

Resolution 2450 (2022)¹

Justice and security for women in peace reconciliation

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The vital role of women in building and safeguarding peaceful, democratic societies has never been as evident as it is now, in the wake of a series of crises affecting global stability and amplifying the strengths and weaknesses of our societies.
2. The Covid-19 pandemic showed that the majority of primary carers within the family unit and within the community are women; that women have the capacities to resist, adapt and innovate, heal and communicate; and that they must also be seen as leaders. Women heads of State or government, for instance, were among those who handled national public health measures during the pandemic the most successfully, through collaborative and consultative approaches.
3. The #MeToo movement spearheaded the denunciation of the hegemony of patriarchal attitudes. These attitudes complicate the recognition of women's capabilities for leadership wherever old inequalities have embedded privileges and sanctioned the misuse of power and where acceptance through force of habit and fear of retribution have stopped all but a small number of women from daring to speak out.
4. The return of the Taliban to Afghanistan has shown the fragility of progress in women's rights and exposed the vulnerabilities of women and girls under fundamentalist regimes. The ongoing war in Ukraine is demonstrating once again that while women and girls are among the first casualties of war, notably as victims of conflict-related sexual violence – among the most systematic and cruel acts of warfare – women are also at the political, military and humanitarian forefront. It is therefore unrealistic and even surreal to see that women are absent from the negotiating table during peace talks. This state of affairs is nothing new, as can be seen by looking at the peace negotiations in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. United Nations statistics show that between 1992 and 2019, on average 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators and 6% of signatories in major peace processes worldwide were women. Approximately 7 out of every 10 peace processes did not include any women mediators or women signatories. Change must come if the processes themselves are to have lasting positive effects.
5. In light of the above, the Parliamentary Assembly considers that it is time to put justice and security for women at the top of the list of priorities for global action, and for women to be empowered to act in all stages of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The women among Ukrainian parliamentarians have shown during the ongoing war that they are capable of drawing the world's attention to the unfolding drama and of acting tirelessly to put an end to the conflict, while reflecting on how legislation and policies can contribute to peace and reconciliation after the war.
6. The Assembly recalls its [Resolution 2351 \(2020\)](#) "The gender dimension of foreign policy" and [Resolution 1385 \(2004\)](#) "Conflict prevention and resolution: the role of women", reiterating with the latter text that as "the main civilian victims of conflicts, [women] are often powerless to prevent them, excluded from the negotiations when it comes to their resolution and confined to a marginal role in the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts". The Assembly draws attention to the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023), of which two main objectives are to ensure equal access to justice for women

1. *Assembly debate* on 22 June 2022 (22nd sitting) (see [Doc. 15525](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk; and [Doc. 15538](#), opinion of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Ms Borianna Åberg). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 22 June 2022 (22nd sitting).



and to achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making. It also recalls Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building, and calls for work to begin on a new recommendation focusing on the role of women.

7. With respect to women's role in peace and security policy and action, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States and national parliaments to:

7.1. employ all means, including by introducing feminist foreign policies, to implement the four pillars of the United Nations women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda, namely participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery. To this end, member States should promote and implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);

7.2. make further efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which provides a framework for WPS by acknowledging the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls, calling for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, transitional justice, policy making and post-conflict reconstruction and by calling on States to engage women in all stages of peacebuilding and State governance in general;

7.3. design, implement, monitor and revise national action plans under Resolution 1325, modelled on those which have already shown positive results and which ensure the participation of national authorities and civil society organisations in development, implementation and monitoring (such as the Netherlands National Action Plan Supervisory Board). In particular, the integration of gender mainstreaming in implementation processes in all areas must be a priority objective.

8. Women form part of every country's military forces. For instance in Ukraine they make up 17% of the army, and as such participate fully in the defence of the country. With respect to women's role in the armed forces, recalling [Resolution 2120 \(2016\)](#) "Women in the armed forces: promoting equality, putting an end to gender-based violence", the Assembly urges member States to:

8.1. recognise that women, far from being solely the victims of war, are in the front line both of national defence and of humanitarian action and as such must be given equal rights coupled with gender-specific means to uphold these rights;

8.2. take measures to promote the recruitment of women to the armed forces and ensure that women in the armed forces are given the same opportunities and incentives as their male counterparts to participate in strategic planning and decision making at the highest levels;

8.3. provide for military training that includes awareness of gender sensitivity and gender specificity, including with respect to physical contact during combat, military accommodation conditions and the provision of medical and psychological support;

8.4. ensure that women are protected against violence within the armed forces, by measures of prevention, awareness raising and sanctions for perpetrators;

8.5. address women's needs in post-conflict situations of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration;

8.6. include teaching on the gender dimension in all stages of military training and make sure that both women and men teach in military academies.

9. Transitional justice is a precondition for rebuilding peaceful societies and attaining justice and closure for victims. Therefore, the Assembly welcomes the decision by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to investigate the crimes committed by the Russian Federation in its war of aggression waged against Ukraine and the establishment of a special investigation commission by the United Nations Human Rights Council, following the unprecedented collective call for action by States members of the court.

10. With respect to the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed during armed conflict, the Assembly calls on member States to:

10.1. ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court if they have not already done so, in order to allow for international prosecution of crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression;

10.2. empower witnesses, survivors and affected communities to actively contribute to investigations, leaving no bystanders to the efforts to establish the truth and pursue those who may be responsible for international crimes;

10.3. facilitate gender-specific collection of testimonies from persons having suffered sexual violence during conflict, taking care to avoid re-traumatisation by providing expert support and guarantees of confidentiality. States must ensure that appropriate medical and psychological support is given before and during the collection of testimonies;

10.4. support the independence and action of ombudspersons in Europe, especially those who are women, and sustain their ability to investigate human rights abuses;

10.5. provide training for women as mediators to be involved in peace missions, conflict resolution and peace support operations.

11. Women's civil society organisations are at the heart of national and international frameworks to accompany women who suffer the consequences of conflict – migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons and victims of gender-based violence – and to support women who are survivors of violence due to war in their own countries, for instance in the former Yugoslavia. The Assembly therefore calls on member States to:

11.1. directly allocate funds to women's civil society organisations advocating for peace and reconciliation and those dealing with the serious and lasting physical and psychological consequences of conflict for women;

11.2. promote inclusive dialogue and participation of minorities in decision-making and political processes, including in peace negotiations and transitional justice processes, and provide capacity-building support.

12. Stressing that quality education, notably with regard to citizenship, conflict transformation and human rights, is essential for developing peaceful societies, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to include democratic citizenship and peace education in formal school curriculums from an early age.

13. Finally, the Assembly calls on all member States to ratify, if they have not already done so, the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "the Istanbul Convention"), which provides for the protection against and prevention of violence against women, prohibits rape and applies to all women, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, in peacetime as well as during conflict.