZ>; Amnesty International, *Algeria: Comprehensive Reforms Needed to End Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls*, 2014, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde28/010/2014/en>. See also the PeaceWomen website: *Country / Region profile of: Algeria*, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/182>.

⁴⁵ Personal correspondence, name withheld, 14 December 2017.

⁴⁶ Rothna Begum, “Algeria Needs to Do More to End Domestic Violence”, in *HRW News*, 23 May 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/node/304047>.

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018*, December 2017, p. 25, <https://www.hrw.org/node/312556>.

⁴⁸ Nourredine Bessadi, “Droits des femmes en Algérie: les lois progressent mais pas les mentalités”, in *Middle East Eye*, 31 July 2017, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/node/65140>.

⁴⁹ Article 2 of Law No. 12-03 of 12 January 2012 (Law for the Representation of Women) requires variable quotas of between 20 and 50 per cent of the candidates for parliament to be women, depending on the number of seats in each electoral district. See the official text: <https://www.joradp.dz/JO2000/2012/001/FP39.pdf>.

the vote in the Algerian Parliament. However, the number decreased to 117 in the 2017 elections (mainly due to the low positions attributed to them in the lists) and the new government appointed only four women ministers out of 27.⁵⁰ Research surveys show that many women still perceive politics as a male profession, indicating that in order to achieve sustainable results legal reforms need to be supported by cultural education and other initiatives aimed at challenging traditional mind-sets.⁵¹

Algeria ratified the CEDAW in 1996, and is currently ranked number 127 of 144 in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Index, with a negative trend compared with the previous year when it was ranked 120th. This is mainly due to a widening gender gap in political empowerment. On the positive side, the country recorded improvements on wage equality and gender parity in healthy life expectancy in 2017.⁵² Despite its partnership with NATO, Algeria has not aligned with NATO/EAPC policy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related resolutions.

Algeria has played an important role in conflict prevention and in the mediation process in the neighbouring region, such as in the peace and reconciliation process in Mali – in which, however, Malian women have unfortunately been marginalized throughout and their inclusion received little priority.⁵³ Algerian women are quite active in the field of mediation; however, the majority of them still lack qualified skills and proper training.⁵⁴ Interviewees underlined the need to develop training activities on mediation, and mentoring programmes for women. At the same time, women politicians who are actively involved in national dialogues deserve more visibility for the work that they are doing.

During the Security Council's open debate on Women, Peace and Security in October 2015, Algeria committed to reinforcing the participation of women and to mainstreaming the gender perspective in conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations by providing training for mediators and envoys engaged in peace-making and preventive diplomacy. The country expressed the intention to "ensure that peace agreements include provisions to strengthen the role of women in conflict resolution, such as the Algiers Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali"; to "break the silence and raise awareness" about conflict-related sexual and

⁵⁰ Nouria Benghebrit, Minister of Education; Iman Houda Feraoun, Minister of Post, Telecommunications, and Digital Technology; Ghania Eddalia, Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women; Fatma Zohra Zerouati, Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy. See the Algerian Presidency website: *Le Gouvernement*, <http://www.elmouradia.dz/francais/institution/gov/institutionsfr.htm>.

⁵¹ Nourredine Bessadi, "Droits des femmes en Algérie: les lois progressent mais pas les mentalités", cit.; Arab Barometer, *Algeria Five Years after the Arab Uprisings*, 15 April 2017, p. 19, http://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/Algeria_Public_Opinion_Survey_2016.pdf.

⁵² World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, cit., p. 21.

⁵³ Jenny Lorentzen, "Women's Inclusion in the Peace Process in Mali", in *PRIO Blogs*, 13 February 2018, <https://blogs.prio.org/?p=5076>.

⁵⁴ Personal correspondence, name withheld, 4 January 2018.

gender-based violence; to protect victims and enable them to be reintegrated into their societies; and last, but not least, to enact measures to prevent such crimes from being perpetrated in the future.⁵⁵

Algerian representatives are also members of the MWMN and of FemWise Africa (the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation), a network of women leaders and mediators aimed at strengthening women's participation in peace-stabilization efforts, conflict prevention in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). FemWise Africa provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity building and networking aimed at enhancing women's inclusion in peace-making in Africa. Algeria hosted the first General Assembly meeting of the FemWise-Africa network, in Constantine in December 2017.⁵⁶

Algeria has not yet developed a 1325 NAP. However, at the October 2016 UN open debate on WPS, it undertook to develop one in collaboration with CSOs. In March 2017, the country's Ministry of Women and Solidarity organized a conference on the "Role of women in conflict resolution: participation of women in security agencies and diplomacy" in order to discuss the implementation and relevance of UNSCR 1325 in the Algerian context, the role of women in peace-building and in decision-making processes, and to begin developing a 1325 NAP and highlighting the possibility of girls gaining access to the country's Cadets School.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, Algeria's commitment to develop a 1325 NAP was not reiterated during the 2017 UN open debate.⁵⁸

4. Morocco

In Morocco, women's rights are considered to be a top priority for the kingdom and gender equality is a right included in the 2011 constitution, which guarantees equality for women "while respecting the provisions of the constitution, and the laws and permanent characteristics of the Kingdom".⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Statement of Algeria at the UN Security Council 2015 Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (S/PV.7533), New York, 13 October 2015, p. 42-44, <https://undocs.org/S/PV.7533>.

⁵⁶ Nourredine Bessadi, "FemWise-Afrique : première Assemblée Générale à Constantine, les 13 et 14 décembre", in *Algérie1*, 12 December 2017, <https://www.algerie1.com/actualite/femwise-afrique-premiere-assemblee-generale-a-constantine-les-13-et-14-decembre>.

⁵⁷ Algerian Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women, Conference "Le rôle de la femme dans la résolution des conflits: la présence des femmes dans les organes de sécurité et l'appareil diplomatique", Algiers, 2 March 2017, <http://www.msnfcf.gov.dz/fr/le-role-de-la-femme-dans-la-resolution-des-conflits>.

⁵⁸ See the PeaceWomen website: *Country / Region profile of: Algeria*, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/182>.

⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018*, cit., p. 379.

The gender-integration approach has made substantial progress in Morocco's security and judicial spheres, with women gaining ground in very important roles. Some progress has also been made in the political sphere. During the last few decades, women generally, and female activists in particular, have fought to get the Moroccan Government to enforce laws ensuring women's rights and to promote a gender-integrated approach through both bottom-up and top-down initiatives. In 2002, a process of legal reform that addressed, in particular, the family code recognizing the joint responsibility of husband and wife within the family and, in general, the supremacy of international law, was launched. Yet, the implementation of many amendments to this process is conditional on their compliance with sharia law. Despite some backward steps after the establishment of the new coalition government, headed by the country's Justice and Development Party, today Morocco is still at the frontline of moderate Islam. At the 2016 general elections, the seats won by women in the House of Representatives rose slightly to 21 per cent, compared with 17 per cent in the 2011 elections.⁶⁰

The number of seats occupied by women in the Moroccan Parliament stands at 81 out of a total of 395. In particular, 71 women were elected to the House of Representatives thanks to a quota system that favours female representation.

Morocco ratified the CEDAW on 21 June 1993. It also voted for the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, but has not yet signed it. Morocco ranked 136th out of 144 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Index, showing progress on closing its gender gap in labour-force participation but also a widening gender gap on the Political Empowerment Subindex.⁶¹

Despite its partnership with NATO, Morocco has not aligned with NATO/EAPC policy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions.

During the Security Council debates, Morocco has issued various statements related to Women, Peace and Security. In particular, at the October 2017 Security Council open debate, Morocco reiterated its support for the WPS agenda but did not make specific commitments towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

In September 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Morocco hosted an international conference focusing on "Women, Peace, Security and Development". The meeting, which fell within the framework of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of 1325, contributed to the debate on the role of women in the peace process: it called on increasing women's participation in the negotiating process and in peacekeeping and the consolidation of peace. During the conference, Morocco declared its intention to establish a regional think tank

⁶⁰ Ahmed Agouchtim, "Proportion of Women in Moroccan Parliament Rises to 21%", in *The North Africa Post*, 14 October 2016, <http://northafricapost.com/?p=14582>.

⁶¹ World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, cit., p. 22.

based in Rabat aimed in particular at analysing the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation, and the contribution that women can make in facing down radicalization and countering violent extremism.⁶²

Morocco has declared the intention to fulfil its obligation to contribute to the agenda of Women, Peace and Security at both national and international level, though it has not developed a 1325 NAP yet. According to interviewees,⁶³ the drafting of the NAP is in the process of being elaborated and will be made public soon, but no official information exists in this regard.

Although women have suffered some setbacks as a result of a conservative push to keep their role primarily domestic, Moroccan women's-rights activists have continued to campaign for the implementation of national and international law for peace, justice and equality. In 2012, one year after the outbreak of the Arab Spring, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), together with the Moroccan-based NGO Union for Women's Action, launched the 1325 MENA Project to draw attention to discrimination against women and to support efforts to reinforce peace and security in the MENA region.⁶⁴ Women fought side by side with men, both in the streets and from behind computer screens; however, their efforts have not always translated into meaningful increased female participation in the reform process. To strengthen their rights and security in the region, women need to define more incisive strategies, deepen their knowledge of security-policy issues and use their networks more effectively.

The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network also includes Moroccan representatives. Moreover, Morocco is a partner of Spain in the Med-Med initiative, which also aims at promoting mediation as a tool for resolving conflict by, *inter alia*, training women mediators.

5. Egypt

Egyptian women have long struggled to achieve greater gender equality. At the outbreak of the Arab Spring they were on the frontlines of the uprising, facing gender-based and sexual violence and repression. After the coming to power of President al-Sisi, women have officially received a great deal of attention, and the state declares itself as having ensured equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with Article 11 of its 2014 constitution. On various occasions, the president has emphatically declared his support for improving the conditions of girls and women; as a proof of his

⁶² "Le Maroc souhaite créer un think thank régional dédié à l'étude du rôle de la femme dans le maintien de la paix et le développement durable", in *Maroc Diplomatique*, 7 September 2016, <https://wp.me/p6Uq9D-28z>.

⁶³ Personal correspondence, name withheld, 10 January 2018.

⁶⁴ See WILPF website: *The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Project*, <https://wilpf.org/?p=16759>.

commitment, he declared 2017 “The year of the Egyptian women”.⁶⁵ However, the status of Egyptian women is far from equal, as shown by the 2017 Global Gender Gap Index, in which Egypt ranked 134th out of 144 countries (with two positions lost compared with the previous year).⁶⁶ However, Egyptian women’s-rights leaders continue to fight actively against, in particular, female genital mutilation and for increasing women’s political and economic participation.

In November 2014, President al-Sisi appointed Ambassador Faiza Abou el-Naga as the first presidential advisor for national-security affairs, which is the highest rank that a woman in Egypt has achieved recently. At the 2016 elections, 89 women were elected members of parliament, marking the highest female representation in Egypt’s parliamentary history (14.9 per cent of the total seats).⁶⁷

In 1981, Egypt ratified the CEDAW but it has not signed the Arms Trade Treaty and it has not aligned with NATO/EAPC policy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions.

According to interviewees, Egypt has been a staunch supporter of the WPS agenda since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, and has contributed to its implementation by providing expertise on peace and security to international and regional processes. However, the country does not yet have its own 1325 NAP.

Following the presentation of the WPS Regional Action Plan by the Arab League and UN Women in 2015, the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned that the National Council for Women of Egypt “worked out a national plan for [the] follow-up and implementation of resolution 1325”.⁶⁸ However, at the end of 2017 no 1325 NAP had been developed. Research findings suggest that Egypt has failed to undertake this process due to a narrow interpretation of the resolutions. UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are seen as applying mainly to countries in open conflict or in a post-conflict situation – and hence irrelevant in the context of Egypt, which is neither at war nor experiencing protracted violent conflict.

As one of the experts interviewed clearly specified, “the implementation of UNSCR 1325 applies to either countries affected by conflict/emerging from conflict (like Libya, Yemen, Syria, etc.), or countries supporting regional and international peace processes with relevant expertise on WPS (like [the] UK, Sweden, Finland, etc.)”. Egypt’s understanding of and dealings with the Resolution follow on from this

⁶⁵ Egyptian Government, *2017...Year of Egyptian Woman*, 15 March 2017, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/108222?lang=en-us>.

⁶⁶ “Egypt records a notable decline in wage equality for similar work but also an increase in gender parity in tertiary enrolment.” World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, cit., p. 21-22.

⁶⁷ Hend El-Behary, “Women’s Representation in New Parliament Highest in Egypt’s History”, in *Egypt Independent*, 5 January 2016, <https://www.egyptindependent.com/?p=2464631>.

⁶⁸ Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen and Emily Parker, “UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East and North Africa”, cit., p. 2.

internationally agreed mandate of UNSCR 1325; hence, as a country in peacetime, Egypt is keen on supporting other peace processes in the MENA region and internationally. Egypt is also playing an important role in norm-setting and policy formulation, as it contributes to the contextualization of the WPS in the Arab region – including by highlighting, in global policy debates, the plight of women under occupation.⁶⁹

The country recognizes the relevance of the WPS agenda and has shown its commitment, mainly through gender training in peacekeeping operations and mediation. Egypt is a longstanding and committed contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. Its first contribution in this arena came in 1960 in the Congo, and since then it has contributed to 37 UN missions with over 30,000 peacekeepers, deployed in 24 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.⁷⁰ Egypt is the seventh largest troop-/police-contributing country to UN peacekeeping operations in the world, and it currently provides more than 2,000 military and police personnel who serve under the flag of the United Nations in nine peace missions.⁷¹ To date, eight female peacekeepers have participated in UN missions, but Egypt has pledged to increase the number of female peacekeepers in the coming years. Besides this, all Egyptian peacekeepers deployed to UN peacekeeping mission are trained in “Gender considerations in peacekeeping” and “Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations”.

The implementing entity of these training and capacity-building activities is the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding (CCCPA), an independent public agency funded in 1994 by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with a mandate that covers all peace and security-related issues. The CCCPA is an African Union centre of excellence, and the only civilian peace training, education and capacity-building centre in the Arab world. As part of its mission, the CCCPA carries out training at tactical level for peacekeeping missions in order to strengthen gender expertise in peace operations in accordance with UNSCR 1325+, as part of the core pre-deployment training offered to Egyptian peacekeepers.

In addition to this, the CCCPA devotes particular attention to mainstreaming a gender perspective in peace- and state-building; enhancing the protection of vulnerable persons, especially women and children; and preventing conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, including gender–ethnic violence, by providing trainees with the relevant concepts, tools and skills.⁷²

⁶⁹ Email correspondence, name withheld, 12 January 2018.

⁷⁰ See CCCPA website: *Egypt and Peacekeeping*, <http://www.cairopeacekeeping.org/en/egypt-and-peacekeeping>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² See CCCPA website: *Training Courses and Capacity Building: Streamlining Gender in Peace and State-Building*, <http://www.cairopeacekeeping.org/en/training-center/training-courses-capacity-building>.

In the field of conflict mediation, the CCCPA has recently carried out training courses to enhance the mediation and negotiation skills of Egyptian diplomats. This training targets gender-balanced groups of mid-career professionals from the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2018, the CCCPA will work with UN Women and the Office of the Arab League on the monitoring and evaluation report of the RAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.⁷³

6. Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan differs from the other case studies, being the only MPC with a 1325 NAP.⁷⁴ When this research started in mid-2017, the country was still in the middle of the developing process; at the end of the year, however, the document had been officially adopted.

Jordan, which held a seat on the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member in the years 2014–15, is a regional and global leader in peace and security, and among the top contributors of peacekeeping troops to UN operations over the past ten years. Since 2017, dozens of Jordanian women from the kingdom's army, police and Civil Defence Department have taken part in peacekeeping missions in countries such as Libya, Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Female peacekeepers in these missions have played an important role – in particular, in raising awareness of violations committed against women and children, and in providing aid and psychological assistance, medicine and medical care.⁷⁵ The celebrations for the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2015, when Jordan was sitting on the UNSC as a non-permanent member, and the deterioration of the security situation in the neighbouring region combined to accelerate the process of adoption of a 1325 NAP in the kingdom.⁷⁶ It was the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), in collaboration with UN Women and thanks to the support of the Government of Japan, that initiated a participatory 1325 NAP drafting process. To lay the foundation for the NAP, ten national and local dialogues on WPS were undertaken in early 2016 across the country. The aim was to raise awareness of WPS issues and engage local partners, stakeholders and champions of the WPS agenda as well as to identify priorities and make recommendations for the upcoming plan. The consultations brought together approximately 250 stakeholders, including government officials (at local and national level), police and

⁷³ Personal correspondence, name withheld, 12 January 2018.

⁷⁴ The 1325 NAP of Tunisia, adopted in July 2018, was still in the drafting process during the redaction of this paper.

⁷⁵ Rana Husseini, "Role of Jordanian Women in Peacekeeping Missions Lauded", in *The Jordan Times*, 23 May 2016, <http://www.jordantimes.com/node/281181>; UN Women Jordan, *Peace in Her Eyes* (Video), 15 June 2016, <http://jordan.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/videos?videoid=OLcCGvkKwHw>.

⁷⁶ Personal interview, name withheld, 4 October 2017.

military representatives, academics, tribal leaders, religious leaders, representatives from NGOs and refugees. Participation was gender balanced (60 per cent women and 40 per cent men), and represented a cross-section of the population.

These dialogues identified a number of potential priority areas to be addressed in the NAP – including increasing women’s participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and enhancing women’s leadership and engagement in the national response to the Syria refugee crisis, with an emphasis on protection and the prevention of gender-based violence. Preventing violent extremism (PVE) was also highlighted as a priority in several of the consultative meetings: many interviewees reported that PVE emerged as one of the areas of major political interest that could work as a push factor to generate support for the NAP process.⁷⁷ Therefore, UN Women commissioned a study on the gendered aspects of radicalization and de-radicalization.⁷⁸ Based on this study’s findings, UN Women will implement a special programme on PVE in Jordanian communities in a gender-sensitive and inclusive manner.

In 2016, UN Women, JNCW and the Institute for Inclusive Security (IIS) provided expertise and technical support to the NAP drafting process through the organization of workshops aimed at outlining an actionable “NAP logic” framework, with precise and appropriate indicators, targets, outputs and a realistic budget. To ensure the implementation of the NAP at local level, UN Women and JNCW supported the role of WPS local “champions” by involving them in training, dialogues and workshops, and by engaging them through other communication channels such as social media and WhatsApp groups. To document lessons learned and promote regional and international knowledge sharing, UN Women facilitated exchange meetings between the 1325 coalition working on the NAP – comprising 49 members and representatives of various institutions – and key supporters of the Jordanian NAP process, such as the government of Finland and regional actors like the Arab League.⁷⁹

The adoption of the 1325 NAP represents a major achievement for Jordan, and for all women in the region. Jordanian women have been struggling for years to increase the space for their political participation and obtain affirmative-action measures and social gender equality. The Hashemite kingdom is a mainly tribal society, and patriarchal culture and customary law are still the dominant factors in determining gender roles and relations between sexes. Jordanian women and

⁷⁷ UN Women and Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), *Women, Peace and Security in Jordan: A Resolution in Action. Synthesis Report*, Amman, UN Women Jordan, March 2016, p. 3, <http://jordan.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/8/a-national-dialogue-on-unscr-1325-women-peace-and-security-in-jordan-a-resolution-in-action>.

⁷⁸ UN Women and Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), *Women and Violent Radicalization in Jordan. Technical Report*, March 2016, <http://jordan.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/7/un-women-and-jncw---women-and-violent-radicalization-in-jordan>.

⁷⁹ See the UN Women Jordan website: *Women, Peace and Security in the Arab States*, <http://jordan.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/past-initiatives/response-recovery-and-resilience/initiative3>.

girls continue to be the victims of “honour” killing and/or domestic violence (one out of three is a victim of this type of violence); when married to a foreign citizen, they may not pass their nationality on to their children or their spouse, as their male compatriots may, and if they marry a second time they lose custody of their children. In April 2017, the Jordanian Parliament approved a domestic-violence protection bill, and in August voted to revoke an article of the country’s penal code that allowed a rapist to escape punishment for his crime if he married the victim.⁸⁰ In recent years, this archaic legislation contravening women’s rights has been the target of campaigners across the entire Middle East: Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, followed by Lebanon in mid-August 2017, have all repealed similar laws and changed their penal codes accordingly. One by one, the “Marry your rapist” laws are being repealed across the entire Middle East. Wafa Bani Mustafa, a Member of Parliament in Jordan and a leading proponent of the repeal of such law, said that only a change in legislation “could drive change in social norms. Without repeal, she argued, ‘the state of impunity will continue, and the interest of the family will be put ahead of the victim’s right to justice’”.⁸¹

The parliamentary polls that took place in July 2016 saw the “historic” election of 20 women to parliament – that is, 15.4 per cent of the seats.⁸² In 2014, the Jordanian Parliament had approved a decentralization law that established governorate councils, with quotas for women to encourage their participation: the quota system reserves 15 per cent of seats for women on governorate councils, 25 per cent on municipal councils and one seat out of five on local councils. These quotas are quite advanced in comparison with other states in the MENA region. In addition, seats won by women in a competitive race are not counted within the quota, meaning that women can win seats in addition to those reserved by the quota.⁸³ Between 2013 and 2017, Jordan undertook a strategic plan to provide support and assistance to women standing in municipal elections, with a focus on training in community leadership. At the local elections in August 2017, women won 66 seats at the governorate and municipal levels by acclamation.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Bethan McKernan, “Jordan Repeals Law Allowing Rapists to Avoid Punishment If They Marry Their Victims”, in *The Independent*, 1 August 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/jordan-rape-law-vote-repeal-rapists-punishment-marry-victims-womens-rights-sexual-assault-violence-a7870551.html>.

⁸¹ Somini Sengupta, “One by One, Marry-Your-Rapist Laws Are Falling in the Middle East”, in *The New York Times*, 22 July 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2tyXuIH>.

⁸² OHCHR, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Examines the Report of Jordan*, 16 February 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21191>.

⁸³ Annette Ranko et al., “The Municipal and Governorate Council Elections of August 2017: Decentralization Efforts in Jordan”, in *KAS Country Reports*, August 2017, p. 6, <http://www.kas.de/jordanien/en/publications/49922>.

⁸⁴ Laila Azzeh, “Women Experience in Elections ‘Positive’ Overall – SIGI”, in *The Jordan Times*, 17 August 2017, <http://www.jordantimes.com/node/297257>.

Due to its particular position, Jordan acts as a “safe zone” in the Middle East, a kind of oasis of peace for a very large refugee population that is fleeing from violence and the consequences of conflicts. This has had far-reaching security repercussions for Jordanian society and for the refugees themselves – in particular, for women living in the refugee camps – as is reflected in the country’s 1325 NAP. A worrying trend is the increased rate of early marriages, mainly among the kingdom’s Syrian-refugee population. Syrian refugees bring their customs and traditions with them, which allow the marriage of children aged 15, and even younger under certain circumstances, and the Government of Jordan cannot prohibit the practice. While respecting Syrian traditions, it took a set of measures, including the opening of an office in the northern Za’atari Camp, to ensure that contracts are in conformity with the national law.⁸⁵

In October 2017, a Jordan representative joined the Italian initiative of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN); the initiative was included among the activities of the Jordanian NAP. This network will become an important tool for ensuring the inclusion of a gender perspective in Jordan’s peace efforts, and more specifically for increasing women’s participation in the mediation activities that Jordan undertakes in the neighbouring region.

As of 2017, Jordan ranks 135th out of 144 countries listed in the Global Gender Gap Index. Like Morocco, the country has made progress on closing its gender gap in labour-force participation, but saw also a widening gender gap on the Political Empowerment Subindex.⁸⁶ On 1 July 1992, Jordan ratified the CEDAW and in February 2017 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considered the sixth periodic report of Jordan, issuing its periodic recommendations.⁸⁷

In 2014, the NATO Jordan III Trust Fund was launched. This project aims to support the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) to attain a 3 per cent female-officer representation target, and to provide women with wider career opportunities.⁸⁸ The trust fund supports Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) partners and other regional actors in the development of the role of women in the military and security sector as well as in peace-making activities. The JAF developed a Military Women’s Strategy for 2006–2016 that aims to build capacity through the recruitment and training of more women in the armed forces, and subsequently to create wider employment and participation opportunities. The strategy aligns with NATO/EAPC policy for implementing UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, but

⁸⁵ OHCHR, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Examines the Report of Jordan*, cit.

⁸⁶ See World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, cit., p. 22.

⁸⁷ OHCHR, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Examines the Report of Jordan*, cit.

⁸⁸ See the website of the NATO SALW & MA Information Sharing Platform: *Jordan III*, https://salw.hq.nato.int/Project/Details/tf_7.

progress has been stalled by the limits of the training centre. Unfortunately, the training centre suffers from shortage of funds that have negatively affected the implementation of the project.

Jordan has been particularly active during the last few UN open debates on WPS. In its 2015 statement, Jordan affirmed its support for the WPS agenda and undertook to harmonize it with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Keeping in mind the regional context, including the constant flow of Syrian refugees, Jordan committed itself to enhancing and guaranteeing respect for the rights of women and girls in its legislation, and to promoting women's empowerment by enabling them to actively participate in decision-making processes. The following year, the Permanent Representative of Jordan followed up on these commitments, noting that a 1325 NAP had been drafted, gender-sensitive trainings had taken place and that women's participation in Jordan's peacekeeping contributions had increased overall.⁸⁹

At the 2017 open debate, Jordan was able to announce that its draft national plan had been finalized and submitted to the Cabinet for ratification. Jordan invested a great deal of effort in preparing its NAP, attempting to estimate its implementation costs and allocating "a flexible and realistic budget" to it; however, it failed to specify the amount of money that should be invested in the WPS agenda over the coming years.⁹⁰ The 1325 NAP was adopted in December 2017, and officially launched in March 2018.

7. Tunisia

Tunisian women are often regarded as regional role models. They have frequently been leading advocates of peace, justice and gender equality in Tunisia and, more broadly, in the MENA region. They were at the forefront of the 2011 Arab Spring protests – also known as the "Jasmine Revolution" – and played a major role during the 2011 Tunisian elections, which led to a coalition government that fought extremism and introduced greater gender equality into the country's new constitution.

The fight for women's rights in Tunisia began in 1956, when polygamy was abolished. The most recent developments include an organic law for the eradication of violence against women, adopted by a unanimous vote on 26 June 2017, and the abolition of the prohibition on marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men, passed on 13 August of the same year.⁹¹ Today, women

⁸⁹ See the PeaceWomen website: *Country / Region profile of: Jordan*, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/557>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Anja Palm, "Women, Peace and Security in the Mediterranean", in *Documenti IAI*, No. 17|20 (November 2017), p. 10, <http://www.iai.it/en/node/8540>.

account for up to 45 per cent of public servants thanks to the competence and skills that they have developed. Until 2011–12, Tunisian women preferred to talk about “partnership” rather than equality, a concept implying that they should stand by the side of men. Since then, a new dynamic has developed, due to the re-emerging activism of Tunisian women and their great capacity to obtain support from men. This process culminated in the adoption of Article 46 in the 2014 constitution, the constitutional provision protecting women’s rights and equality.⁹²

Many strategies and mechanisms have been deployed in parallel with these developments, such as the “Plan d’action multisectoriel pour l’enfance” to counter radicalization; the “Plan d’action de lutte contre le terrorisme”; and the “Ligne de credit sans interest pour les femmes”, aimed at sustaining women’s economic independence.⁹³

Tunisia ratified the CEDAW in 1985, and fully withdrew all its reservations in 2014.⁹⁴ The country ranks 117th out of 144 in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Index. In the MENA region, it is among the best-performing countries in this arena – together with Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.⁹⁵ Tunisia voted for the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, but has not yet signed it.

In May 2016, Tunisia officially launched its 1325 NAP drafting process. It has been part of a three-year project developed in collaboration with UN Women and promoted by the Government of Finland as part of its own 1325 NAP, aimed at supporting Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia in the preparation and adoption of their NAPs. The project aims to facilitate dialogue between the various stakeholders working in the field, with the objective of elaborating a NAP that can satisfy the needs of all institutions (both governmental and non-governmental) involved in the process, taking into account their respective roles and responsibilities.⁹⁶

This first workshop – organized by the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood in collaboration with UN Women – aimed to raise awareness among the different stakeholders about the principles embedded in UNSCR 1325+ and the WPS agenda, and in particular to introduce the results of the 1325 UN Global Study, presented on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Resolution. During the various working-group sessions, participants had the opportunity to discuss the relevance of the WPS agenda for Tunisia and to identify the national priorities that could be included in its NAP. Participants recognized the fact that the implementation of the WPS agenda in Tunisia would contribute to stronger protection of women’s

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Tunisia: Landmark Action on Women’s Rights*, 30 April 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/node/253554>.

⁹⁵ World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, cit., p. 21.

⁹⁶ UN Women Maghreb, *ONU Femmes Tunisie organise un atelier de formation sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution 1325*, 12 April 2017, <http://maghreb.unwomen.org/fr/actualites-evenements/actualites/2017/04/atelier-resolution-1325>.

rights and to the realization of a security framework based on human security, inclusiveness and equality for all.⁹⁷

In April 2017, Tunisia's Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood, in collaboration with UN Women, organized a training workshop on the WPS agenda for governmental and civil-society representatives, with a particular focus on the Jordanian NAP drafting process. The importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, and especially in conflict mediation, was underlined by Neziha Labidi, Minister of Women, Family and Childhood, and Saana Kyröläinen, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland in Tunisia. During the training, participants were encouraged to include a gender perspective in their daily work and in all relevant policies.⁹⁸ All these developments have taken place with a view to the adoption of the 1325 NAP.

Within the framework of the same project, another conference was organized at the Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) in July 2017 to present the results of a mapping study of Tunisian CSOs working in the WPS field, as well as a study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ in the country.⁹⁹ Research results showed that 86 associations working on women's issues in the country participated in the survey and presented their projects related to the four "pillars" of the resolutions: prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery. Other NGOs that cooperate with UN Women on these subjects presented their research results as well.¹⁰⁰ According to the report, 50 per cent of the associations work on women's protection, 26 per cent focus on prevention, 25 per cent are more interested in women's participation and 7 per cent in relief and recovery actions. Four per cent of the associations interviewed are interested in addressing more than one pillar of UNSCR 1325 at the same time. According to Khadija Ben Hassine, professor of philosophy and a gender expert, the challenges that Tunisia is facing when it comes to protection issues are not related to the lack of a legal or institutional framework but to the difficulties in implementing these norms and to the failure of institutions to adapt to a society in constant evolution.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ UN Women Maghreb, *La Tunisie lance la mise en œuvre de la Résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies*, 30 May 2016, <http://maghreb.unwomen.org/fr/actualites-evenements/actualites/2016/05/tunisie-resolution-1325>.

⁹⁸ Personal interview, name withheld, September 2017.

⁹⁹ UN Women Maghreb, *Présentation des études sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution 1325 en Tunisie*, 21 July 2017, <http://maghreb.unwomen.org/fr/actualites-evenements/actualites/2017/07/etude-resolution-1325-tunisie>. See also CREDIF and UN Women, *Etat des lieux de la mise en œuvre de la résolution 1325 en Tunisie*, July 2017, <http://maghreb.unwomen.org/fr/ressources-medias/publications/2017/07/etat-des-lieux-fps-vf>.

¹⁰⁰ Association for the Right to the Difference Promotion (ADD); Aswat Nissa; Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMSS); and the Observatoire Tunisien de la Sécurité Globale (OTSG).

¹⁰¹ UN Women Maghreb, *Présentation des études sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution 1325 en Tunisie*, cit.

During the Conference on “Women, Peace and Security in the Mediterranean”, organized in Palermo by the IAI as a side event to the 2017 OSCE Mediterranean conference, Neziha Labidi briefed the participants about the major developments in the drafting process of the Tunisian NAP. She emphasized the fact that Tunisia was trying to cover all aspects related to the roles and responsibilities of women in the security field, drawing together all existing plans in order to develop a single strategy suitable for the country’s society.¹⁰² On the same occasion, she also noted the importance of involving men in the development of NAPs, and the role that these documents can play in facing current security challenges – in particular, terrorism and radicalization. She further remarked that Tunisia is in a peculiar situation, since the current government is fighting on two fronts – that is, against both terrorism and corruption. This has created an urgency that accelerated the drafting process of the NAP so that the document could be finalized and adopted in the first months of 2018.¹⁰³ The NAP was then officially adopted on 4 July of that year.¹⁰⁴

Looking at the work done by Tunisia in the field of conflict mediation, a mention should be made of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, one of whose members is a woman, Ouided Bouchamaoui, President of the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA). The Quartet has played a major role in fostering dialogue and peace, and in countering conflictual dynamics. This effort was internationally recognized and acclaimed when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 for its decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011. Though the Quartet was involved in the country’s national dialogue process rather than in a true conflict-mediation effort, its activity perfectly fits in with what can be considered high-level mediation. Ouided Bouchamaoui is today one of the active members of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN).

8. General observations and critical issues

The research findings demonstrate that, despite considerable cultural and political differences, the implementation of the WPS agenda faces similar challenges in all the countries analysed – in line with the assessment made in previous OSCE studies.¹⁰⁵ OSCE participating States share with the Mediterranean Partners the same barriers and obstacles that hinder a full dissemination of the core principles embedded in this body of resolutions.

¹⁰² Anja Palm, “Women, Peace and Security in the Mediterranean”, cit., p. 13.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ UN Women Tunisia, *Lancement du Plan d’Action National de mise en œuvre de la Résolution du Conseil de Sécurité 1325 Femmes, Paix et Sécurité*, 3 July 2018, <http://unictunis.org.tn/?p=13085>.

¹⁰⁵ Christin Ormhaug, *OSCE Study on National Action Plans...*, cit.; Allison Muehlenbeck, *Designating Sustainable Strategies for Inclusive Security*, cit.

UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions are not utilized consistently across the MENA region. This disparity exists not only among the six countries examined but also within each of them, particularly between urban and rural areas. Members of underprivileged communities in remote areas are less aware than their urban compatriots of their rights and opportunities, and are mostly under the influence of community leaders who play a dominant role within tribes or families. The involvement of community leaders in policy formulation is essential in order to reach out to all segments of the population and have a real and sustainable impact on the whole of society.

The general lack (with the exception of Jordan and Tunisia) of structured coordinating mechanisms that could facilitate cooperation between the various governmental entities (ministries of Foreign Affairs; Defence; Interior; and Social Issues, Family and Women) as well as parliaments, civil-society organizations and academia, regional (Arab League and African Union) and international (UN) organizations prevents an effective dialogue and much-needed synergies between the different stakeholders. This is particularly evident in the case of relations with NGOs and CSOs. In all the countries analysed, women's civil-society organizations are actively engaged, and they are at the forefront of promoting the agenda and advocating for women's rights in the field of peace and security. CSOs play a key role in implementing the WPS agenda, but to be effective their efforts should be, as far as possible, complementary to the those of the government – i.e. they should not be developed separately from, or as a substitute for, the latter. A more prominent and outspoken role for parliamentary representatives committed to the WPS agenda, and ready to provide both political vision and economic support, would also facilitate its implementation.

As instability in the MENA region and across the world generally persists and economic disparities deepen, we are confronted with political choices by some governments that still prioritize responses to economic, political and security crises in ways that preserve patriarchal social structures and reinforce gender inequalities. As a result, women's issues are again pushed towards the margins of political debates, requiring an additional and constant effort to bring them back to the core of domestic and foreign politics. Conflicts represent an important opportunity for changing social structures and reshaping the narrative of security, and the 1325 NAPs are precious tools in this regard. However, a common opinion among many interviewees (both women and men), was that 1325 NAPs remain "ink on paper" – in the same way that many other action plans do – without the proper financial tools and political support to ensure their implementation.

On their side, women push for being more actively included in the field of peace, defence and security, but they face a number of challenges. This arena remains strongly male dominated, and changing the patriarchal vision of gender roles rooted in customary traditions remains a daunting task. At the same time, in some cases the lack of enough qualified and skilled women who are able to engage in specific areas of peace and security issues – such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); preventing violent extremism (PVE); conflict mediation;

and early warning – is another important factor to be taken into consideration, as it represents a crucial gap that needs to be filled.

One final aspect that emerged during the interviews was the lack of knowledge about the OSCE and what the Organization does in general terms, but also in the field of gender equality and WPS. One of the activities that can be developed is undertaking awareness-raising initiatives – not only about the 1325 agenda but also about the OSCE itself, and the opportunities that it can provide for its partners.

9. Recommendations: How to support and accelerate the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ in the six OSCE MPCs

1) *Lack of awareness.* One of the aspects that often emerged during the research was the assumption that this agenda concerns only countries in ongoing or post-conflict settings. Due to the changing nature of conflict and the contemporary emerging security challenges – most notably, the rise of terrorism, forced displacement and migration – women and girls (together with boys and men) face security challenges in all countries. It has become increasingly clear that there is an urgent need for enhanced national and local capacities and for gender expertise in order to respond to today's challenges. Therefore, it would be a mistake to limit the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ to countries in open conflict, ignoring such major destabilizing factors as hybrid warfare, cybersecurity and terrorism. A general lack of awareness about the agenda is a major obstacle to both launching effective campaigns for 1325 and engaging the actors necessary for its implementation.

Recommendation: the OSCE can support the development of strategic communication and media campaigns about UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions with the goal of challenging negative attitudes and mind-sets at national level, including both urban and rural areas. Providing funding for training and awareness-raising efforts that reach larger communities would facilitate a broader understanding of the WPS agenda.

2) *Lack of political will.* The lack of commitment by political leaders complicates considerably the implementation of the WPS agenda. Parliamentarians – both women and men – can play a crucial role in developing measures in support of UNSCR 1325+. It is important that members of parliaments commit themselves increasingly to supporting this agenda and, in particular, that its implementation becomes an integral part of the responsibility of the countries' foreign affairs, and security and defence committees.

Recommendation: participating States should include gender and security issues within their political analyses and reports; support the adoption of Women, Peace and Security Acts within their national parliaments; and allocate specific funding to support the development of 1325 NAPs and other mechanism or actions related to the WPS agenda. The OSCE can facilitate this process through its Parliamentary Assembly, by including a WPS perspective in its annual meetings and by organizing

ad hoc conferences and events. References to UNSCR 1325+ should be regularly included in the recommendations produced by the Assembly.

3) *Lack of inclusiveness.* Too often, the WPS agenda is perceived mainly as a women's-rights and gender-equality issue, rather than as a security issue. This attitude manifests itself both in the participating states and among the Partners for Cooperation, as well as at the Secretariat level. Security concerns and the WPS agenda should instead be addressed by the OSCE as a single set of problems.

Recommendation: in view of promoting comprehensive and sustainable security, the OSCE should not only include WPS/GPS (Gender Peace and Security) issues in the mandate of its Gender Equality Unit but also integrate them within the entire spectrum of its activities: the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimensions.

4) *Limited collaboration with men.* One of the obstacles to the implementation of the WPS agenda at global level is the widespread perception that it refers only to women's rights and does not concern the whole of society. It would be more beneficial for a wider understanding and acceptance of the agenda if its sphere of application were to be broadened. To this end, it could be renamed Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) without neglecting the specific roles and responsibilities that women can play during the entire conflict cycle.

Recommendation: training and awareness-raising campaigns at local level should be as inclusive as possible, with a particular focus on men and boys, male politicians and religious leaders. It should be continuously stressed that advancing the role of women within the security field would have a positive effect not only on them but also on the whole of society. Outreach activities towards men and boys would also contribute to the emergence of new advocates of the agenda, and would challenge patriarchal notions of masculinity.

5) *Limited resources.* One of the biggest limits to the WPS agenda worldwide is the lack of dedicated resources for its implementation – including the adoption and development of NAPs, together with adequate monitoring and evaluation systems.

Recommendation: the OSCE and participating States can provide funds for realization-training activities and awareness-raising campaigns, and for assisting the development of 1325 NAPs that include monitoring and evaluation plans.

6) *Facilitating collaborative practices.* This research has again demonstrated that CSOs and female activists are the driving agents promoting the WPS agenda. They work on projects in the field, keep the spotlight trained on women's needs and push institutions to increase their commitment towards this agenda. In some cases, they are also directly involved in the development of NAPs and the related implementing mechanisms. However, they sometimes lack an articulated political vision, and their dialogue with the institutions is often problematic as they do not always trust politicians and governmental agencies. There is, therefore, the need

to establish and even institutionalize new forms of collaboration and dialogue between governmental and non-governmental actors, provided that the latter's independence is safeguarded.

Recommendation: the OSCE and participating States should support dialogue and collaboration between women's CSOs and national institutions, including the armed forces, promoting the organization of dedicated forums or workshops. Dialogues with women's CSO representatives should be included in bilateral meetings organized by participating States, when appropriate, including those involving OSCE's parliamentary delegations.

7) *Increasing the active participation of women in conflict mediation.* The important role that women can play in peace negotiation and conflict mediation is internationally recognized. So is the lack of female experts in this field, especially at the Track I level of mediation. Many initiatives have been undertaken over the past few years in order to remedy this shortcoming, including in the Mediterranean region. The newly established Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the IAI and Women in International Security (WIIS) Italy, launched in October 2017, is a platform for enhancing dialogue on the role of women in conflict mediation, and a tool for supporting more initiative in this region.

Recommendation: the OSCE and the participating States should support the development of training in conflict mediation and national dialogue, both at OSCE headquarters and in the Partner States. Training activities could include mentoring programmes for trainers and mediators. In the spirit of collaboration and synergy, the OSCE could engage with the MWMN, supporting joint initiatives in the field of training and involve its members in other OSCE-led activities.

8) *Strategic cooperation.* The implementation of UNSCR 1325+ is high on the agenda of international and regional organizations operating in the MENA region. Cooperation and synergetic actions between the most relevant actors would avoid duplication, overlapping of efforts and waste of resources.

Recommendation: the OSCE is encouraged to explore possible areas of cooperation within the Mediterranean region, and to strengthen its cooperation on the implementation of UNSCR 1325+ with other regional organizations – including the Arab League, which is particularly active on this field. Potential cooperation between the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding (CCCPA) could be explored as well.

9) *Leading by example.* Over the last few years, women in the MENA region have made significant progress in a number of fields: social and economic, but also political – and in the military. In some cases, they have reached high-ranking positions, albeit still in limited numbers.

Recommendation: the OSCE and the participating States are encouraged to lead by example, by appointing more female Ambassadors in their delegations and embassies, including as chief mediators and negotiators.

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