



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

29 October 2020

# Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

**The Hon Marise Payne**  
**Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women**

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President,

As both Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, I am pleased to present the National Statement for Australia to the Security Council on this important milestone: the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. We welcome the Secretary-General's call to action on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. We thank Russia for hosting this debate.

Calls by women activists to end conflict were pivotal to the development of the agenda, with the recognition of women's critical role in negotiating, building, and sustaining peace.

The WPS Agenda remains as relevant now as it was 20 years ago. We commend the critical role women are playing as frontline responders as we work together against COVID-19. However, we cannot overlook the negative and significant impacts on women during this crisis. Growing levels of hostility against women, including political violence, conflict related sexual violence and intimate partner violence, have devastating effects on victims and survivors. These are not just attacks on women – these are attacks on good governance and democracy. They undermine communities' resilience to conflict and extremism.

As we look towards building back better, we must draw on the capability of all, particularly women.

Nationally, we are committed to improving the number and influence of women in national security services, including by meeting the UN's Uniformed Gender Parity targets and funding the Elsie Initiative to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed women.

We commend the UN Force in Cyprus for the strong representation of women in its leadership team, including Australia's Major-General Cheryl Pearce as Force Commander.

In our region, we strongly value our WPS partnership with ASEAN, including supporting Vietnam's hosting of the Global WPS Conference, and co-hosting the second ASEAN-Australia WPS Dialogue.

Internationally, as a top-ten donor to UN-Women, we have renewed our support for the Global Facility and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund to advance women's participation, academic partnerships, and women-led grassroots organisations pivoting towards COVID-19.

Australia has played a key role in mainstreaming gender into Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policy, including by co-chairing with Indonesia the Global Counterterrorism Forum CVE Working Group, and developing a policy toolkit to guide gender-sensitive implementation.

We are pleased to have supported the PeaceFem App through the Towards Inclusive Peace project: an innovative digital tool to share strategies on gender-sensitive peace processes with practitioners.

Australia also continues to use its voice on the global stage. As a member of the Human Rights Council, we have consistently promoted and protected women's rights and gender equality in our work.

As the Secretary-General concludes in his report, we must go beyond plans and numbers to address the root causes of gender inequality and conflict, including harmful norms and inequitable structures. We must promote and protect women's rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and commit to women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding, crisis response and prevention. As we adjust to the realities of COVID-19, Australia gives its assurances to all that we remain committed to implementing fully the WPS agenda.