# New Tracks, New Pathways: Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Arab States Region

## Meeting Report: Arab States Regional Open Day on Women, Peace and Security

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Arab States Regional Open Day
on Women, Peace and Security
25th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325

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# 1. Commemorating United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 – A Transformative Framework for Peace and Security

In 2025, the world commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. With its adoption in October 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 reaffirmed that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all their diversity. Nine subsequent resolutions later and thirty years after the foundational commitments laid by the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action – and its Critical Area of Concern on "Women and Armed Conflict" – the WPS Agenda continued to deliver progress on enhancing women's meaningful participation and leadership in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and recovery, while ensuring their protection in conflict and post-conflict settings, but its implementation remains uneven across contexts and faces new and urgent challenges, especially in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Women's participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, relief response and decision-making is not only an essential element of sustaining peace, but also a proven approach for long-term peace outcomes and inclusive post-conflict recovery. Since 2000, National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS have been adopted by 112 UN Member States (58 percent)[1] as the primary vehicle to localize WPS within national contexts. Governments also pledged to take further action to accelerate the implementation of WPS commitments as part of the 2024 Pact for the Future. The commemoration of the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 provides an opportunity to re-focus on its objectives and reflect on the advantages of the meaningful participation of women to peace and security efforts.

Despite global research indicating that higher levels of gender equality are directly related to increased levels of security and stability and that a peace agreement inclusive of women's participation is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years,[1] in 2024, only 7 percent of negotiators, 14 percent of mediators and 20 percent of signatories to peace agreements were women.[2] With world military expenditure exceeding USD 2.7 trillion – the steepest year-on-year rise since at least the end of the Cold war[3] and while many countries still face or seek to emerge from protracted crises, the full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making and formal peacebuilding processes becomes even more essential for inclusive and sustainable recovery and nation-building efforts.

1 Women's Participation in Peace Processes. Council on Foreign Relations (2025).
2 Infographic: UN Secretary-General's annual report on women and peace and security (2025) | Publications | UN Women knowledge hub (2025). Yet, this falls below the minimum 1/3 target for women's participation in mediation and peace processes by the UN and the parity goal for decision-making recommended by the CEDAW.
3 Ibid.

# 2. A Regional Snapshot on the Implementation of Women, Peace and Security

Over the past 25 years, the Arab States region has witnessed high levels of conflicts and instability, including in Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, with spillover effects to neighbouring countries, such as Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan, who have been continuously responding to the needs of refugee populations seeking safety across borders. An estimated 22.4 million women and girls in the region currently require humanitarian assistance (UN Women, 2025). In protracted and emerging conflict settings alike, women and girls continue to face heightened protection risks, including conflict-related sexual violence, forced displacement, and increased exposure to militarization of aid delivery. The region has further been marked by political turmoil, economic crises and weakened governance systems, where women face multiple structural obstacles, including restrictive social norms.

Amid shrinking democratic space and rising militarization, over half of the region's countries have adopted or renewed NAPs on WPS. Nine countries in the region have adopted NAPs, some in their second or third iteration, and in 2015, the League of Arab States (LAS) adopted the Regional Strategy and Executive Action Plan on the Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security. Recently, the regional intergovernmental organization established an emergency committee for the protection of women during crisis and conflict together with a roadmap (2025-2028) to oversee the work of this new structure. Together with the Arab Declaration on Combating All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), these frameworks are key cornerstones that guide regional and national implementation of the WPS Agenda, while the Arab Women Mediators Network launched in 2020 jointly with UN Women directly aims at increasing the direct participation of women in formal mediation and peacebuilding efforts.

Despite important legislative and political progress, women and girls across the region continue to be directly affected by various forms of conflicts and widespread violence, both offline and online. Meanwhile, the essential work of feminist civil society organizations is at risk and under continued pressure. UN Women's global survey At a Breaking Point: The Impact of Foreign Aid Cuts on Women's Organizations in Humanitarian Crises Worldwide (2025) paints a stark picture. Surveying 411 organizations in 44 countries, the survey found that 90 per cent of Women-Led Organizations (WLOs) or Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) have been significantly (62 per cent) or somewhat (28 per cent) financially impacted by recent aid reductions. In the Arab States, the situation is even more bleak, with 80 per cent of women's organizations significantly impacted by the funding cuts.[4]

The absence of accountability and reconciliation, increased weaponization, the disregard for international or domestic laws, women's insufficient representation in decision-making spaces, including in ceasefire negotiations or mediation processes, the lack of social and economic justice, continued discriminatory social norms and practices, and the absence of regional or global coordination among women's movements and fragmentation risks, all call for renewed thinking and commitments for the advancement of the WPS Agenda through a women-led and feminist approach.

Acknowledging this reality, the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS), with generous support from the German Federal Ministry for Development Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the Government of Japan, organized a Regional Open Day on the WPS Agenda from 2 to 4 December 2025, in Amman, Jordan, offering a dedicated space

4 Advocacy Note – Four Ways to Support Women's Organizations in the Arab States Amid Widespread Funding Cuts | Publications | UN Women – Arab States

Group photo of participants at the Regional Open Day on Women, Peace and Security in the Arab States, marking 25 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Photo: UN Women

for high-level deliberations on the continued relevance of the WPS agenda in a changing regional context, with the aim to foster joint strategizing and formulate actionable recommendations to strengthen the agenda's implementation in the Arab Region.

Gathering close to a 100 representatives from different backgrounds, including state entities, women's rights organizations, women-led organizations and youth activists, the Regional Open Day on WPS was preceded by a close-door civil society consultation, gathering around 13 WLOs and WROs from across the region on 1 December 2025. The consultation aimed at recognizing the critical role of women's organizations as frontline actors in humanitarian, peacebuilding and recovery efforts—preventing conflicts, challenging radicalization and extremism, and promoting gender equality, justice, and human rights, ultimately ensuring that regional policymaking reflects the lived realities and priorities of women and girls across the region.

# 3. Sessions Summary and Key Recommendations

## Session 1: Opening Segment

The Arab States Regional Open Day on WPS was opened by Dr. Moez Doraid, UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States and H.E Ms. Wafaa Bani Mustafa, Minister of Social Development and Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As highlighted by the speakers, the WPS agenda remains essential for building sustainable peace, especially in contexts of political transition and recovery. Strengthening the interlinkages between the WPS and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas and applying a triple nexus approach (humanitarian–development–peace) can significantly improve outcomes.

Despite progress, including the development of costed NAPs on WPS, as in Jordan, the implementation of WPS in the region still face key challenges, including: (i) Lack of funding, with funding cuts significantly impacting 80 percent of WLOs in the region to deliver and respond to existing needs,[5] (ii) Limited access to services, undermining recovery and resilience, (iii) Regional instability, leading to displacement, economic challenges and high levels of migration from Arab States, and (iv) Underrepresentation of women in peace processes, negotiations, and mediation, despite the positive efforts of regional networks such as the LAS Women Mediators' Network.

## Session 1: Setting the Scene – 25 Years of UNSCR 1325 in the Arab Region

Amid regional instability and backlash against women's rights, the need for effective and impactful WPS implementation is as important as ever. With distinguished panelists, including H.E Doaa Khalifa, Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Women Department, League of Arab States, Ms. Huda Ayesh, Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), Dr. Ahmed Zubaidi, Deputy Director, National Directorate of Iraqi Women (NDIW), and Ms. Randa Siniora, Arab Network for Feminist Women's Civil Society, moderated by Ms. Heba Zayaan (Regional Advisor for WPS and Humanitarian Action, UN Women) the session gave an overview of the WPS agenda in the region since 2000 examining how it can be improved and better deliver for inclusive peace and stability. This session shed light on the WPS agenda as a key investment in national peace and security, going beyond traditional understanding of it being simply another "gender equality" framework and underlining how the WPS agenda can be used as the main vehicle to rebuild after conflict.

Building on Jordan's experience in WPS implementation, key takeaways included strong partnership with civil society, which played a central role in designing the national plan and establishing a clear and distinctive institutional structure. Recognizing that government institutions cannot reach all communities, Jordan emphasizes working "hand in hand" with civil society to expand outreach and implementation. National efforts also focused on engaging men and boys to support women's participation in preventing and addressing armed conflict, alongside initiatives to increase women's representation within the security sector, an area where Jordan has been institutionalizing good practices.

Leveraging contributions shared by representative from the Iraqi's delegation, peace is understood as a broad concept addressing the root causes of violence, including preventing extremism through the engagement of religious leaders. The Participation Pillar of the WPS Agenda is also understood beyond parliamentary representation, encompassing political empowerment through civic education and efforts to combat digital violence, while the Protection Pillar is also closely interlinked to economic security.

Through her intervention, the representative from the Arab Network for Feminist Women's Civil Society stressed that the WPS agenda cannot be realized without women's rights activists. CSOs contribute substantially to localizing the agenda, advocating for rights, and maintaining close connections with communities. Integration of women's voices and representatives from Civil Society at the UN Security Council and connecting better the WPS agenda with International Humanitarian

5 https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/11/advocacy-note-four-ways-to-support-womens-organizations-in-the-arab-states-amid-widespread-funding-cuts

Law and International Human Rights Law, implying a stronger focus on accountability—using national, regional, or international mechanisms to ensure justice, were identified as areas for further improvement. Looking at current challenges, militarization appears as a central challenge to be addressed, together with other conflict drivers, while civil society continues to advocate for greater participation, justice, and equality at all levels.

Looking at regional efforts, the representative form the League of Arab States (LAS) underscored the importance of networking and coordination, noting that UNSCR 1325 has been pivotal to regional progress. The LAS has worked with the Arab countries that have developed WPS strategies and supported them through an Arab Strategy on the protection of Arab women, prepared in collaboration with UN Women. This strategy laid the groundwork for NAPs and has since been expanded to cover other key topics. The LAS has established several mechanisms, including the Arab Women Network for Peace—comprising 18 diplomats to advance mediation objectives—, the Emergency Committee for the Protection of Women during Crisis and Conflict with an action plan for 2025–2028, and a regional strategy addressing all forms of violence against women and girls. These key developments are in line with the LAS commitment to the Secretary-General's Common Pledge for Women's Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes launched in 2024.

Across the region, key challenges persist. Protracted armed conflicts, the Israeli occupation, and broader instability requires stronger international support. Political will and commitments from some Member States remain insufficient, and women's participation in mediation continues to be limited, despite recent regional pledges to increase women's inclusion in peace processes. Funding remains unsustainable, limiting LAS's ability to develop national mediation networks chapters. Data gaps related to women's needs, displacement, and conflict impacts hinder evidence-based policymaking.

Looking ahead, the representative from Jordan emphasized strong intersectoral coordination, the need for better integration of climate change to WPS implementation, and the expansion of protection systems—including domestic violence legislation—to all population groups, including refugees, and people with disabilities as key priorities. The representative from Iraq stressed the importance of the development of NAPs with clear budgets, monitoring and evaluation systems, and accountability mechanisms, including a dedicated oversight agency.

Towards the conclusion of the sessions, panelists proposed the establishment of a regional think tank to advance WPS, empowering women mediators, and integrating women's needs into recovery strategies and climate-related policies. They highlighted the importance of programmes preventing violent extremism, targeting girls, boys, women and men, including the youth, training women leaders in constructing shared narratives, promoting meaningful rather than nominal participation, and strengthening structures such as Women Affairs Committees and one-stop referral systems, while advancing networks of women WPS experts. Finally, speakers emphasized the need for stronger political will supported by clear budgets from national ministries, and the creation of an enabling and incubating environment that protects the work and freedom of CSOs to operate, including investing in digital safety and security for women's rights activists and women human rights defenders.

## Session 2: Delivering on the Commitment of Meaningful Participation

Women's participation in decision-making, from negotiating ceasefires and broader peace agreements to early recovery and security processes, is key for ensuring their success. In the Arab States – and across the world – ensuring women's adequate representation in peace and security processes continues to face cultural, societal and ideological barriers in addition to shrinking civic space and reprisals against women peacebuilders. Through the participation of Dr. Turkia Alwaer, Coordinator of Libyan Women for Peace and Justice Alliance, Ms. Nathalie Zaarour, Secretary of the Executive Board, National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), Mr. Thomas Müller, Director Near and Middle East, GIZ and Dr. Muhannad Alazzeh, Higher Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities, moderated by Ms. Yara Mourad (Assistant Director, Issam Fares Institute), this session explored the status of women's participation to decision-making processes across the Arab Region.

In Libya, shrinking civic space, discriminatory laws, and rising attacks on women activists are pushing many women out of public life. Meanwhile, the UN-facilitated Structured Dialogue presents a key opportunity to advance women's participation in Track II peacebuilding processes. The UN Support Mission to Libya (UNSMIL) supports inclusive dialogue through nationwide consultations aimed at securing 35 percent women participation, though questions remain about whether this representation will be meaningful and sustainable, and concerns persist about social barriers that restrict women to topics stereotypically considered "women's

issues". Regionally, instead of ineffective parallel structures, the existing spaces should be connected, promoting exchange among state institutions, civil society, and grassroots groups, expanding WPS as a cross-cutting agenda, and avoiding women's tokenistic participation.

In Lebanon, numerous challenges continue to limit women's participation, and the National Commission for Lebanese Women plays a pivotal role in addressing these barriers. NCLW aims for 50/50 representation of women in decision-making spaces, in alignment with CEDAW recommendations. Lebanon has seen success in integrating women to the Lebanese Army, though cultural norms remain a major obstacle. Efforts focus on capacity-building, civic education, and awareness campaigns to encourage women's political participation.

Globally, women with disabilities often face intersecting disadvantages, and their participation in decision-making is often deprioritized in favor of concerns about their health. Even within feminist movements, women with disabilities remain underrepresented. In Jordan, the Higher Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities is fostering a constructive dialogue with parliament and human rights bodies and stresses the importance of investing in children and future generations. The Higher Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities also worked with the Electoral Commission in Jordan to assess the inclusivity and accessibility of election centers.

Across contexts, the identified **key recommendations** for this session included:

- Reforming legal frameworks to strengthen women's rights.Ensuring NAPs are in place, adequately funded, and result in tangible outcomes.
- Integrating gender-responsive and inclusive clauses in ceasefire agreements.
- Promoting post-conflict reforms addressing housing, land, and property rights.
- Conducting targeted trainings to enhance legal and digital protection for women.
- Training mediation teams on gender-sensitive conflict dynamics.
- Including security forces in training initiatives to ensure gender awareness in peace and security efforts.
- Ensuring women are present at negotiation and decision-making tables and systematically track their inputs and contributions.
- Promoting meaningful women's representation during times of peace and conflict.
- Supporting and strengthening women's coalitions to enhance collective impact.
- Documenting success stories where women effectively engaged in negotiations with parties of conflict.
- Documenting and replicating best practices across contexts to strengthen women's role in peacebuilding.
- Building bridges between Track 1 (official), Track 2 (informal), and Track 3 (community-level) peace processes to ensure inclusive and cohesive approaches.

## Session 3: Coalition-building & Cross-national Cooperation: Building Bridges across the Region

Building women-led networks and coalitions across the region is an essential component to fostering effective joint action to address shared challenges and priorities. Leveraging contributions from H.E Anne Meskanen, Ambassador, Embassy of Finland to Jordan and Lebanon, H.E. Mona Omar Attia, Ambassador, Arab Women Mediators Network, Ms. Loredana Teodorescu, Head of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, Ms. Nathalia Hawi, Representative of the Women Peacebuilding Network in Lebanon (WPNL), and Ms. Hala Bughaigis, Jusoor Center for Studies and Development,,moderated by Mr. Zachary Taylor, Managing Director, Inclusive Peace, this session explored successful examples and lessons learned from cross-regional cooperation in the Arab States.

The aim and role of women mediators' networks vary across regions. While they sometimes focus on peer-to-peer support or strategic-level engagement, such as the Nordic Women Mediators network, local and regional networks are often more 'hands-on', concrete and tied to the daily realities. Regionally, the Arab Women Mediators Network consists of officially appointed representatives and has developed guidelines to create national networks and coordinate them with the regional antenna. As highlighted by one panelist, the effectiveness of women meditators networks often requires political will, institutionalization, and targeted budgeted support to ensure women's participation in negotiation and mediation processes, particularly in areas like defense and foreign affairs. Establishing meaningful positions or quotas for women in peace delegations is essential. The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network also operates at a regional level, bringing together diverse women and leveraging existing structures to share experiences and knowledge. It builds on collaboration, complementarity, and global alliances to amplify women's voices, develop joint initiatives, and avoid duplication.

On the other hand, local women mediators serve as key agents of early-warning system in their communities and require continued training, capacity-building, and empowerment. The Women Peacebuilding Network

in Lebanon exemplifies an intergenerational network of active women working across local and national levels, combining community engagement with policy advocacy. The Secretariat, through UN Women, plays a critical role in fostering trust and ownership. However, sustainability of funding and inclusivity remain some of the key challenges.

Based on lessons learned from regional practices, **recommendations include:**

- Women's networks must strive for inclusive decision-making, clear governance structures, and coordination to build trust among members.
- Coalitions and networks need to be self-critical, avoid reproducing hierarchical power structures, and strengthen the production of feminist knowledge.
- Collective influence, solidarity, transparency, joint advocacy, and nurturing new generations of women leaders remain key priorities to sustain women's movements.
- Member States and international organizations must recognize women's movements and networks as key allies and interlocutors in peace processes and negotiations.

## Session 4: Building Solidarity to Protect Shared Narratives Amid Rising Backlashes

This session unpacked the nature of the backlash against gender equality, civic space, and human rights while highlighting the role of solidarity in resisting fragmentation and advancing transformative change. Gathering Dr. Islah Jad, Lecturer, Bir Zeit University, Ms. Shirine Jurdi, Member, Steering Committee – Arab CSOs and Feminist Network and President, WILPF Lebanon and Ms. Zahra Langhi, Gender Advisor, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen (OSESGY), moderated by Ms. Maha Muna, Regional Gender Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office of the Middle East and North Africa, the session covered South-South cooperation and regional feminist solidarity, centering women's voices in narrative building, storytelling as resistance, amplifying grassroots and women-led perspectives, and long-term resilience of women-led movements.

In the context of political instability, economic crisis and rising conservatism in the Arab States region, gains made by women's movements are under threat. The gender backlash is evident in shrinking civic space, regressive legal reforms, and attacks on women human rights defenders, who face smear campaigns, intimidation and, in some cases, lethal violence. Across several Arab States, including Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen and Libya, women peace actors and activists encounter online harassment and efforts to discredit gender equality as a "foreign agenda." Such pushback continues to undermine women's participation in public life, policymaking, and peacebuilding.

The session highlighted manifestations of the gender backlash across different countries and unpacked some of its key drivers. The "NGOization" of women's movements and funding-driven fragmentation, often shaped by international actors, have contributed to divisions within the feminist movement, while also isolating it from broader social movements. Additionally, the co-branding of gender equality public campaigns with donor logos has reinforced perceptions of gender discourse as Western. The continued lack of clarity in Arabic translations of gender terminology, combined with the limited success of gender equality actors in countering anti-rights narratives, has further exacerbated these challenges.

Moving forward, **recommendations include:**

- Develop a thorough action-oriented analysis of the gender backlash, including its drivers and manifestations, and propose concrete, scalable recommendations that can be piloted at the country leverage both academic research and fieldwork as critical tools to document changes in how the narrative of the women's movement is received and to assess the impact of feminist initiatives, bridging the theory to lived experiences on the ground.
- Adopt non-elitist, inclusive approaches that involve local leaders, local mediators, and social movements to inform policy formulation and programming
- Reorganize and strategize among civil society movements across the region to encounter the gender anti-women's rights backlash and also in the face of the new funding environment.
- Recognize and focus on terminology, language, and documentation as vital tools to generate knowledge that reflects women's lived experiences, rather than reinforcing existing power hierarchies or relying on tools that face resistance and fail to address context-specific challenges.
- Centralize the "Do No Harm" and localization principles in nurturing and sustaining feminist advocacy.

## Session 5: Generational Connection or Generational Divide? Drawing parallels between the Youth, Peace and Security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

As youth account for over 25% of the Arab States population, they have legitimate expectations and a right to be included in decision-making processes that will directly affect their future, from peace and security to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Together with the 25th anniversary of the UNSC Resolution 1325 on WPS, the year 2025, also marks the 10-year

anniversary of the UNSC Resolution 2250 on YPS. With the participation of Ms. Nuseebh Al-Bably, youth representative, Young Women Peacebuilders member, Yemen, Ms. Areen Muaddi, Researcher, MENA Coalition on YPS, Palestine, Ms. Rana Abou-Gazia, Managing Director, Youth Leaders Foundation, Egypt, Ms. Nancy Al-Atoum, Youth, Peace and Security Project Manager, Ministry for Youth, Jordan, and Ms. Bothaina Qamar, Regional Advisor, UNFPA, moderated by Ms. Caitlin Chittenden, Deputy Representative, UN Women Palestine, the session explored linkages and entry points to leverage, promote alignment and increase impacts between these two agendas.

The YPS and WPS agenda face similar challenges. Youth participation in public life is closely linked to human security, yet harmful norms, conservative movements, non-compliance with international laws and lack of accountability, weak democratic processes, and the absence of NAPs continue to limit their meaningful engagement. Addressing these barriers requires capacity-building, consultations, policy formulation, and connecting youth with policymakers and diplomats to ensure their voices inform decision-making. Awareness-raising remains further critical to motivate young people and women to take on leadership roles.

Networking and mentorship are highlighted as essential for sustaining youth engagement and linking grassroots initiatives to policy influence. Young women require specific skills to be in leadership positions. Successes in Jordan, where political participation and protection were prioritized, demonstrate the value of nation-wide consultations and alignment with regional strategies. The launch of the independent National Strategy for 2250 in 2025, aligning with the LAS Regional Strategy, illustrates how thorough planning and strong political will can ensure effective national implementation.

The lessons learned emphasized the importance of **key recommendations** to address barriers to youth inclusion:

- Ensure that WPS and YPS agendas cross-fertilize, with WPS NAPs integrating YPS priorities and YPS plans incorporating WPS objectives.
- Support capacity building of male and female youth, creating and co-creating with them the spaces for learning and knowledge exchange.
- Institutionalize youth participation in different decision-making structures.
- Leverage YPS and WPS NAPs as tools for accountability and structured implementation, addressing country-specific gaps and youth needs, including diaspora engagement and identifying role models to inspire participation.
- To address uneven and insufficient financing, commit to government budgetary support and engage the private sector.

## Session 6: Delivering Inclusive Security — Enhancing Women's Participation in the Security Sector

In recent years, many countries in the region have increased gender mainstreaming within the security sector and increased women's participation and representation in armed forces, police, and in peacekeeping. Building on contributions from Ms. Rym Mhadhbi, WPS Focal Point at the Ministry of National Defense, Member of the Steering Committee UNSCR 1325, Tunisia, Major-Colonel Ilias Lamdouar, Royal Armed Forces, Morocco, Major - Wojood Hussein Alsyaideh, Gender Unit, The Public Security Directorate, Jordan and Major-General Youssef Haddad, Member of the Military Council at the Ministry of Defense, Lebanon, the session explored some of the key lessons learned and best practices on advancing gender-responsive approaches in the security sector and looked at pathways to continue progress despite shrinking international funding.

In Tunisia, women have been appointed at Major General levels, supported by systems of gender focal points, gender advisors, and rotating experts to combat sexual harassment through an established committee. A hotline for reporting GBV cases and awareness-raising initiatives to female soldiers on equality, rights, and anti-GBV principles has been established, reflecting a holistic approach to gender mainstreaming.

In Jordan, women's inclusion within the Public Security Directorate (PSD) has been institutionalized through formal gender responsive strategy, clear implementation mechanisms, and dedicated units responsible for monitoring progress at the leadership level. High-level institutional support has been critical to advancing and sustaining these reforms. The participation of women in uniform in peacekeeping operations and efforts to prevent violent extremism has been strengthened through targeted, gender-responsive capacity-building initiatives. These efforts were informed by gender audits supported by UN women that identified operational challenges and skill gaps, ensuring that interventions were evidence-based and responsive to women's needs. With support from the Elsie Initiative Fund, Jordan established a specialized training center aimed at increasing the deployment of women in peacekeeping missions. This initiative recognizes the distinct and

strategic role women peacekeepers play, particularly in engaging women and vulnerable populations in conflict-affected communities.

Morocco, initially building on individual initiatives, has since demonstrated long-term structural reforms, integrating women across all branches of the army, and aiming for cross-cutting gender parity, rather than limiting them to specific roles, such as the provision of social services. Efforts have included sensitization campaigns for commanders, the establishment of focal points for parity, deployment of women in peacekeeping missions, and the integration of gender-responsive budgeting since the early 2000s, with gender mainstreaming efforts within the Morocco Armed Forces funded entirely through national resources. In Lebanon, gender mainstreaming within the security sector evolved from ad hoc measures to institutionalized mechanisms. The establishment of focal points system in 2019 and the creation of a Gender Department in 2021 enabled permanent structures, job opportunities, and a focus on retention linked to economic security. Collaboration with UN Women has enhanced legitimacy, and women in the army are increasingly recognized as actors with delegated authority in fields like civil-military coordination, engineering, education, and radicalization prevention.

Across contexts, **key lessons include:**

- Ensure and sustain engagement from security sector leadership, and promote institutional commitment that prioritizes and supports women's inclusion.
- As a first step toward full gender mainstreaming, operationalize dedicated structures for women's inclusion, such as institutionalized focal points or departments, and adapt infrastructure to respond to specific needs of women, creating an enabling environment for women's participation in security institutions.
- Conduct continued awareness-raising and offer gender focused training and capacity-building across different branches and levels of security and defense forces.
- Guarantee sustainable and national-based funding for women's participation and leadership in the security sector.

## Session 7: Sustainable funding for WPS and women-led organizations - addressing the global development funding cuts

There remains a striking disparity between policy commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the financial allocations to achieve them. Amid increased military expenditure, changing funding environment and the Humanitarian Reset, women-led organizations in the Arab States region are significantly impacted by global funding cuts, and need urgent support. Gathering insights from Ms. Erma Mulabdic, Protection Officer, IOM Jordan, Ms. Amal Syam, Women's Affairs Centre, Palestine (Online), Ms. Katrin Fischer, Programme Coordinator – Africa & Middle East, Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (Online), Mr. David Macdonald, Country Director, CARE International, Syria, and Ms. Eman AlHourani, WPS Programme Specialist, UN Women Jordan, moderated by Ms. Heba Zayyan, WPS/ Humanitarian Action Regional Advisor, UN Women, the session looked at entry points and new pathways to ensure WPS implementation continues to be funded with increased support to women's organizations in the region.

Overall, 80 percent of WLO/WROs in the region report being significantly impacted by the shortage of funding. Current funding mechanisms are often project-based, technical, and complicated, which limits the ability of WROs/WLOs to respond to urgent needs, scale their interventions, or operate in fragile and insecure contexts. Transparency about funding constraints with beneficiaries is essential, as is the need to explore new funding sources and markets, including engaging with the private sector and leveraging national budget sources.

Several innovative approaches have demonstrated promise. Jordan's NAP pooled funding mechanism stands out as a strong example of how sustainable financing for WPS can be effectively structured. By bringing together multiple donors, the Government, civil society and UN Women under a single, coordinated framework, the mechanism has created a predictable, transparent, and jointly monitored funding model that reduces fragmentation and administrative burdens. This approach has strengthened trust among partners, ensured alignment with national priorities, and encouraged increased government's contributions—reinforcing national ownership at a time of shrinking external resources. Jordan's model demonstrates how coordinated, nationally anchored financing can protect WPS gains and provide a replicable pathway toward greater sustainability and impact.

The Women, Peace Security and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), bringing together actors for a coordinated funding approach, also supports institutional funding, reaching organizations that have never received UN support before, lowering barriers to access, and connecting grassroots initiatives with macro-level processes. Rapid response and flexible funding mechanisms, such as those implemented by IOM in Iraq and in Sudan, enable women's organizations to operate in humanitarian and crisis contexts, enhancing agility and inclusivity. From the perspective of CARE International Syria, donors and international organizations must

Photo: UN Women

ensure a thorough understanding of the local context. A strong commitment is needed from the UN and INGOs to work collaboratively with CSOs and women-led organizations, avoiding unequal power dynamics, co-creating solutions, and recognizing and highlighting the achievements of CSOs and women's organizations.

The **key recommendations** emphasized:

- Enable non-conditional, flexible, institutional and context-specific funding that can adapt to local realities, where feasible, and prioritize WROs/WLOs in funding strategies. Investing in institutional capacity, governance, and sustainability of women-led and women's rights organizations.
- Rely on locally led and designed solutions and foster horizontal partnerships that avoid hierarchical donor-recipient dynamics.
- Support and advocate for joint, coordinated solutions, such as pooled funding or building consortia of organizations to reduce competition and strengthen collective efforts.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes must ensure accountability, transparency, and justice, addressing risks of favoritism, corruption, or fund diversion.
- Success stories should be documented and leveraged for advocacy while respecting the ownership of those on the ground.
- Expand engagement with regional actors, such as Gulf Cooperation Council countries.
- Support and advocate for national and local funding sources in light of long-term sustainability of women-led initiatives and the successful implementation of the WPS Agenda.

# 4. Presentation of the findings from the thematic group discussions

## Thematic discussion 1: National Action Plans (NAP) on WPS in the Arab Region

While many countries in the region have adopted NAPs on WPS, challenges remain over their implementation in contexts of protracted crises and conflict or sudden onset emergencies. Looking at the experiences of different countries and actors, notably Ms. Nayera Cherif, CCCPA, Egypt, Aya Mohey El Din, League of Arab States, Ms. Houda Zourhlal, Political Advisor, United Nations and International Organizations Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Morocco and Ms. Huda Ayesh, Director of the Policy & Observatory Unit, Jordanian National Commission for Women, the session explored key lessons learned, challenges and recommendations for effective implementation of WPS NAPs in the region.

Efforts made at the regional level by the League of Arab States were presented, including by providing technical support to member states and periodically preparing regional review reports in cooperation with the UN Women Regional Office, as well as the work of the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding in Africa (CCCPA), through training programmes and capacity-building for national cadres. The session further showcased several national experiences in preparing and implementing NAPs, with a focus on the experiences of Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Iraq, as well as the general efforts made by the State of Libya to implement the WPS agenda.

From the experiences presented and the discussion, it became clear that a participatory approach was adopted in the preparation and implementation phases of the NAPs, with the involvement of civil society organizations and relevant national entities. The importance of sustainable funding to ensure the implementation of NAPs was also highlighted, while interlinkages between the WPS and YPS agendas, and climate security need to be more systematic.

Among some of the **key recommendations**, participants identified the following:

- Developing or updating NAPs aligned with Resolution 1325 and subsequent Security Council resolutions in countries that have not yet prepared such plans. Also support the development of flexible, adaptative, realistic and tangible NAPs, avoiding targets that are too ambitious or unrealistic.
- Integrating a gender perspective into all security, defense, and humanitarian policies, including increasing the participation of women in security, military, and police institutions, as well as in leadership and decision-making positions.
- Establishing national committees to lead the implementation of NAPs, including representatives from government, civil society, and various relevant stakeholders. Also advocate with relevant ministries to include dedicated budget lines for WPS programmes.
- Building women's capacities in mediation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.
- Supporting community engagement and involving the private sector, youth, and the media in awareness campaigns, peacebuilding, and women's empowerment.
- Establishing monitoring mechanisms and developing clear performance indicators to measure progress in implementing NAPs.
- Organizing joint platforms to exchange lessons learned and adopting successful practices from Arab countries that have already advanced in implementing their NAPs.

## Thematic discussion 2: Leveraging WPS Agenda during situations of sudden onset and protracted conflict, in view of the Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus

The region is witnessing an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises, including climate change induced crises. Building on experiences and practices from the participants, speakers, including Ms. Nesmah Mansouri, Co-Founder, Peace Track Initiative, Yemen, Ms. Barbora Sakho, Gender Equality Specialist, UNDP, Dr. Hisham Alabbadi, Training and Qualification Director, National Center for Security and Crisis Management (NCSCM), Jordan and Dr. Nada Aswad, Syrian Political Activist, the session explored the interlinkages between the WPS

agenda implementation and the Humanitarian–Peace–Development Nexus.

The discussion looked at the central role of women in emergency response stressing that women are essential actors in crisis planning, response, and follow-up; yet their contributions remain insufficiently recognized, especially in decision-making spaces. The situation in Libya was cited as an example, where the Derna Reconstruction Fund does not include any women despite their roles in the frontline. In crisis settings, poor coordination and low synergies, among actors, further complicates responses, while weak accountability mechanisms or the absence of clear tools for tracking commitments to women limits the protection of WROs/WLOs and women activists, or the effectiveness of the WPS agenda.

The WPS agenda is a transversal and horizontal framework that embodies the triple nexus approach. Crisis response planning and decision-making structures need to mainstream gender across all stages, including in planning, implementation and coordination. Under the protection pillar, limited access of women and girls—especially the most vulnerable—to adequate protection services continue to undermine the delivery of protection services. Participants agreed that existing tools for addressing gender-based violence remain insufficient, and national frameworks such as the NAP on WPS or the National Plans of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (NAP-VAWCs) need to be further aligned to promote complementarity and avoid duplication. Strengthening women's leadership and participation will also enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian responses and support more resilient community recovery.

As highlighted in other sessions, flexible financing is essential to enable integrated responses and avoid a siloed approach which is sometimes reflecting the different existing funding streams and priorities. Co-ownership—through gender-responsive policies and genuine leadership roles for women—was highlighted as a fundamental component of success, while participants emphasized how NAPs on WPS need to be adaptive enough to rapidly changing contexts, while WROs/WLOs need to advocate to link environmental and climate-related disaster response with broader crisis management mechanisms.

Moving ahead, participants highlighted how interventions and projects must systematically incorporate conflict sensitivity and gender sensitivity components to align with the objectives of the WPS agenda and really implemented an HDP nexus approach. Emergency response and prevention structures—including coordination bodies, civil defense, police, and the military—should ensure meaningful representation of women and adopt gender-responsive planning, while humanitarian response plans must integrate gender considerations from the design phase, and relief interventions should include concrete components for managing communal tensions and promoting social cohesion.

### Thematic discussion 3: Dealing with the Past – WPS agenda as a tool for transitional justice and inclusive post-conflict recovery and reconciliation

The session which saw the participation of key participants and speakers, including Ms. Dima Moussa, Transitional Justice Programme Coordinator, The Day After, Syria, Dr. Roua Al Taweel, Programme Manager, Bahar organization, Syria and Dr. Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoudé, Lecturer and Researcher, Saint-Joseph University, Former Commissioner at the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared, opened with an overview of the main pillars of transitional justice, including truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence.

Throughout the discussion, participants reflected on the contexts in different countries and identified several shared challenges, most notably the traditional approach to transitional justice that places the responsibility solely on the state—even though the state is often one of the parties to the conflict. Regarding terminology, "transitional justice" is a spectrum and is context-dependent concept – the way of delivering "justice" can vary and does not always have to be institutional. For this reason, in some contexts it may be more appropriate to refer to "justice mechanisms" that are tailored to each country's realities, as some competing narratives may undermine progress on transitional justice. Finally, the concepts of "civil peace" vs. "civil justice" were discussed pointing to the unattainability of peace without justice.

In the Syrian context, for instance, multiple narratives have emerged, reflecting the particularities of each region, its circumstances, and the actors involved. This has created a real concern that a single dominant narrative may eventually overshadow all others. Addressing women's issues requires an especially sensitive approach, due to widespread violations against women, their instrumentalization as tools of war, and the socially conservative character of many Syrian communities. Lack of trust in the international community's ability to deliver meaningful accountability and prosecutions

also emerged, prompting consideration of alternative mechanisms—such as training local judges to conduct trials at the national level. When it comes to forced displacement and civil registration—an often-overlooked issue—statistics indicate that around seven million Syrians are displaced internally and another seven million are displaced outside the country. Many of them are unable to obtain nationality or identity documents, either because their areas were outside state control during the conflict or due to restrictive host-country policies at certain times. The crisis is further compounded for Syrian women due to nationality laws: Syrian women cannot pass their nationality to their children. This creates severe challenges for women who married fighters, foreigners, kidnapped persons, or men who were killed during the war, as they cannot secure legal identity for their children. Women married to Palestinians or Kurds face the same problem, since their children can only obtain identification through numerous documents that are often impossible to secure. This issue is directly tied to nationality and identity: without legal identity, individuals cannot access education, humanitarian assistance, healthcare services, or the labour market, leaving them excluded from fundamental rights. Finally, in the Syrian context, there is a major challenge in managing expectations versus reality. People demand immediate trials and reforms once any transitional body is formed, assuming the state can deliver these processes. However, the lack of resources and capacity makes such expectations unrealistic, prompting discussion on the role of moral and symbolic reparations to manage this gap.

In Lebanon, the 15-year civil war witnessed numerous violations—particularly sexual violations against women—without any systematic documentation. The conflict ended with the Taaif Agreement, which represented a political settlement rather than a true end to the conflict. This resulted in a form of "negative peace" based on power-sharing among sects, reinforced by the General Amnesty Law, which entrenched a culture of impunity. Reconciliation, meanwhile, occurred primarily among political leaders and did not extend to the wider society. As a result, it remained incomplete and insufficient to mend the social fabric in a comprehensive way.

Building on the discussion and identified lessons learned, **key recommendations** from the participants included:

- Transitional justice is not only a state responsibility, all sectors and stakeholders need to be engaged in this process at all levels, and coordination is key to engage all narratives.
- Integrating the WPS agenda as a core component of any transitional justice strategy, particularly under the Prevention and Protection pillars of the WPS framework, while recognizing that the relationship between "transitional justice" and "reformative justice" requires further conceptual exploration.
- Strengthening the role of civil society in engaging all segments of society through community dialogues to understand people's needs and aspirations, ensuring that the community's voice, including that of women, guides any transitional justice process.
- Pursuing legal reforms that guarantee non-recurrence, especially since many violations stemmed from weak legal frameworks or lack of adherence to them.
- Breaking the traditional, state-centric approach to transitional justice and moving toward a participatory model that involves civil society and all segments of the population across age groups and backgrounds. The process should be driven by the people, not imposed from above.
- Drawing on local experiences, such as the movement of families of the disappeared in Lebanon who—through collaboration with civil society—successfully pressured for the establishment of an official commission on the disappeared and secured a dedicated law. This demonstrates that community-driven initiatives can generate political will and lead to structural change. While reconciliation sometimes takes place at community and leadership levels, a key challenge remains regarding how to bridge and connect these two spaces.
- Working toward structural reform of institutions, recognizing that strong institutions are the primary safeguard against recurrence of violations.
- Ensure comprehensive documentation that considers all diverse narratives including those of conflict affected women and girls. In Lebanon, the absence of systematic documentation during the war made oral history essential, particularly for capturing women's experiences and the violations they endured, to build a shared and inclusive narrative.
- Before, during and after conflicts, violations need to be documented to support not only justice but enhance collective memory, including through the compilation of oral history of affected population.
- As highlighted with the cases of Syria and Lebanon, transitional justice, including the issue of the missing and forcibly disappeared offer an opportunity for cross-country collaboration.

# 5. Conclusion

Photo: UN Women

Twenty-five years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325, the assessment from Amman was clear: The WPS agenda remains indispensable, particularly in the Arab region marked by protracted conflict and political transition. However, as noted across the sessions, political courage, structural reform, and sustained investment in women's leadership at all levels, its promise risks erosion.

Accountability, resources, and local ownership are recognized as essential for the progress in the region. In a workshop preceding the Open Day in WPS event, a group of civil society actors from across the Arab region jointly drafted a document articulating a shared vision and civil society participation and leadership for the next phase of the WPS agenda implementation in the region (See Annex III). Their recommendations aim to tackle the structural gaps that continue to constrain women's influence in peace and security processes around three interlinked tracks. The document calls for institutionalized participation of women and civil society across peace and security processes, elevates accountability as a core pillar of the WPS agenda through justice-centered implementation and independent oversight, and anchors the agenda in local realities through inclusive, bottom-up approaches. It signals the importance of shifting beyond participation to power-sharing with the civil society actors, underscoring that women's meaningful engagement must be backed by decision-making authority, accountability for violations, and sustained, flexible financing for women-led organizations.

The civil society actors also encouraged regional and international institutions to deepen their engagement with women-led civil society actors, underscoring that political will, institutional openness, and adequate resourcing are essential to maintaining the momentum of the WPS agenda and advancing just and durable peace in the Arab region.

The multiple recommendations highlighted across this report under different thematics aim to offer guidance, entry points and steps forward for all stakeholders engaged in WPS in the Arab region. They are designed to lead to concrete action and to be carried forward and facilitate advocacy in the local, national, regional and global fora.

The next chapter of WPS in the Arab region must be defined by impact delivered, not commitments renewed. The post-25-year phase demands a decisive shift toward women as architects of peace and security.

# 6. Annexes

**Annex I – Regional Open Day Agenda**
**Annex II – Communications and Visibility on the Regional Open Day**

| WPS Open Day - Day 1<br>Tuesday, 2 December 2025 I Royal Hall 1, Landmark Hotel, Amman | |
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| **9:30 – 10:00** | **Registration & Coffee** |
| **9:30 – 10:00** | **Opening Remarks**<br>•**Dr. Moez Doraid,** UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States<br>•**H.E. Mrs. Wafaa Bani Mustafa,** Minister of Social Development and Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan |
| **10:30 - 12:00** | **Session 1: Setting the Scene: 25 Years of UNSCR 1325 in the Arab Region**<br>Amid regional instability and backlash against women's rights, the need for WPS implementation remains as important as ever. This session will give an overview of the agenda's implementation in the region since 2000 with a specific focus on how it can be taken forward with renewed urgency to deliver inclusive peace and stability.<br><br>**Panelists**:<br>• **Ms. Randa Siniora,** Arab Network for Feminist Women's Civil Society<br>• **Ms. Huda Ayesh,** Director of the Policy and Observatory Unit, Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)<br>• **Dr. Ahmed Zubaidi,** Deputy Director, National Directorate of Iraqi Women (NDIW)<br>• **H.E Doaa Khalifa,** Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Women Department, League of Arab States (Online)<br>**Moderator: Ms. Heba Zayyan,** Regional Advisor WPS and Humanitarian Action, UN Women |
| **9:30 – 10:00** | **Coffee Break + group photo** |
| **12:30 – 2:00** | **Session 2: Delivering on the commitment of meaningful participation**<br>Women's participation in decision-making, from negotiating ceasefires and broader peace agreements to early recovery and security processes, is key for ensuring their success. In the Arab States – and across the world – ensuring women's adequate representation in peace and security processes continues to face cultural, societal and ideological barriers in addition to shrinking civic space and reprisals against women peacebuilders. This session will explore the status of women's participation to decision-making processes across the Arab Region.<br><br>**Panelists**:<br>• **Dr. Turkia Alwaer,** Coordinator of Libyan Women for Peace and Justice Alliance, Libya<br>• **Mr. Thomas Müller,** Director Near and Middle East, GIZ<br>• **Me. Nathalie Zaarour,** Secretary of the Executive Board, National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)<br>• **Dr. Muhannad Alazzeh,** Secretary General, Higher Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities, Jordan<br>**Moderator: Ms. Yara Mourad,** Assistant Director, Issam Fares Institute |
| **2:00 – 3:00** | **Lunch (Colours Restaurant)** |
| **3:00 - 4:30** | **Session 3: Coalition-building & Cross-national Cooperation: building bridges across the region**<br>Building women-led networks and coalitions across the region is an essential component to fostering effective joint action to address shared challenges and priorities. This session will explore successful examples and lessons learned from cross-regional cooperation in the Arab States.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• **Ms. Loredana Teodorescu,** Head of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network<br>• **Ms. Nathalia Hawi,** Representative of the Women Peacebuilding Network in Lebanon (WPNL)<br>• **Ms. Hala Bughaigis,** Jusoor Center for Studies and Development, Libya<br>• **H.E. Mona Omar Attia,** Ambassador, Arab Women Mediators Network, Egypt<br>• **H.E Anne Meskanen,** Ambassador of Finland to Jordan and Lebanon<br>**Moderator: Mr. Zachary Taylor,** Managing Director, Inclusive Peace |

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| **4:30 – 5:00** | **Coffee and Networking** |

**Conclusion of Day 1**

## WPS Open Day - Day 2
## Wednesday, 3 December2025 I Royal Hall 1, Landmark Hotel, Amman

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| **9:00 – 9:10** | **Welcome and overview of Day 2** |
| **9:10 – 10:20** | **Session 4: Building Solidarity to Protect Shared Narratives Amid Rising Backlash**<br>This session will unpack the nature of the backlash against gender equality, civic space, and human rights while highlighting the role of solidarity in resisting fragmentation and advancing transformative change. The session will cover South-South cooperation and regional feminist solidarity, centering women's voices in narrative building, storytelling as resistance, amplifying grassroots and women-led perspectives, and long-term resilience of women-led movements.<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• **Ms. Shirine Jurdi,** Member, Steering Committee – Arab CSOs and Feminist Network. President, WILPF Lebanon<br>• **Dr. Islah Jad,** Lecturer, Bir Zeit University, Palestine<br>• **Ms. Zahra Langhi,** Senior Inclusion and Women, Peace and Security Advisor, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen (OSESGY)<br>**Moderator: Ms. Maha Muna,** Regional Gender Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office of the Middle East and North Africa |
| **10:20 – 11:30** | **Session 5: Generational Connection or Generational Divide? Drawing parallels between the Youth, Peace and Security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.**<br>As youth account for over 25% of the Arab States population, they have legitimate expectations and a right to be included in decision-making processes that will directly affect their future, from peace and security to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Often times, women and youth face the same challenges in ensuring their voices and recommendations are heard and taken into account by decision-makers. Together with the 25th anniversary of the UNSC Resolution 1325 on WPS, the year 2025, also marks the 10-year anniversary of the UNSC Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. How could the two agendas be better leveraged for joint impact?<br><br>**Panelists:**<br>• **Ms. Nuseebh Al-Bably,** youth representative, Young Women Peacebuilders member, Yemen<br>• **Ms. Areen Muaddi, Researcher,** MENA Coalition on YPS, Palestine<br>• **Ms. Rana Abou-Gazia,** Managing Director, Youth Leaders Foundation, Egypt<br>• **Ms. Nancy Al-Atoum,** Youth, Peace and Security Project Manager, Ministry for Youth, Jordan<br>• **Ms. Bothaina Qamar,** Regional Advisor, UNFPA<br>**Moderator: Ms. Caitlin Chittenden,** Deputy Representative, UN Women Palestine |
| **10:20 – 11:30** | **Thematic Discussions: Introduction and Explanation of the format**<br>Participants will be invited to join a breakout room of their choice to join one of three thematic discussions. Each thematic discussion group will have selected briefers contributing to the discussion, followed by open dialogue. Each session will nominate a rapporteur, to carry forward discussion conclusions and recommendations to be presented in plenary on the 3rd day of the Open Day (4 December).<br><br>**Facilitation: Ms. Heba Zayyan,** WPS/HA Regional Advisor, UN Women |
| **11:40 – 12:00** | **Coffee** |

**Thematic discussions**

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| **12:00 – 1:30**<br>Royal Hall 2 | **Thematic discussion 1: National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace and Security**<br>While many countries in the region have adopted WPS NAPs, challenges remain over their implementation in contexts of protracted crisis and conflict or sudden onset emergencies. What are the key lessons learned, challenges and recommendations for effective implementation of WPS NAPs in the region and what is needed to ensure their success even in times of crisis?<br><br>**Briefers:**<br>• **Ms. Nayera Cherif,** CCCPA, Egypt<br>• **Ms. Aya Mohey El Din,** League of Arab States<br>• **Ms. Houda Zourhlal,** Political Advisor, United Nations and International Organisations Directorate,<br>• **Ministry of Foreign Affairs,** African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Morocco<br>• **Ms. Huda Ayesh,** Director of the Policy & Observatory Unit, Jordanian National Commission for Women<br>• **Host: Mr. Moustafa Awad,** Programme Specialist, UN Women Iraq |
| **12:00 – 1:30**<br>Jerash Hall 2 | **Thematic discussion 2: Leveraging WPS Agenda during situations of sudden onset and protracted conflict and crisis, in view of the Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus**<br>The region is witnessing an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises, including climate change induced crises. How can the WPS agenda be more effectively leveraged during situations of sudden-onset and protracted conflict and crisis to advance women's empowerment and ensure the meaningful inclusion of women and girls, including from marginalized groups, across the Humanitarian–Peace–Development Nexus?<br><br>**Briefers:**<br>• **Ms. Nesmah Mansouri,** Co-Founder, Peace Track Initiative, Yemen<br>• **Ms. Barbora Sakho,** Gender Equality Specialist, UNDP<br>• **Dr. Hisham Alabbadi,** Training and Qualification Director, National Center for Security and Crisis Management (NCSCM), Jordan<br>• **Dr. Nada Aswad,** Syrian Activist<br>• **Hosts: Ms. Olivia Schmitz,** Crisis Response Specialist, UN Women Regional Office,<br>• **Ms. Eman Al-Hourani,** Programme Specialist, UN Women, Jordan |
| **12:00 – 1:30**<br>Jerash Hall 3 | **Thematic discussion 3: Dealing with the Past – WPS agenda as a tool for transitional justice and inclusive post-conflict recovery and reconciliation**<br>Both the transitional justice process and the WPS agenda offer significant opportunities for enhanced accountability and protection of women's rights. How can the WPS agenda be used as a tool for ensuring full and meaningful participation of survivors in all stages of transitional justice, recovery and reconciliation processes, including in decision-making roles?<br><br>**Briefers:**<br>• **Ms. Dima Moussa,** Transitional Justice Programme Coordinator, The Day After, Syria<br>• **Dr. Roua Al Taweel,** Programme Manager, Bahar organization, Syria<br>• **Dr. Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoudé,** Lecturer and Researcher, Saint-Joseph University, Former Commissioner at the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared<br>**Host:** Ms. Jumanah Zabaneh, Programme Management Specialist, UN Women Lebanon |
| **1:30 – 2:30** | **Lunch** |
| **2:30 – 3:00**<br>Continued in breakout rooms | **Thematic discussions – preparation for the presentation of findings**<br>Collecting the conclusions of thematic discussions and preparation for the presentation of findings in the plenary on the next day. |
| **3:00 – 4:30** | **Session 6: Delivering Inclusive Security — Enhancing Women's Participation in the Security Sector**<br>In recent years, many countries in the region have undertaken gender-mainstreaming exercise within the security sector and increased women's participation and representation in armed forces, police, and in peacekeeping. What are some of the key lessons learned and best practices on advancing gender-responsive approaches in the security sector? How can we ensure sustainable results and impact in a shrinking funding environment?<br><br>**Briefers:**<br>• **Ms. Rym Mhadhbi,** WPS Focal Point at the Ministry of National Defense, Member of the Steering Committee UNSCR 1325, Tunisia<br>• **Major-Colonel Ilias Lamdouar,** Royal Armed Forces, Morocco<br>• Gender Unit, The Public Security Directorate, Jordan<br>• **Major-General Youssef Haddad,** Member of the Military Council in the Ministry of National Defense- Lebanon<br>**Moderation: Ms. Manal Benkirane,** UN Women Deputy Representative to Jordan |

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| **4:30 - 5:00** | **Break** |
| **5:00 – 7:00** | **Cocktail-style networking reception at the Landmark hotel (Ghoroub Sunset Lounge – 13th floor)** |
| | **End of Day 2** |

## WPS Open Day - Day 3
## Thursday, 4 December 2025 I Royal Hall 1, Landmark Hotel, Amman

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| **9:00 – 9:10** | **Welcome and Overview of Day 3** |
| **9:10 – 10:40** | **Presentation of the findings from the thematic group discussions**<br>Rapporteurs from the thematic group discussions<br><br>**Format:** Plenary and Q&A<br>**Facilitation: Ms. Yael Parrotta,** Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Specialist, UN Women |
| **10:40 – 11:00** | **Coffee Break + group photo** |
| **11:00 –12:30** | **Session 7: Sustainable funding for WPS and women-led organizations - addressing the global development funding cuts**<br>There remains a striking disparity between policy commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the financial allocations to achieve them. Amid increased military expenditure, changing funding environment, Humanitarian Reset, the women-led organizations in the Arab States Region report 80% of being significantly impacted by global funding cuts, and are in need of urgent support. What are the entry points to ensure WPS implementation continues to be funded and how can we better ensure WLOs in the region continue to be supported?<br><br>• **Ms. Erma Mulabdic,** Protection Officer, IOM Jordan<br>• **Ms. Amal Syam,** Women's Affairs Centre, Palestine (Online)<br>• **Ms. Katrin Fischer,** Programme Coordinator – Africa & Middle East, Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (Online)<br>• **Mr. David Macdonald,** Country Director, CARE International, Syria<br>• **Dr. Nada Aswad,** Syrian Activist<br>**Moderator: Ms. Heba Zayyan,** Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, Regional Advisor, UN Women |
| **12:30 - 1:30** | **Key recommendations from civil society on "The next 25 years for the WPS agenda in the Arab States Region: the change we want to see and be"**[1]<br><br>• Representatives from civil society<br>**Moderator: Ms. Ayat Mohamed,** Gender Specialist, UN Women Syria |
| **1:30 – 1:45** | **Closing remarks**<br>• **Dr. Moez Doraid,** UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States |
| **1:45** | **Lunch** |
| | **Conclusion Day 3** |

1 A closed-door format civil society consultation will take place before the Open Day main event on 1 December.

**Annex II – Communications and Visibility on the Regional Open Day**

The Arab States Regional Open Day on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), held in Amman, Jordan, from 02–04 December 2025, generated strong media visibility across national and regional platforms. Media coverage reflected key advocacy priorities aligned with the Women, Peace and Security agenda, particularly in the context of the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325.

Coverage appeared across national newspapers, official news agencies, civil society media platforms, and digital media outlets, contributing to both policy-level engagement and broader public outreach. The participation of H.E. Wafaa Bani Mustafa, Minister of Social Development and Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was prominently highlighted by several outlets and served as an important indicator of the Government of Jordan's commitment to advancing the WPS agenda.

Media engagement also included interviews with Heba Zayyan, Regional Advisor on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action at the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States.

Several media outlets produced multiple pieces on the event. Petra News Agency, Jordan's official news agency, reported on the opening of the Regional Open Day and published additional coverage of thematic discussions. The Jordan Times covered the opening session and later published an interview highlighting key messages from the event. Radio Al-Balad aired an interview with Heba Zayyan and subsequently published related coverage on its digital platforms.

Across the coverage, several key themes were emphasized:

- The Open Day was framed within the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, serving as a moment to reflect on progress while identifying priorities for accelerated implementation.
- Media reporting highlighted substantive policy discussions and thematic sessions, positioning the Open Day as an action-oriented platform that contributes to advancing implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- Coverage highlighted the commitment of countries across the Arab States region to advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including efforts to strengthen women's participation in peace and security processes. This underscores the importance of sustained national ownership and regional cooperation in driving progress.
- Coverage consistently emphasized the importance of ensuring women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making, peace processes, and recovery efforts, as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and inclusive governance.

Additionally, the event visibility was supported by wide range of social media content deployed pre-event, as live coverage, and post-event, in the form of teasers, quote cards (1, 2, 3) and reels (1, 2, 3). Live stories and on-ground coverage across the sustained real-time engagement and aimed to extend participation beyond physical attendance. Contribution from the event participants was essential, in form of quote cards, reels, and participant testimonials, and importantly also through generating and reposting content from their own accounts. UN Women posts reached 27,500 views on Facebook, 2,270 impressions on X, and a strong engagement rate in Instagram and Linkedin (47% and 75%). Additionally, prominent partner and regional accounts amplified the event through organic sharing, further expanding reach and reinforcing the event's regional relevance.

**Selected Media Coverage:**

1. The Jordan Times
Jordan 'champion' in advancing women, peace, security — UN Women advisor
https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-champion-in-advancing-women-peace-security-un-women-advisor

2. Radio Al-Balad 92.5 (Arabic): المستشارة الإقليمية لشؤون المرأة والسلام والأمن والعمل الإنساني في المكتب الإقليمي لهيئة الأمم المتحدة للمرأة هبة زيان: بعد 25 عامًا على القرار 1325 آن الأوان لتسريع تنفيذ التزامات مشاركة النساء في السلام

3. Petra News Agency (English): Open Regional Day on Women, Peace and Security Kicks Off in Amman

4. Petra News Agency (Arabic): جلسة متخصصة تبحث تعزيز مشاركة المرأة في جهود السلام عربيًا

5. Al-Dustour Newspaper (Jordan): إطلاق اليوم الإقليمي المفتوح حول المرأة والسلام والأمن
Launch of the Regional Open Day on Women, Peace and Security.

6. Al-Dustour Newspaper (Jordan): بني مصطفى تؤكد أهمية تمكين النساء للمشاركة في صنع القرار
Minister H.E. Bani Mustafa emphasizes the importance of empowering women to participate in decision-making.

7. Ammannet: اليوم الإقليمي المفتوح في عمّان يناقش 25 عامًا من أجندة المرأة والسلام والأمن
Regional Open Day in Amman discusses 25 years of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

8. Neswan Voice: احتفاءً بمرور 25 عامًا على قرار مجلس الأمن 1325، هيئة الأمم المتحدة للمرأة تُطلق أول يوم إقليمي مفتوح حول المرأة والسلام
https://neswanvoice.com/?p=11193

9. Jordan News (Facebook): إطلاق اليوم الإقليمي المفتوح حول المرأة والسلام والأمن
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10. Hala News : إطلاق اليوم الإقليمي المفتوح حول المرأة والسلام والأمن
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11. Jordanian National Commission for Women: اليوم الإقليمي المفتوح حول المرأة والسلام والأمن في المنطقة العربية

# UN WOMEN ADVANCES WOMEN'S RIGHTS, THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS AND EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN.

As the lead United Nations entity on women's empowerment, and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we support advancement of laws, institutions, social norms and services to close the gap between women and men and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector, coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations, deliver lasting changes. We make strides in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and peace, security and humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because equality between men and women is not just what we do. It is who we are.

UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

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