



2026

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY BEYOND THE BINARIES

BLOG SERIES



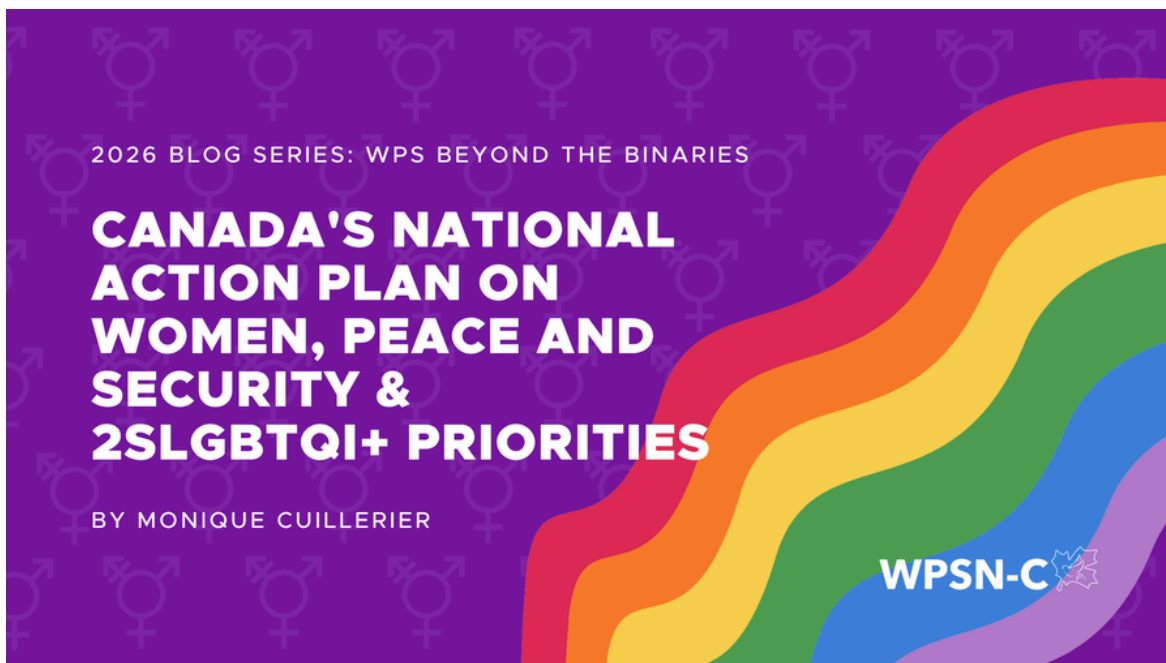
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Acronyms

2SLGBTQI+	Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and other members who identify with the community
2SLGBTQIA+	Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual
CNAP	Canada's National Action Plan on WPS
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBA+	Gender-Based Analysis Plus
GoC	Government of Canada
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and other Members who identify with the community
MST	Military Sexual Trauma
NAP	National Action Plan
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WPSA	Canada's WPS Ambassador
WRO	Women's rights organizations
WPSN-C	Women, Peace and Security Network - Canada

The views expressed in the following blog posts are those of the authors only and do not necessarily represent those of the WPSN-C or its membership.



Canada's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023-2029) is at its midway point and as we await the, hopefully imminent, release of the most recent Canadian National Action Plan (CNAP) progress reporting, along with the appointment of a new Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security, now is a useful time to review the evolution of 2SLGBTQI+ representation within Canada's WPS priorities and the concerns that have been articulated by members of the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C).

Over the last five years, in the Network's publications, WPSN-C members have explored the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ communities in the government of Canada's women, peace and security priorities from various perspectives. (It should be noted that the opinions expressed in the Network's publications do not necessarily constitute the opinions of the WPSN-C. Nor should they be considered the opinions and views of all Network members.)

In the 2021 publication, Reflection on Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: Gains, Gaps & Goals, the article "Why Canada Needs to be Intersectional: Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Folks in Women, Peace and Security Priorities" by Alexandria Bohémier situates the need for the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ women and girls within the CNAP in the context of the 2020 announcement that Canada would develop a federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan (which was subsequently launched in 2022). While the federal 2SLGBTQI+ action plan,

Bohémier iterates that it "is an important first step for the [LGBTQ+] community in Canada, the community cannot exist in a silo. LGBTQ+ women and girls must be included in the WPS agenda and in Canada's National Action Plan as they are both women and LGBTQ+ community members; their experiences as both cannot be separated from one another." Bohémier offers broad suggestions for the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ women and girls in the fourth year of the 2nd CNAP (which was in effect from 2017 to 2022). These suggestions include situating discrimination against 2SLGBTQI+ women and girls as a barrier to CNAP implementation; considering the impacts of homophobia and transphobia in the context of sexual and gender-based violence; addressing the issues faced by 2SLGBTQI+ women in the Canadian Armed Forces, including in peacekeeping operations; utilizing the government's own internal 2SLGBTQI+ expertise in the development of the 3rd NAP; and increasing data collection on the experiences of 2SLGBTQI+ women and girls across the WPS agenda.

Fostering Feminist Peace At Home: Implications for CNAP3, the Network's 2023 publication includes an article by Micaela Crighton, "Queering Canada's Domestic Peace and Security: Opportunities for WPS and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan," addressing the federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan and CNAP3.

Crighton discusses the erasure of 2SLGBTQI+ communities from WPS spaces in general over time and how CNAP3 provides an "immense opportunity for a WPS implementation that uses a queered understanding of WPS as a tool to advance peace and security for all." It reflects on the binary nature of the 2nd CNAP and the potential of the government's then recently launched 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan, under the auspices of the Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), to support "the expansion and stabilization of the 2SLGBTQI+ Secretariat to enable the implementation of the Action Plan, along with the new federal interdepartmental governance tables, presents an opportunity to support the development of a gender, peace and security understanding of WPS within the CNAP3, specifically in collaboration with the Canadian Ambassador for WPS."

The Network's 2024 publication, 'Foundations for Peace' in Turbulent Times: Analysis of Canada's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, analyzed the then-newly released 3rd National Action Plan, including a chapter on "Queering Peace and Security: 2SLGBTQI+ Reflections on Canada's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security" by Alexandria Bohémier.

According to Bohémier, in the 3rd and current NAP, "Canada strengthened its approach to queering the agenda demonstrably by reflecting on discourse and criticisms raised by experts on CNAP1 and CNAP2. CNAP3 also specifically notes the integration of the first federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan as part of the policy alignment of the new WPS action plan."

However, it is also acknowledged that "this is just a starting point, and these commitments must turn into action. To build sustainable peace, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals must be fully and meaningfully included. The Government of Canada must collaborate closely with [Queering Peace and Security] experts, both domestically and globally, to ensure its commitment to creating the most inclusive and impactful implementation of a NAP to date, which truly moves from words to action."

Most recently, in October 2025, the Network released a publication to coincide with the 25th Anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, WPS at 25 and Canada's CNAP3: Feminist Reflections on Progress and Gaps, which included "From Reflection to Action: Queering Canada's WPS Commitments at 25 Years," written by Alexandria Bohémier, Kim Vance-Mubanga, and Sarah Clifford.

As the introduction states, recalling previous recommendations, "CNAP3 presents an opportunity to move beyond tokenism and toward co-creation, embedding queer and trans voices in the heart of peace and security practice."

Bohémier, Vance-Mubanga, and Clifford warn that, although there have undoubtedly been gains over the last twenty-five years, "for 2SLGBTQI+ communities, this milestone underscores the need to move beyond rhetorical acknowledgement toward systemic change. Existing work being led by 2SLGBTQI+ individuals and organizations already provides roadmaps for how to centre queer and trans voices, dismantle tokenism, and embed co-creation into Canada's WPS implementation efforts."

We can see from the above the responses to incremental improvements in addressing 2SLGBTQI+ issues and increasing the inclusion of these communities within the

government's WPS priorities. But much still remains to be done, and opportunities for true change remain underdeveloped.

What can we expect next? The Government's upcoming progress report, the first under CNAP3, will hopefully provide a clearer understanding of what has been accomplished so far under the Action Plan and what challenges remain unaddressed.

The WPSN-C acts as both a forum for exchange and action by Canadian civil society on issues related to WPS and a platform to promote and monitor the Government of Canada's efforts to implement and support the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS.

Last June, for the 2025 Pride Month, the Network hosted, in collaboration with organizational members Women of Colour Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation – Canada (WCAPS-Canada), the Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security (CCYPS), Egale Canada, and Inter Pares, a virtual panel discussion on Queering Peace and Security.

That panel discussion, along with this blog series and articles in the Network's publications, provides space for civil society to come together and discuss the challenges that remain for 2SLGBTQI+ communities within the WPS context, in general, and in relation to Canada's NAP, in particular.

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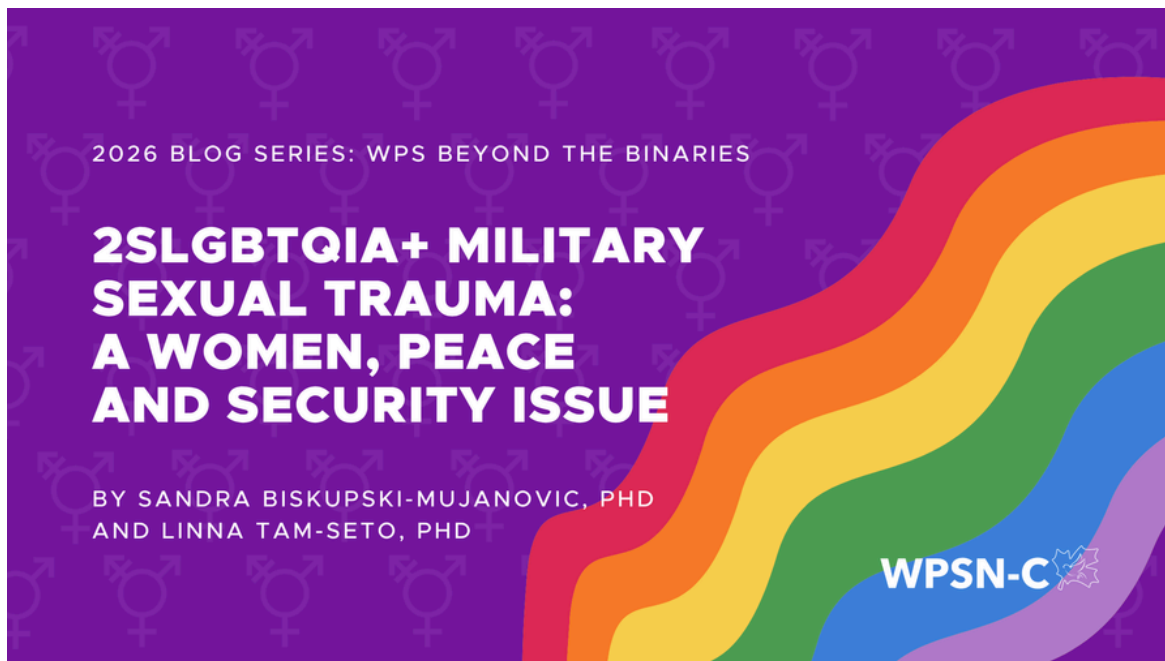
Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan (Women and Gender Equality Canada)

WPS at 25 and Canada's CNAP3: Feminist Reflections on Progress and Gaps. Edited by Katrina Leclerc, Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic and Sarah Keeler (2025).

'Foundations for Peace' in Turbulent Times: Analysis of Canada's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Edited by Bénédicte Santoire, Katrina Leclerc and Beth Woroniuk (2024).

Fostering Feminist Peace At Home: Implications for CNAP3. Edited by Katrina Leclerc, Bénédicte Santoire and Beth Woroniuk (2023).

Reflection on Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: Gains, Gaps & Goals. Edited by Katrina Leclerc, Beth Woroniuk, and Claire Wählen (2021).



Military sexual trauma (MST)¹ is widely recognized as a persistent problem within militaries internationally and produces serious consequences for health, well-being, and daily functioning. In Canada, external reviews and national media investigations have repeatedly documented military sexual misconduct and the inadequacy of institutional responses. Far less attention has been paid to the MST experiences of Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) service members and veterans for whom MST is also shaped by homophobia and transphobia.

2SLGBTQIA+ service members and veterans have long faced discrimination and exclusion across military contexts. In the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), this history includes the LGBT Purge, the period from the 1950s to mid-1990s when the Canadian government systematically discriminated against, harassed, and often fired members of the CAF and federal public service who were suspected of being LGBT. The Purge involved state-sponsored surveillance based on sexuality and gender identity, and its legacy continues to shape trust, safety, and belonging. In the US context, despite the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT), the official US policy on non-heterosexual service members that was in effect from the early 1990s to 2011, President Trump's Administration is openly barring transgender members from service. The ban is having a tremendous negative impact, including the denial of hearings, the denial of retirement benefits, the loss of health benefits, and feelings of being threatened. While new exclusionary policies are not in effect in Canada, the close cultural, political, and institutional ties between the US and Canada mean that Canadian service members may still perceive themselves as vulnerable to similar shifts. This new ban illustrates how inclusion can backslide, particularly for some, as the state establishes sexual and gender diversity as a threat to cohesion, morality, and even national security (a claim that has not been substantiated). We also have evidence of continued discrimination against CAF service members based on sexual orientation, as well as statistics indicating that 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals experience higher rates of sexualized or discriminatory behaviours

¹ MST is defined as "any sexual or sexualized activity that occurs without the person's consent, during their service as a member of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the physically or psychologically traumatic impacts of this activity on the affected person" (from: Heber et al., 2023). MST is considered the most inclusive term to capture a spectrum of sexualized harms in a military context and to acknowledge the impact of such experiences. The CAF has added the term to the Defence Terminology Bank but also uses the language of sexual misconduct.

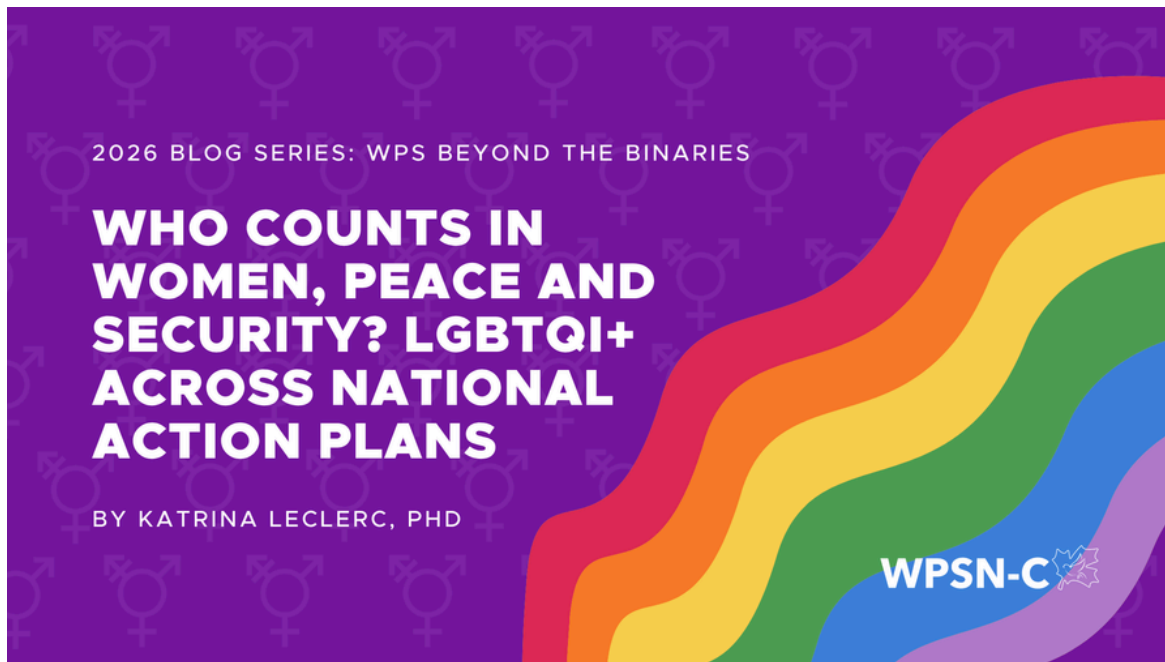
than heterosexual members. Additionally, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Canada faces increased risk of violence, hate speech, stigma, and microaggressions; the anti-gender movement poses a threat of extreme violence in Canada; and Statistics Canada reported in 2023 that hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation rose by 69% from the previous year.

These realities raise important questions for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, established through the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 to address the gendered impacts of conflict and to ensure women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes. Canada's third National Action Plan on WPS (CNAP3) has committed to addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual misconduct. The Department of National Defence and CAF implementation plan for CNAP3 also includes SGBV as a focus area, under which it also commits to "strengthen gender-responsive and inclusive systems and services for the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma within the Defence Team." Unfortunately, DND/CAF have not explained how they will accomplish this goal and progress reports tracking CNAP3 implementation have not yet been released (and are already very late). Previous critiques demonstrate that Canada's WPS attention has mostly focused outward while paying insufficient attention to WPS issues, including gendered violence occurring at home. Outward-facing implementation of WPS risks "making war safe for women" rather than prioritizing demilitarization, and risks assuming insecurity is always and only 'elsewhere' rather than here. While Canada has made progress since earlier NAP iterations (2010 and 2017), gaps remain. Despite CNAP3 including DND/CAF's implementation plan and naming gender-diverse people as stakeholders, the absence of any benchmarks makes it impossible to assess if and how 2SLGBTQIA+ voices are included.

A recent study by researchers at the University of Toronto's LINKS Lab (publication of findings forthcoming) demonstrates that 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences of MST are not isolated forms of interpersonal misconduct but are entangled with sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and heteronormativity. These systems of power are also among the root causes of MST and the harmful components of CAF's culture. While much of WPS relies on binary understandings of gender that fail to adequately account for violence and the targeting of people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, experts in "Queering WPS" urge expanding our understandings of (in)security and listening to those who have lived experience. Drawing on participant interviews, Drs. Biskupski-Mujanovic and Tam-Seto argue that broader exclusion in the military enables MST to continue. Such conditions include heteronormative expectations, discriminatory comments, threats of corrective rape, and everyday hostility toward people perceived as different, with participants highlighting how military leadership and peer cultures normalized these behaviours and created climates where disclosure felt unsafe, reflecting broader patterns of institutional betrayal. Many participants reported deep mistrust of military reporting systems and leadership responses, and described fears of retaliation, minimization, or disbelief if they disclosed MST. These experiences were also linked to significant impacts on mental health and well-being, including anxiety, depression, anger, difficulties forming relationships, and a diminished sense of belonging within and outside of the military. Several participants also described how identity-based discrimination and MST influenced their career trajectories and willingness to seek care. Recovery was described as strengthened in environments where validation and respect were present.

Feminist scholarship has argued that WPS implementation cannot be reduced to checkbox exercises and requires confronting systemic inequality and exclusionary institutional cultures. Mackenzie, Metelits, and Hunter stress that institutionalizing gender perspectives into professional military education requires acknowledging the resistance that WPS efforts continue to face. We also see an increase in gender backlash broadly. Biskupski-Mujanovic and Tam-Seto's research findings have important implications for the WPS agenda because

they highlight how insecurity and gendered violence are not confined to conflict zones abroad but are also produced within military institutions in Canada. If WPS is to create inclusive security institutions, then MST among 2SLGBTQIA+ servicemembers and veterans must be addressed. Achieving this requires moving beyond symbolic inclusion toward institutional transformation that addresses underlying military cultures of heteronormativity, homophobia, and transphobia, including embedding trauma-informed, gender-affirming, and culturally-competent supports into military and veteran systems, strengthening reporting mechanisms, and ensuring WPS implementation plans include measurable commitments related to 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion, accountability, survivor well-being, and institutional culture change.



Twenty-five years after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has become one of the most significant normative frameworks shaping global conversations on gender, conflict, and peacebuilding. Yet despite growing attention to intersectionality within international policy spaces, the WPS agenda remains overwhelmingly structured around binary understandings of gender. Across much of the global WPS architecture, women are still implicitly imagined as cisgender, heterosexual, and politically legible within relatively traditional frameworks of gender and security.

This raises an important question: who remains excluded from the WPS agenda, even as it expands?

Over the past several months, I reviewed 208 National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS, past and present, to examine whether they included explicit references to LGBTQI+ communities, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or broader gender-diversity frameworks. The findings were striking. Fewer than 10 percent of the documents reviewed contained explicit references to LGBTQI+ communities or broader SOGIESC-inclusive language.¹ More than 90 percent contained no explicit references at all. Even among newer-generation NAPs that strongly emphasized inclusion, diversity, or intersectionality, explicit naming of queer, trans, non-binary, or gender-diverse communities remained exceptionally rare.

This absence matters. WPS NAPs are not simply symbolic documents. They shape national priorities, institutional training, funding allocations, participation mechanisms, protection frameworks, and the broader political imagination of who counts within peace and security governance. The continued invisibility of LGBTQI+ communities within most NAPs reflects deeper assumptions about whose experiences of insecurity are recognized as legitimate and whose participation is considered politically relevant.

¹ Throughout this blog, the acronym LGBTQI+ is used as a broad and internationally recognizable umbrella term. However, in the Canadian context, the acronym 2SLGBTQI+ is increasingly used to explicitly recognize Two-Spirit identities and the distinct experiences and histories of Indigenous gender and sexual diversity

At the same time, a small but growing number of states are beginning to challenge these binary assumptions more directly.

Canada's 2023-2029 NAP is among the clearest examples. The document explicitly references "2SLGBTQI+ issues," "sexually and gender-diverse people," transgender communities, and critiques binary understandings of gender within the WPS agenda itself. Particularly significant is the inclusion of references to Two-Spirit and gender-diverse Indigenous peoples in discussions on violence and insecurity. Rather than simply adding LGBTQI+ communities into existing frameworks, the Canadian NAP begins to question some of the assumptions underpinning WPS policy architecture.

Similarly, Sweden's 2024-2028 NAP explicitly states that Sweden will "highlight and support particularly marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities, LGBTI persons, young people and older people." This is notable not only because it uses explicit "LGBTI" terminology, but because the reference is embedded within the strategic framing of the NAP itself rather than confined to a passing mention or footnote.

Colombia's first National Action Plan (2024-2034) also stands out as one of the most comprehensive examples of LGBTQI+ inclusion within the WPS agenda. The plan explicitly references sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, non-binary persons, and LGBTIQ+ communities throughout the document. Importantly, Colombia integrates these references into its broader framework on intersectionality, human security, and conflict-related violence, including within discussions on transitional justice and implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement. Rather than treating LGBTQI+ inclusion as peripheral, the Colombian NAP embeds sexual orientation and gender identity directly into its conceptual understanding of peace and security.

Argentina's 2022 NAP also stands out for its extensive references to LGBTIQ+ communities, gender-diverse individuals, sexual orientation, gender identity, and "sexual dissidences," reflecting the influence of broader feminist and gender-diversity movements within Argentine politics. Australia's 2021-2031 NAP references "people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities" as well as "sexual and gender minorities." Norway's 2023-2030 NAP recognizes that conflict impacts vary depending on "gender and sexual identity," while South Africa's 2020-2025 NAP explicitly references "women, girls and gender non-conforming persons" and frames the agenda around "women in all their diversity."

These examples remain exceptions rather than the norm.

More commonly, newer-generation NAPs adopt broader inclusion language without explicitly naming LGBTQI+ communities. Chile's 2025-2030 NAP references "women in all their diversity" and includes references to "LGTBIQA+ populations." Finland's 2023-2027 NAP discusses "sexual minorities" and "gender diversity" in the context of anti-gender movements and security-sector training. The Philippines' fourth NAP references "women in all their diverse and intersecting identities" and "greater gender inclusivity," yet stops short of explicitly naming LGBTQI+ communities or gender identity concerns.

These distinctions are important because wording shapes visibility. Broad references to "diversity" or "inclusion" can create openings for more expansive understandings of gender and security, but they can also avoid politically difficult conversations around sexuality and gender identity. In many contexts, the absence of explicit language reflects ongoing political sensitivities, legal restrictions, or broader societal resistance to LGBTQI+ inclusion. Yet from a policy perspective, ambiguity can also produce erasure. Communities that are never

named are often communities that remain absent from implementation frameworks, funding priorities, data collection, protection mechanisms, and participation processes.

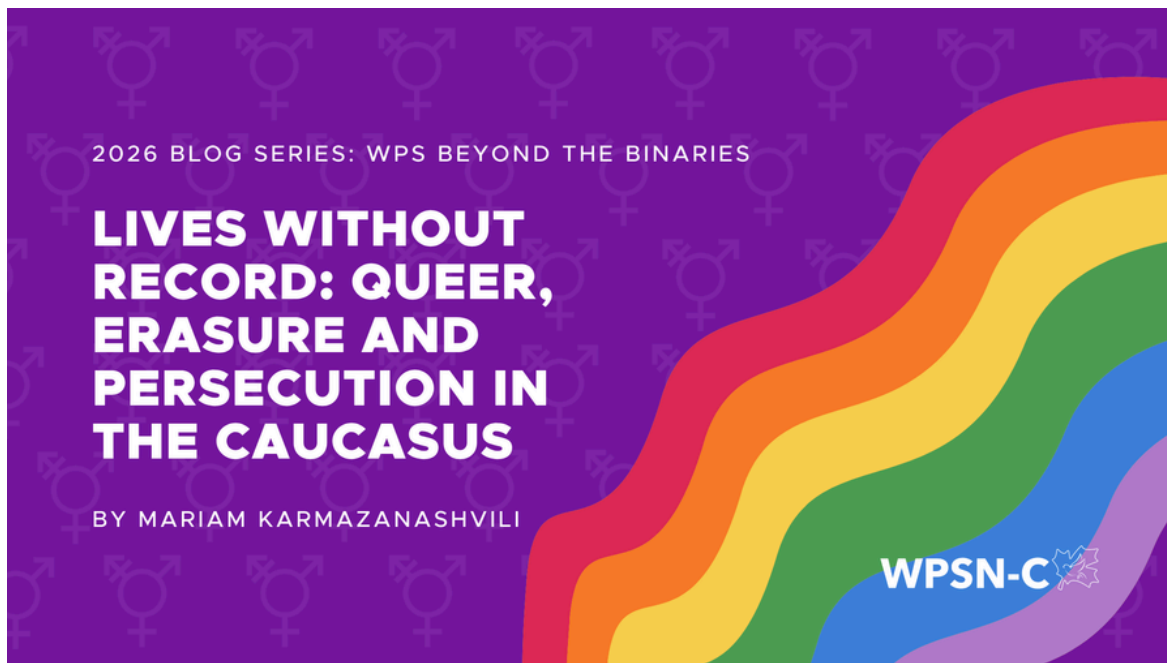
This has practical implications across the WPS agenda. LGBTQI+ communities experience conflict, displacement, militarization, and insecurity in distinct ways. Queer and trans people often face heightened risks of targeted violence, exclusion from humanitarian assistance, criminalization, family rejection, and barriers to accessing health care or protection systems. Yet these experiences frequently remain invisible within conflict analysis and peacebuilding frameworks. Even within discussions of gender-based violence, most NAPs continue to frame violence primarily through heterosexual and cisnormative assumptions.

The issue is not whether the WPS agenda should “expand” to include LGBTQI+ communities as an afterthought. Rather, it is whether the agenda can genuinely claim to address the gendered realities of conflict while continuing to rely on narrow and binary understandings of gender itself.

Importantly, explicit references alone are not sufficient. Inclusion can quickly become symbolic if it is not accompanied by meaningful implementation. Naming LGBTQI+ communities in a NAP does not automatically translate into safer participation spaces, better protection mechanisms, dedicated funding, or inclusive peacebuilding processes. At the same time, visibility still matters. The decision to explicitly recognize LGBTQI+ communities within national peace and security frameworks is politically significant, particularly in a global context marked by growing anti-gender movements and backlash against queer and trans rights.

As the WPS agenda enters its next phase, conversations about inclusion cannot remain limited to adding new groups into existing frameworks without interrogating the assumptions those frameworks reproduce. The question is not only who is included in WPS, but also how peace and security themselves are being conceptualized.

If WPS is truly intended to address the lived realities of those affected by conflict and insecurity, then moving beyond binary understandings of gender is not a peripheral issue. It is central to the future relevance, legitimacy, and transformative potential of the agenda itself.



The Caucasus region is situated between Europe and Asia and encompasses republics within the Russian Federation as well as independent states such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In international policy discourse, the region is often described as a place of “frozen conflicts” and “fragile stability.” Yet there is nothing frozen about the violence that continues to shape the region. Beneath the language of stability lies a political and social reality marked by forced disappearances, repression and systems of fear that have become easier for the international community to ignore. Across the region, violence persists in ways that are unevenly recorded, inconsistently acknowledged, and frequently displaced from international attention.

Among the least documented patterns of violence in the Caucasus is the persecution of individuals based on sexual orientation and gender expression, alongside broader systems of gendered repression. Elena Milashina is a Russian journalist who was the first to report coordinated kidnappings, detentions and the disappearances of LGBTQI+ individuals in the Chechen Republic, which is a federal republic of Russia located in the North Caucasus region. Milashina’s findings were later corroborated and expanded upon by Human Rights Watch and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), whose investigations documented campaigns of torture, enforced disappearance, and extrajudicial killing targeting individuals perceived to be part of the LGBTQI+ community. Survivors described being taken to unofficial detention sites, often referred to as basements or camps, where they were beaten, interrogated, and subjected to physical and sexual violence while being forced under coercion to identify others.

Some detainees were later released into environments where families faced implicit pressure to “conceal” the situation through so-called honour-based violence. In fact, because of family complicity, there is no official record of detention, disappearance, or death in many cases. The violence is therefore not only physical, but administrative: individuals are removed not only from public and family life, but from systems of recognition themselves. Regional organizations and activists continue to challenge this erasure. Groups such as Gender Hub Azerbaijan have worked to expand discussions on gender, peace, and security in the South Caucasus, including advocacy for LGBTQI+ inclusion, feminist peacebuilding, and addressing structural violence. The organization does this work by incorporating key

frameworks, such as Women, Peace and Security (WPS), into its strategic priorities and applying gender-sensitive lenses to critical areas such as education, climate change, and peacebuilding. On the other hand, North Caucasus remains significantly more isolated and overlooked, particularly regarding the daily realities faced by LGBTQI+ communities.

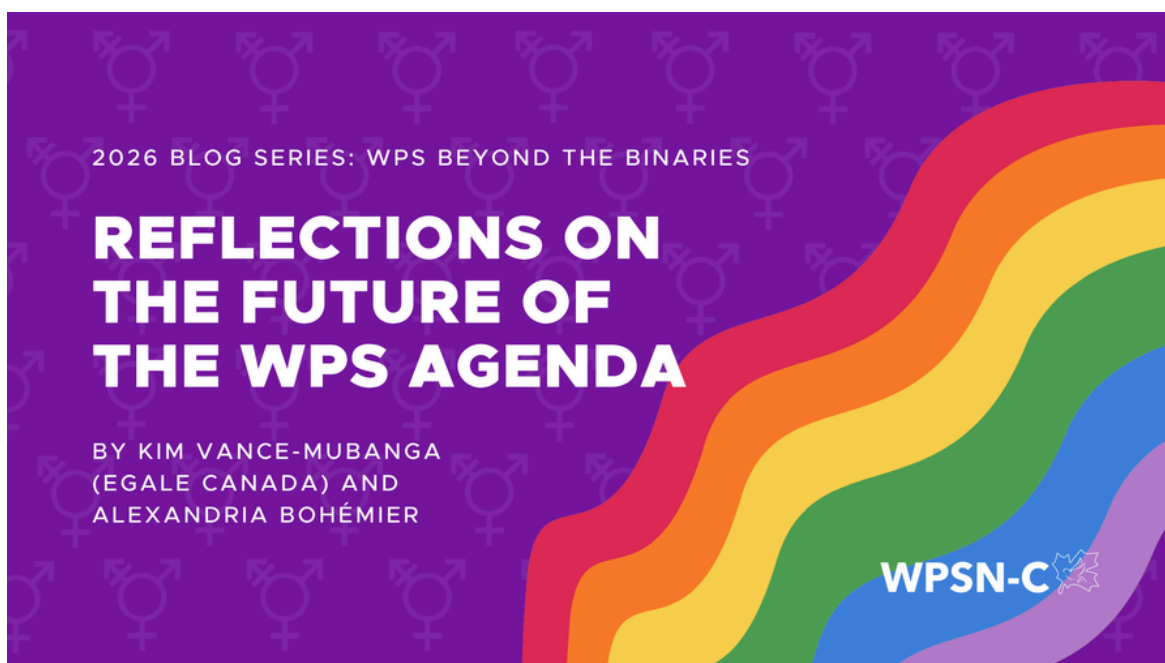
Investigations by the OSCE and international human rights organizations found that Russian federal authorities repeatedly failed to properly investigate disappearances connected to the LGBTQI+ community despite extensive evidence and survivor testimony. In some cases, individuals who fled Chechnya were tracked down and forcibly returned with the assistance or cooperation of Russian security structures, including the 2021 abduction of Salekh Magamadov and Ismail Isaev from Nizhny Novgorod back to Chechnya. The 2023 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Maxim Lapunov further concluded that Russian authorities had failed to investigate his abduction and torture, reinforcing broader concerns regarding institutional complicity and systemic impunity.

Lapunov's case in particular became visible because it entered a legal framework capable of recognizing it. It became an international case and went through the European court system. Most cases do not. The disappearance of singer Zelim Bakaev after returning to Chechnya for his sister's wedding further illustrated how disappearance itself functions politically: a person can vanish publicly while the State simultaneously denies that any persecution exists at all.

These patterns have direct implications for the WPS agenda established through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Over the past two and a half decades, WPS has significantly reshaped discussions surrounding gender, conflict, participation and protection. Although some organizations, such as Gender Hub Azerbaijan, have made a concerted effort to integrate WPS into their work, key gaps remain across the wider Caucasus region. The WPS framework relies on systems of visibility, categorization and institutional recognition that do not fully account for populations whose existence is formally denied or politically erased, such as those in the North Caucasus.

The example of Chechnya highlights the limitations of peace and security frameworks. Looking specifically at protection, one of the pillars of the WPS agenda, violence in the region frequently operates through disappearance, which is rarely, if ever, publicly acknowledged. Individuals may be detained without a record, displaced into informal systems of coercion, or removed from legal recognition altogether. Under such conditions, those who are the most at risk, such as LGBTQI+ individuals, are excluded and unable to access the mechanisms and structures meant to protect communities. Expanding WPS requires more than simply adding additional identities to existing categories. It requires recognizing how State power itself determines whose experiences become visible within international security frameworks and whose suffering remains politically unrecognized.

Expanding WPS requires more than simply adding additional identities to existing categories. It requires recognizing how state power itself determines whose experiences become visible within international security frameworks and whose suffering remains politically unrecognized. This work is already being advanced by organizations, such as OutRight International, which has consistently advocated for the inclusion of LGBTQI+ perspectives within the WPS agenda. It has also been led by regional and local initiatives, exemplified by Gender Hub Azerbaijan, which has highlighted how exclusion, discrimination, and structural violence shape experiences of peace and security in the Caucasus. Their work suggests that inclusion is not merely a matter of representation but of challenging the political processes through which some lives become visible and others remain unseen.



Twenty-five years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda remains one of the most influential global frameworks for advancing inclusive peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and human security. It has fundamentally changed how governments, international organizations, and civil society think about the relationship between gender, conflict, and security. But as we reflect on the future of the WPS agenda, it is clear that significant gaps remain. This blog series, WPS Beyond the Binary, has demonstrated that while progress has been made in recognizing the experiences of women, young women, and girls in conflict and crisis settings, the realities of many 2SLGBTQI+ communities continue to be overlooked and excluded. Throughout this series, we have seen how discussions of gender within peace and security are still often shaped by binary and heteronormative assumptions that fail to capture the full diversity of people's lived experiences. At a time when violence, discrimination, and exclusion targeting 2SLGBTQI+ communities are increasing in many parts of the world, these gaps are becoming harder to ignore.

The question becomes: Can the WPS agenda truly achieve its goals if it continues to leave some communities at the margins? Queer rights and protections are not solely human rights concerns; they are also deeply connected to questions of security, participation, resilience, and peace. When people are excluded from public life, targeted because of who they are, or denied opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their communities, these are not only human rights issues, but also peace and security issues. One of the greatest strengths of the WPS community has always been its ability to challenge narrow understandings of peace and security, encouraging us to think more broadly about who is affected by violence and insecurity. Yet as this blog series has highlighted, the WPS actors have yet to institutionalize these strengths for 2SLGBTQI+ people, including through mechanisms such as National Action Plans (NAPs).

Queering the WPS agenda means expanding our understanding of who experiences insecurity, how insecurity manifests, and what meaningful participation in peacebuilding looks like. It means asking whose voices are missing from our conversations and whose experiences have yet to be fully recognized. It also means acknowledging that 2SLGBTQI+ communities experience conflict, displacement, political violence, and structural insecurity in

ways that are often overlooked within traditional approaches to peace and security.

2SLGBTQI+ communities are not simply groups in need of protection. Around the world, queer and trans activists, community leaders, and organizations are already leading efforts to build safer, more resilient, and more inclusive communities. However, their expertise and leadership remain underrepresented in many formal peace and security processes, a pattern that continues to limit progress towards fully achieving the WPS agenda's potential. When we talk about the future of the WPS agenda, it is important to acknowledge that not only do significant gaps remain for the 2SLGBTQI+ community within the framework, but we are seeing alarming backsliding when it comes to protection.

Since 2023, Pride7 (P7), now a formal G7 engagement group comprising of global queer and trans activists and allies, has tried to address underrepresentation by embedding community-led efforts and grassroots 2SLGBTQI+ voices into global processes on WPS.¹ In March of this year, P7 called on the G7 to take a clear stance and act in response to the United States' unprecedented expansion of the Global Gag Rules. Now, in the latest and most radical expansion, the policy will apply to all non-military U.S. foreign assistance, impacting a broad range of new actors including foreign governments and multilateral organizations like UN agencies. Furthermore, it extends restrictions to activities that recognize the dignity and human rights of transgender, nonbinary, and intersex persons, or those that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices in foreign assistance. The links between development assistance and weakened systems of peace and security are well-documented and understood by 2SLGBTQI+ communities. And who is to say that this approach could not be further expanded to military assistance?

Beyond underrepresentation, the work of activists and organizations to support peacebuilding is also directly targeted. As an example, in January 2026, Russia used its "undesirable" law to target ILGA World — a global federation of over 2,000 LGBTQI organizations from 170 countries and territories. First adopted in 2015, and then further expanded in 2021 and 2024, the law on "undesirable" organizations is one of the repressive tools Russian authorities have adopted. It has been used to silence all criticism of the government, including around the ongoing invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, and incapacitate civil society. Widely criticized by UN commissions, committees, and experts, this law adds to the arsenal of provisions that, for over a decade, Russia has used to crack down on 2SLGBTQI+ activism, including labelling the "international LGBT movement"

¹ Pride 7 Communique for France 2026

"As of 2026, critical gaps are still visible in the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and calls, such as those from Women7, have echoed the lack of willingness from G7 members to identify the connection between conflict and gender inequities.

Affirm the right to refugee protection for those fleeing persecution, even among G7 countries, on the basis of SOGIESC and recognize the unique and overlapping vulnerabilities of LGBTQIA+ refugees during all points in the migration cycle of displacement and resettlement.

Call for urgent and renewed global attention to the numerous ongoing humanitarian crises, such as Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan, Ukraine, Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran. Additionally, according to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and ICJ, hostilities and violence in Palestine are resulting in a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza and suspected war crimes waged against civilian populations. We call on all G7 nations to reaffirm their commitment to upholding the human rights and dignity of all individuals in conflict-afflicted geographies and acknowledge that LGBTQIA+ people should be safe from all violence and never be used as justification for violence.

Call on G7 nations to enter the Hague Group to reaffirm the importance of international law, namely, to uphold decisions by the ICJ and the ICC.

Affirm G7 member states responsibility to not only be prepared to engage in the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in a more transformative manner but to also identify gaps that many members have regarding the impact of conflicts on LGBTQIA+ individuals, which have left behind many LGBTQIA+ individuals facing persecution in conflict and crises."

as extremist. These actions only widen the gaps that prevent 2SLGBTQI+ voices from meaningfully engaging in the WPS agenda.

The urgency of addressing these gaps has only grown in recent years. Around the world, 2SLGBTQI+ communities are facing increasing political and social backlash. Hard-won gains are being challenged through legislation, political rhetoric, and coordinated campaigns that seek to restrict rights, limit participation in public life, and undermine protections for gender and sexual diversity. Recent developments in Ghana offer a powerful example of why these issues must be understood as peace and security concerns. In May 2026, Ghana's Parliament passed legislation that criminalized homosexuality and the promotion of LGBTQI+ activities. Ghana is one of the sixty-five countries that currently criminalize 2SLGBTQI+ people. While Ghana has a NAP on WPS, they are part of the over 90% of countries whose NAPs make no explicit reference to the 2SLGBTQI+ community. Without explicit reference in their NAP, security threats against the 2SLGBTQI+ community in Ghana are able to persist and increase, leaving 2SLGBTQI+ persons without protection that the WPS agenda could work to provide them. The situation in Ghana reflects a broader global trend in which gender and sexual diversity are increasingly politicized and framed as threats to national identity, social stability, or cultural values. Uganda offers another example of this gap. Despite being widely regarded as a global leader in WPS implementation, with a detailed NAP and strong monitoring framework, Uganda's NAP also makes no mention of 2SLGBTQI+ people. Uganda criminalizes the 2SLGBTQI+ community and imposes the death penalty under its Anti-Homosexuality Act, which came into effect in 2023. How can the country be perceived as a leader in WPS when its implementation of one of the world's harshest anti-2SLGBTQI+ laws is enabling significant security threats?

One of the communities most impacted by the escalation in anti-2SLGBTQI+ rhetoric is the trans community, which has become a central focus of political and legislative targeting. In March 2026, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security released a third Red Flag Alert for the U.S., related to the Trump Administration's anti-trans initiatives, which have continued to expand nationwide. The anti-trans agenda has radicalized and continues to intensify, with 2025 being the sixth consecutive record-breaking year for the number of anti-trans bills considered across the country. The Administration has moved from identifying transgender people as a threat to the family and to the nation's military prowess, to claiming that transgender people constitute a cosmic threat to the spiritual health of the nation and the greatest direct threat to U.S. national security in the world. This year, the United States has announced publicly that its national counter-terrorism activities will prioritize the rapid identification and neutralization of violent secular political groups whose ideology is anti-American, radically pro-transgender, and anarchist. This followed a statement by the U.S. Defence Secretary, Pete Hegseth, celebrating the U.S. repealing the WPS Act, which the previous Trump Administration had adopted in 2017. These developments highlight why advancing 2SLGBTQI+ integration into the WPS agenda is essential, given the opportunities the framework offers to respond to existing and escalating security threats.

As we look ahead, we believe the question is no longer whether there is a place for 2SLGBTQI+ inclusion within the WPS agenda. The question is whether the international community is prepared to address the gaps that continue to prevent the agenda from reaching its full potential. The examples shared throughout the WPS Beyond the Binaries blog series has clearly demonstrated that the WPS agenda cannot succeed while an entire population remains structurally excluded. The insecurity faced by the 2SLGBTQI+ community must be seen as central to advancing peace and security, and the full and meaningful integration of 2SLGBTQI+ people into the WPS agenda must be treated as a crucial next step to ensure the agenda's success over the next 25 years as we strive to move WPS beyond the binary.



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