



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ON: FROM LANDMARK TO LITMUS TEST

by Katrina Leclerc, Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic and Sarah Keeler

When the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 in October 2000, it set a global precedent: the first international recognition that peace and security cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women and attention to gendered impacts of war. Twenty-five years later, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is both a landmark and a litmus test. It is a landmark in the sense that it reshaped the discourse of international security. But it is also a litmus test of governments' willingness to act, as implementation remains uneven, under-resourced, and vulnerable to political shifts.

The anniversary comes at a time of profound global uncertainty. Authoritarianism, armed conflict, military spending, and climate change are converging with backlash against gender equality and human rights. Far from being a moment of celebration, this anniversary forces us to ask whether WPS commitments are keeping pace with contemporary realities.

Canada's CNAP3 in context

In Canada, the anniversary coincides with the second year of the third National Action Plan on WPS (CNAP3), covering 2023–2029. CNAP3 builds on previous plans and situates WPS within Canada's broader feminist policy framework, including the Feminist International Assistance Policy. It sets out ambitious objectives: advancing women's participation, preventing violence, supporting human rights defenders, and strengthening gender-responsive peacebuilding.

Yet critical questions remain. Is CNAP3 adequately resourced? How is the implementation monitored? What leadership structures ensure coherence across departments? And, crucially, how inclusive is the plan for women in all their diversity, both within Canada and internationally?

These questions echo concerns raised consistently by civil society since Canada's first action plan. They speak to an underlying tension: Canada positions itself as a global leader on WPS, yet the gap between rhetoric and practice remains wide.



by *Katrina Leclerc, Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic
and Sarah Keeler*

Purpose of this publication

This analysis publication is coordinated by the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C), a coalition of over 80 civil society organizations and individuals committed to advancing feminist peace. Timed deliberately with the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325, the publication serves three purposes:

1. **Accountability:** to critically assess Canada’s progress, shortcomings, and contradictions in implementing WPS and CNAP3.
2. **Policy analysis:** to provide evidence-based insights on current challenges, from military spending to climate impacts, and their implications for Canada’s commitments.
3. **Advocacy tool:** to amplify civil society perspectives and ensure that feminist analysis shapes both Canadian policy and international debates on WPS.

The contributions are written by members of WPSN-C — researchers, practitioners, and activists. They bring diverse expertise and lived experience, providing a grounded analysis that challenges government policy where necessary and offers constructive recommendations for change. The authors are expressing their own views and not necessarily those of all Network members.

Key debates shaping WPS today

The chapters in this publication illustrate how the WPS agenda continues to evolve. Four debates run through it:

- **Leadership and accountability:** WPS requires more than symbolic endorsement — it needs political champions and resources.
- **Conflict and geopolitics:** global conflicts, military strategies, and foreign policy choices directly shape the scope and credibility of WPS.
- **Intersectionality and inclusion:** women and communities marginalized by age, disability, race, sexuality, and displacement must be centred, not sidelined.
- **Care, justice, and survival:** feminist approaches remind us that peace is not only about ceasefires but about the conditions that sustain life, dignity, and justice.

These debates frame the contributions that follow and signal where civil society sees the most pressing gaps and opportunities for Canada.



*by Katrina Leclerc, Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic
and Sarah Keeler*

A guide to the chapters

The publication begins with a focus on leadership. Bénédicte Santoire and Beth Woroniuk call for the re-establishment of a Canadian WPS Ambassador to provide visible political leadership, while Woroniuk later interrogates CNAP3's financing, warning against ambitious plans left without the resources to deliver.

Chapters on conflict and geopolitics highlight Canada's contradictions. Nahid Azad documents the environmental devastation of war and urges a feminist approach that links WPS with climate justice. Ellen Woodsworth and Tamara Lorincz expose how ballooning defence budgets undermine Canada's feminist commitments. Wazhma Frogh details the lived realities of Afghan women under Taliban rule, underscoring Canada's enduring obligations. Mary Bridger brings Palestine into focus as an urgent WPS issue, while Rita Morbia situates Sudan as both a site of devastation and a reminder of WPS's ongoing relevance. Tamara Lorincz also critiques Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy as a militarized approach that erodes feminist foreign policy claims.

The next set of contributions examines intersectionality. Alexandria Bohémier, Kim Vance-Mubanga, and Sarah Clifford push for queering WPS and integrating 2SLGBTQI+ perspectives. Anne Delorme and Sarah Keeler expose the invisibility of women with disabilities in both Canadian and international WPS frameworks. Shayne Wong argues for meaningful, not tokenistic, youth engagement by drawing links between WPS and the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda. Esra Bengizi outlines critical concerns and experiences of women of colour in the context of WPS, including shedding light on domestic and foreign affairs decisions that are contrary to the aspirations of WPS.

The final chapters foreground care and justice. Chloé Silvestre and Rabab Rabbani explore the connections between climate justice and feminist peacebuilding, while Denise Koh reflects on her experience as a Filipina physician on how WPS must also account for everyday practices of healing, dignity, and survival.



*by Katrina Leclerc, Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic
and Sarah Keeler*

What emerges across the chapters

Taken together, these contributions paint a picture of WPS at 25 as an agenda under pressure but also alive with possibility. Three cross-cutting themes emerge:

- The gap between rhetoric and resourcing: Canada's policies are ambitious on paper, but without adequate financing and leadership, commitments risk remaining aspirational.
- The centrality of intersectionality: WPS must fully integrate disability rights, queer perspectives, youth leadership, and climate justice if it is to reflect the realities of women in all their diversity.
- The costs of militarization: Rising defence budgets and security-driven foreign policy choices erode Canada's feminist positioning and undermine the credibility of WPS.

These findings reinforce the need for sustained monitoring, stronger political leadership, and genuine partnerships with civil society.

Conclusion: From anniversary to accountability

The 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325 should not be remembered as a symbolic milestone. It must be treated as a moment of accountability. Canada's CNAP3 will ultimately be judged not by its ambition, but by its implementation — by the resources invested, the leadership demonstrated, and the extent to which it centres those most affected by conflict and insecurity.

This publication offers a civil society contribution to that accountability. It provides feminist policy analysis, names gaps and contradictions, and highlights recommendations for moving forward. Above all, it insists that WPS at 25 is not about commemoration, but about renewing the agenda through action, inclusion, and sustained feminist commitment.