

# Annual Report 2025



**The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security is a non- partisan and independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance the WPS agenda in Australia, the Asia and Pacific region, and globally.**

**Our vision is a world in which gender equality, and the contributions and rights of diverse women and girls are transforming conflict to build peace.**

# Who we are?

We are an Australian-based coalition of individuals and organisations working to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda at local, national, regional and global levels. We bring together activists, academics, gender equality advocates, humanitarians and people with lived experience of conflict and insecurity.

# What we do?

The Coalition advances the WPS agenda by raising awareness, facilitating dialogue, building evidence and strengthening networks that elevate the voices and priorities of women peace builders in Australia, regionally and globally. We are a community of women and gender diverse people and civil society groups working for peace and challenging growing militarisation and conflict. This work is grounded by an intersectional feminist perspective, lived experience, and a commitment to decolonisation, collaboration and reciprocity.

# Opening.

2025 marked twenty-five years since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, an important milestone that prompted both reflection and urgency among the Coalition. While the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has delivered important gains, this anniversary unfolded amid escalating conflict, deepening humanitarian crises, rising authoritarianism, and increasing attacks on women's rights and civic space globally. For many women and gender-diverse people living in conflict-affected contexts, the promises of the WPS agenda remain unrealised.

In this challenging environment, the Australian Civil Society Coalition on WPS Women, Peace and Security continued to centre the leadership, knowledge and lived experience of women on the frontlines of conflict and crisis. Throughout the year, the Coalition created spaces for dialogue, analysis and solidarity, amplifying the voices of women from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Palestine and across the region, strengthening connections between civil society and policy actors.

A key focus of the Coalition's work in 2025 was ensuring that the WPS agenda remains relevant, intersectional and grounded in reality. Through our webinars, policy papers and public statements, we sought to challenge approaches that are increasingly disconnected from lived experience, and to advocate for responses that prioritise prevention, protection, participation, and inclusive recovery.

We also worked to highlight the interconnected impacts of conflict, climate change and gender inequality, and the urgent need for inclusive and feminist peacebuilding. This included the launch of two policy papers bringing queer insights into the WPS agenda and a climate perspective.

The Coalition's regional convening in August brought together almost 60 civil society leaders from across Asia and the Pacific at a critical moment for WPS. The discussions affirmed the progress made over the past 25 years and priorities for the future, with stronger accountability, sustained resourcing for women-led organisations, and meaningful inclusion of those most affected by conflict, including Indigenous women, young women, LGBTQIA+ people, refugees and people with disabilities.

We are deeply grateful to the speakers, members, partners and communities who contributed their time, expertise and trust in support of the Coalition's work this year.

As we look ahead to 2026 and the Coalition's forthcoming strategy, we remain committed to advancing a feminist, inclusive and regionally led vision of Women, Peace and Security.



# Amplifying Frontline Feminist Voices.

## Webinars and Discussion Summaries

We hosted the following Webinar series commemorating the 25th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Online convenings followed with discussion papers capturing reflections and recommendations from speakers. Building an Inclusive WPS Agenda.



### 25 Years of WPS: Resistance & Resilience among Myanmar Women

Date: 16th July 2025

Webinar Registrations: 40

This webinar brought together Moon Nay Li (Women's League of Burma), Min Khant Tar (A Tar, Kings N Queens – LGBTQIA+), and Lway Pa Kay Jar (Ta'ang Women's Organisation), to share grounded reflections on the WPS agenda amid escalating conflict, systemic sexual violence and a worsening humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. Speakers highlighted the critical role of women-led and gender-diverse organisations in providing lifesaving support, documenting violations, sustaining community resilience and shaping pathways for peace and democratic governance, often at significant personal risk. The accompanying discussion paper synthesises these insights and underscores the need for sustained international solidarity, flexible and direct funding for women's organisations, and the meaningful inclusion of diverse voices in future peace and political processes. This webinar contributed to our broader work to ensure WPS implementation reflects regional leadership and lived experience.



### 25 Years of WPS: Amplifying Palestinian Women's Voices

Webinar Date: 18th June 2025

Webinar Registrations: 74

This webinar brought together Soraida Abed-Hussein Sabbah (Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid), Rita Jabri Markwell (Australian Muslim Advocacy Network) and Katie Shammas (Australian Palestinian Advocacy Network), to discuss the gendered impacts of the escalating crisis in Gaza and the leadership of Palestinian women on the frontlines. Grounded in lived experience and rights-based analysis, speakers highlighted the compounding risks facing women and girls, the critical role of local women leaders in humanitarian response and advocacy, and the urgent need for accountability and international action. The accompanying discussion summary outlines key messages from the dialogue and calls on Australia and civil society to uphold WPS commitments through sustained advocacy, coherent policy engagement and meaningful solidarity with Palestinian women.



## 25 Years of WPS: Challenges and Opportunities in Advancing Afghan Women's Rights

Date: 12th May 2025

Webinar Registrations: 60

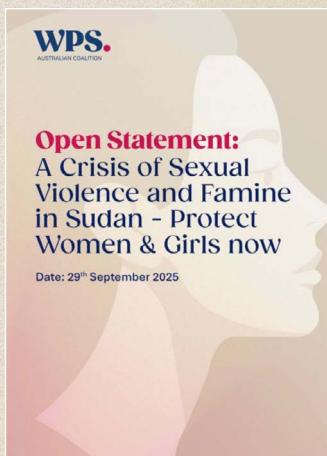
This session brought together Kochay Safi (Afghan Women's Educational Center), Susan Hutchinson (Azadi-e Zan) and Simana Hashimi (Afghan Women's Federation of South Australia / Australian Refugee Association) to reflect on the evolving situation for Afghan women and girls under the current regime. Speakers outlined the escalating restrictions amounting to gender apartheid, the severe impacts on women's rights, safety and participation, and the continued efforts of Afghan women leaders, both inside the country and across the diaspora, to advocate for protection, education and political inclusion. The discussion examined how the WPS agenda can remain relevant and responsive in this context, emphasising the need for sustained international pressure, principled engagement and meaningful support for Afghan women-led organisations as central actors in shaping future pathways for rights and justice.

## Key Reflections

- Frontline women and gender-diverse leaders continue to sustain communities, document violations and lead humanitarian responses despite escalating risk and shrinking civic space.
- Across contexts, participants emphasised that the WPS agenda risks losing credibility when it is detached from lived experience and meaningful participation.
- Flexible, long-term and direct funding for women-led organisations remains one of the most consistent and urgent priorities raised across regions.

# Advocacy and Public Engagements.

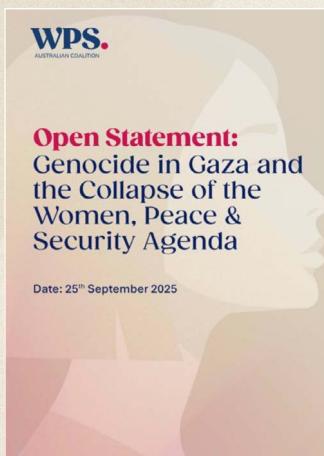
## Open Statements



### A Crisis of Sexual Violence and Famine in Sudan

*Date: 29th September 2025*

In September 2025, the Coalition released a statement expressing solidarity with Sudanese women amid escalating conflict, mass displacement and widespread conflict-related sexual violence. The statement underscored the severe humanitarian crisis, the targeting of women human rights defenders, and the deep impact on Sudanese communities in Australia with family members trapped or missing. The Coalition committed to advocating for increased humanitarian funding, particularly for women-led organisations, working with the Sudanese diaspora to expand visa and sponsorship pathways, and amplifying Sudanese women's leadership across our advocacy. It also called on the Australian Government and the UN to open humanitarian corridors, strengthen protection and monitoring, ensure survivor support, pursue accountability for atrocities, and expand resettlement options for at-risk women and families.



### Genocide in Gaza and the Collapse of the Women, Peace & Security Agenda

*Date: 25th September 2025*

The Coalition issued a statement expressing deep concern about the escalating humanitarian crisis and mass civilian harm in Gaza, condemning the failure of the international community to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law. The statement highlighted the severe gendered impacts of the crisis, including the destruction of health services, acute risks to women and girls, and the obstruction of humanitarian assistance. It also underscored how all four pillars of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (Prevention, Protection, Relief and Recovery, and Participation) are being gravely undermined. The statement reaffirmed the Coalition's mandate to centre the experiences of women, girls and gender-diverse people in conflict settings and called for urgent international action, accountability, and gender-responsive humanitarian support.



**WPS.**

AUSTRALIAN COALITION

**Open Statement:**  
Urgent Call for  
Action in the  
Democratic Republic  
of the Congo

## Urgent Call for Action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

*Date: March 25, 2025*

In March 2025, the Coalition issued an urgent statement on the escalating humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where sexual and gender-based violence continues to be used as a weapon of war and women and girls remain largely excluded from peace processes. The statement called for immediate international action to prevent further violence, support survivors, and ensure women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. It also urged Australia to strengthen its response under the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security by increasing humanitarian assistance, enforcing accountability measures and engaging diplomatically to advance peace and justice.

## Key Reflections

- The scale and severity of current conflicts are profoundly undermining all pillars of the WPS agenda, particularly protection and participation.
- Civil society advocacy remains critical to naming gendered impacts, countering impunity and pressing for accountability when international responses fall short.
- Diaspora communities in Australia play an increasingly important role in advocacy, solidarity and policy engagement, and must be meaningfully included in responses.

# Knowledge and Evidence Building.

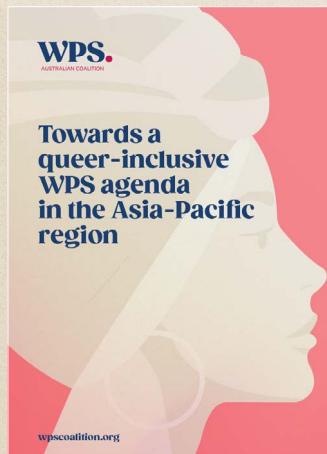
## Policy Papers



### Climate and Women, Peace & Security

*Date: August 2025*

This report explores the urgent intersections between climate change, gender equality, peace and security. It highlights how women and girls, particularly in conflict-affected, rural, coastal and Indigenous communities, are disproportionately impacted by climate disasters, displacement and insecurity, yet too often excluded from decision-making. Drawing on feminist knowledge and practice, the report outlines why the gender, climate and security nexus must be central to Australia's responses, calling for action that centres women's leadership, strengthens peacebuilding, and advances gender equality as essential to climate resilience.



### Towards a Queer-Inclusive WPS Agenda in the Asia-Pacific

*Date: February 2025*

All We Want in Our Lives is Peace and Security: Towards a Queer-Inclusive WPS Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Region, was developed in collaboration with Edge Effect to explore the experiences of LGBTQIA+ communities in conflict and crisis settings across the Asia-Pacific. This focus was a topic that the Coalition decided to address as part of our commitment to intersectional perspectives on the WPS agenda. The paper highlights barriers to inclusion in the WPS agenda and advocates for a more intersectional Gender, Peace and Security approach. Based on interviews with activists and organisations across the region, the paper examines challenges such as violence, exclusion from peace processes, and shrinking civic space, offering key recommendations for governments, multilateral organisations, and civil society.

## Key Reflections

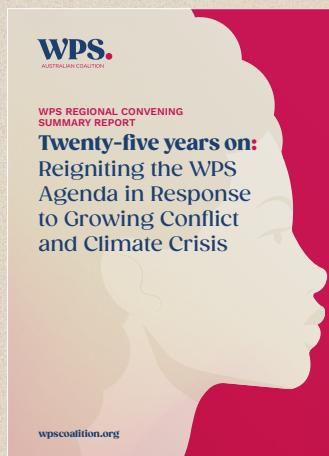
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- Feminist, intersectional analysis is essential to understanding how conflict, climate change and insecurity interact, and compound gendered impacts.
- Existing WPS approaches often fail to adequately include LGBTQIA+ people, young women and other marginalised groups without deliberate, targeted action.
- Evidence grounded in lived experience strengthens advocacy and provides a critical counterbalance to securitised and militarised policy approaches.

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# Convening and Movement Building.

## Events



### Twenty-five years on: Reigniting the WPS Agenda in Response to Growing Conflict and Climate Crisis

Date: 26th – 27th August

In August 2025, the Coalition convened a regional gathering of over 60 civil society participants from 18 countries in Brisbane to reflect on the Women, Peace and Security agenda at 25. The event recognised a decline in recent years, driven by rising authoritarianism, militarisation, conflict, and the growing impacts of the climate crisis. It emphasised the urgent need to reignite the WPS with a stronger, more inclusive and intersectional vision. The convening report, *Reigniting the WPS Agenda in Response to Growing Conflict and Climate Crisis*, sets out detailed recommendations for 2025-2028 for regional collaboration.

Key proposals include allocating dedicated, multi-year funding for frontline women's rights organisations; establishing concrete prevention, protection and survivor-centred programs to address sexual and gender-based violence; and ensuring meaningful representation for Indigenous women, LGBTQIA+, young people, refugees, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Recommendations also called for embedding climate justice into WPS National Action Plans, promoting demilitarisation and redirecting military spending into gender-inclusive peacebuilding as well as investing in intergenerational leadership and cross-movement collaboration across the region.



### Public Event: Looking Forward – 25 Years of WPS

Date: 26th August

Following the Brisbane regional convening, the Coalition hosted a public event, "25 Years of the WPS Agenda: Opportunities & Challenges Moving Forward", with 72 participants. The event provided a space for discussion, reflection, and networking among participants from across Australia, Asia, the Pacific and Africa, focusing on opportunities and challenges for advancing the WPS Agenda 25 years on. Keynote presentations were delivered by Bandana Rana, Member of the CEDAW Committee, Her Excellency, Michelle O'Byrne, Australia's Ambassador for Gender Equality, and Norul Mohamed Rashid, UN Women Regional Policy Advisor for Governance and Peace & Security for Asia and the Pacific. Speakers, highlighted regional perspectives, lessons learned, and priorities for inclusive, intersectional WPS action.



## Key Reflections

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- There is strong regional appetite for renewed collaboration and solidarity across the Asia-Pacific, particularly in the context of WPS at 25.
- Movement-building requires sustained investment, trust-based partnerships and spaces for intergenerational and cross-movement dialogue.
- Civil society leadership is central to reimagining a WPS agenda that is accountable, inclusive and responsive to contemporary crises.

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# What we Learnt in 2025.

# Looking Ahead.

Across its work in 2025, the Coalition observed a growing gap between the commitments to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the lived realities of women and gender-diverse people in conflict-affected contexts. While WPS remains a vital framework, its effectiveness depends on whether it is implemented in ways that are inclusive, accountable and grounded in lived experience. The agenda is also challenged by increasing militarisation with the majority of countries globally increasing their defence spending, which reached over 2.7 trillion dollars in 2024.

Several consistent lessons emerged across the Coalition's dialogues, advocacy and research. First, women-led and feminist organisations continue to be central to humanitarian response, peacebuilding and community resilience, yet remain chronically under-resourced and excluded from decision-making. Second, the gendered impacts of conflict are increasingly shaped by intersecting crises, including climate change, displacement, militarisation and authoritarianism, demanding more integrated and intersectional responses. Third, meaningful participation requires more than representation; it requires participation in decision making, protection and sustained support for those most affected.

These lessons reinforce the urgency of renewing the WPS agenda at a time of profound global instability. They also inform the Coalition's strategic priorities moving forward, as outlined in the Strategy 2026-2030.

In the context of rising insecurity and conflict, the Coalition has established a three year strategy to guide its work to advance the WPS agenda. This includes working to be a respected and influential advisory group to governments in advancing the WPS agenda and building a vibrant and growing membership across Australia that is globally connected and takes local action. This will be enabled through a well-resourced Coalition with diversified funding streams and growing and human financial resources. As we embark on this strategy, we look forward to working with Coalition members and partners to advance these objectives.

## Acknowledgments.

We acknowledge the contribution of Brittney Potvin, Program Coordinator, to the Coalition's work in 2025.

The Coalition also acknowledges the support of the Australian Aid Programme through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which supported its policy and convening work in 2025.



# Our People.

## Co-chairs.



**Michelle Higelin**

ActionAid Australia



**Ludmilla Kwitko**

Women's International League  
of Peace and Freedom

## Coordinator.



**Charlie Fox**

WPS Program and  
Communications Coordinator

## Steering Committee.



**Melissa Monteiro**

Community Migrant  
Resource Centre



**Sarah E. Davies**

Griffith University & CEVAW



**Linh Nong Dieu**

International Women's  
Development Agency (IWDA)



**Mitra Khakbaz**

CEO, Immigrant Women's  
Support Service



**Behishta Anwar**

Afghan Women's Federation  
of South Australia



**Tiana Hippolite**

Consultant, researcher  
& community connector

**WPS.**  
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