



From Presence to Power

What the next era of Women, Peace and Security must make possible

Women have helped make peace possible. The institutional test is whether their contribution becomes durable authority.

The central argument

Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325, the Women, Peace and Security agenda has changed who is expected to participate in peace and security. That normative progress matters. Yet participation is not the same as power. Durable influence requires the ability to shape agendas, direct resources, affect implementation, demand accountability, and remain in leadership over time.

Progress is real. Transformation is unfinished.

RECOGNITION

Women are now recognized as peacebuilders, mediators, security actors, public leaders, and rights holders.

ARCHITECTURE

National action plans, regional frameworks, and institutional mandates have created formal entry points.

REPRESENTATION GAP

Women remain underrepresented in many formal negotiations, security institutions, and decision-making bodies.

AUTHORITY GAP

Attendance, consultation, and visibility often expand without corresponding control over budgets, mandates, or outcomes.

Liberia as a case with wider relevance

Liberia demonstrates both the force of women-led peacebuilding and the unfinished work of institutionalization. Women organized across social divisions, strengthened community peace infrastructure, and influenced national recovery. Liberia's validation of a third National Action Plan for 2026-2031 creates a renewed opportunity to connect this legacy to financing, public accountability, local authority, and long-term institutional practice.

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Six shifts that convert participation into authority

01 PRESENCE TO DECISION RIGHTS

Define where women can set priorities, approve decisions, influence budgets, and trigger accountability.

02 PROJECTS TO PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Connect externally supported activity to law, national budgets, civil-service responsibility, and durable delivery.

03 PROTECTION TO AGENCY

Design safety measures to preserve mobility, livelihood, political voice, digital security, and leadership continuity.

04 NATIONAL PLANS TO LOCAL AUTHORITY

Create formal routes from community peace structures into early warning, mediation, planning, and review.

05 WPS AND YPS TO INTERGENERATIONAL SECURITY

Build joint mechanisms so young women are not split between agendas and participation includes decision power.

06 ACTIVITY COUNTS TO OUTCOME ACCOUNTABILITY

Measure authority, financing, implementation, safety, retention, and institutional change - not attendance alone.

Questions for leaders and institutions

AGENDA

Who can change the priority, not merely respond to it?

RESOURCES

Who controls allocation, disbursement, and review?

PROTECTION

What does safety make possible for women's agency?

CONTINUITY

What law, budget line, office, or practice survives the project cycle?

WPS AUTHORITY™ POSITION

The measure is not simply who enters the room. It is who can shape what the room decides - and whether the systems beyond it allow that authority to endure.



CONTINUE THE ANALYSIS ONLINE

Read the related WPS Authority insight, then join or share the public conversation.

abrathadoeglobal.com/wps/participation-without-power-is-not-security

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SELECTED SOURCES

UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)
documents.un.org | View official source

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knowledge.unwomen.org | View official source

UN Women Africa, Liberia validates its third National Action Plan on WPS, 2026-2031
africa.unwomen.org | View official source