Gender Transformation and Empowerment

PRESS RELEASE

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A CIVIL SOCIETY/WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATION STATEMENT ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION (UNSCR) 1325 IN UGANDA.

Today, as Women's Rights Organizations and the general Civil Society Organizations, we join the global community in commemorating the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). Adopted in 2000, the UNSCR 1325 established a groundbreaking framework emphasizing the pivotal role of women in peace and security processes, underscores the necessity of women's participation in decision-making, the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, the prevention of conflicts, and the provision of relief and recovery efforts in post-conflict scenarios.

Today, we pay tribute to the tireless efforts and contributions of women and girls across Uganda in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and response, and the promotion of inclusive governance, often in the face of systemic barriers and personal risk. This year's commemoration, themed ***"When Women Lead, Peace Follows,"*** highlights the critical role of women's leadership in sustaining peace and security at local, national, and global levels. As we mark this milestone, it is essential to reflect on the progress made, the setbacks encountered, and the path forward, reaffirming the shared commitment to advancing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Uganda and beyond.

The role of women's rights organizations (WROS) in advancing the UNSCR 1325 on WPS agenda in Uganda.

Women's Rights Organizations and indeed the larger Civil Society Organisations (CSO) have been central in advancing the WPS agenda in Uganda by complementing government efforts in advocating for the meaningful participation in leadership and inclusion of women's perspectives in peacebuilding and security processes, at all levels. This work spans community mobilization, creating safe platforms for women's participation in decision-making, strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders to implement the WPS initiatives, seeking gender accountability on commitments to the resolution.

In partnership with the Government of Uganda WROs have contributed to the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs), as well as their localization across districts, translating international commitments under UNSCR 1325 into practical national and local strategies that enhance women's security, agency, and leadership in peace and conflict contexts., capacity building of duty bearers, monitoring and reporting on the implementation[1] amongst others.

Progress and achievements of the UNSCR 1325 women, peace and security (WPS) agenda in Uganda

- Uganda has taken steps in the implementation of the UNSCR1325 on WPS that has demonstrated the impact of coordinated government, civil society, and community efforts.

- Legal and Policy Frameworks: Uganda has established a legal and policy framework to safeguard women's rights, including the Domestic Violence Act (2010), Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010), Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009), and the National Gender Policy (2007) (United Nations). The country has also developed three National Action Plans on WPS, with NAP III (2021–2025) focusing on enhancing women's participation in peace processes and aligning WPS goals with national development priorities (United Nations, 2021).

- Women's Representation and Participation: Notable progress is evident in women's representation across leadership spheres. Women now occupy 45% of Cabinet positions, 34% of Parliamentary seats, and 49.6% of the judiciary. At the community level, women mediators have successfully resolved numerous local conflicts, highlighting the critical role of grassroots organizing and engagement in sustaining peace.[2]

- Localization of WPS Commitments: Efforts to localize the National Action Plan have yielded tangible results, with 20 districts developing Local Action Plans (LAPs) that integrate gender perspectives into community-level peacebuilding and security initiatives. This ensures that national commitments are translated into actionable strategies that directly benefit women and girls at the local level.

[1] https://open.unwomen.org/fr/country-results/UG
[2]https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/sites/www.un.org.shestandsforpeace/files/uganda-_nap_2021-2025.pdf

Gender-based violence remains a pervasive challenge in Uganda, with sexual violence constituting a significant proportion of reported cases. The Uganda Police Force's Annual Crime Report 2024[4] recorded 14,073 cases of domestic violence and 14,425 sex-related offences, underscoring the persistent prevalence of gender-based violence.

In addition, local women's organizations working on the frontlines for peace face underfunding and dwindling funding, with only 0.3% of Official Development Assistance directed to these organizations between 2021 and 2022[5] which figures continue to dwindle.

Deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes further impede women's full participation in peacebuilding and security initiatives.

Despite Uganda's strong commitment to the WPS agenda, financial allocations remain a significant constraint. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, which leads the coordination of WPS initiatives, has seen its share of the national budget decline from 0.60% in FY 2018/19 to around 0.53% in FY 2023/24, with sharper dips to 0.36% in FY 2020/21 and 0.26% in FY 2021/22[6]. This underfunding limits the Ministry's capacity to implement national priorities, including the operationalization of NAP III on WPS, which has an estimated cost of UGX 90.57 billion for the period 2021–2025 (National Action Plan III on WPS, Uganda, 2021–2025)[7]. Assessments indicate that less than 5%[8] of Ministries Departments and Agencies and local government budgets are allocated to interventions addressing violence against women and girls, further constraining efforts to promote women's participation in peacebuilding and protection from gender-based violence. These funding gaps undermine the effective localization of WPS commitments and restrict the ability of CSOs and local actors to deliver essential programs on the ground.

[4] https://upf.go.ug/download/annual-crime-report-2024/
[5]https://knowledge.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/unravelling-the-gap-between-global-commitments-and-funding-for-womens-organizations-in-conflict-affected-contexts-en.pdf
[6]https://budget.finance.go.ug/sites/default/files/National%20Budget%20docs/National%20Budget%20Framework%20Paper%20%28NBFP%29%20FY%202024-25.pdf
[7] https://wipc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NAP-III-Popular-Version.pdf
[8]https://www.africa-press.net/uganda/all-news/gbv-budget-cuts-and-fragmented-allocations-leave-vulnerable-at-risk

Calls to Action

Women's Rights Organizations therefore call on all stakeholders to reinforce women's participation and protection in peace and security. We call upon;

- The Government of Uganda to increase budget allocations to the MGLSD to strengthen implementation of the NAP III and ensure that Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) increase their budgets to interventions addressing violence against women and girls, in line with the WPS agenda.

- Cultural, faith-based, and community leaders to challenge harmful social norms and practices that limit women's participation, and to champion inclusive decision-making, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding efforts that reflect gender equality principles.

- The security sector, including the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), to adopt deliberate measures to increase women's representation, particularly in leadership, negotiation, and operational roles, and to integrate gender-responsive policies in recruitment, training, and deployment.

- The media, civil society, and private sector actors to amplify women's leadership, provide capacity-building opportunities, and promote safe and inclusive spaces for women in peace and security initiatives.

- Communities and citizens to actively support women's leadership, challenge gender stereotypes, and create enabling environments where women's voices are heard and respected in all peacebuilding processes.

- Women to claim their rightful space, participate boldly in decision-making, and take active roles in leadership, peace negotiations, and community development initiatives, ensuring their perspectives shape Uganda's path to peace and security.

WROs/CSOs reaffirm their commitment to promoting women's rights, leadership, and protection, and to sustaining inclusive, peaceful, and resilient societies in Uganda.

UNITED WOMEN CAN! FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.