



Protection Is Not Neutral

The political economy of care, aid, and control

Peace is not sustained by safety alone. It is sustained by sovereignty.

The argument

Protection is necessary. It preserves life, creates stability, and enables recovery. But protection also shapes access, dependency, authority, and control. When protection is disconnected from pathways to agency and power, it can stabilize vulnerability without transforming the systems that produce it.

What protection can produce

SAFETY

Immediate protection from harm and access to essential support.

DEPENDENCY

Services without authority, economic autonomy, or a credible transition path.

VISIBILITY WITHOUT POWER

Women are recognized as survivors or stabilizers while remaining distant from decisions.

INSTITUTIONAL COMFORT

Organizations can demonstrate action without redistributing resources or authority.

The political economy of care

Care absorbs labor, redistributes time, and subsidizes institutions and communities. Women are often positioned simultaneously as recipients of protection and providers of unpaid or under-recognized care. Their labor sustains stability, while their authority remains bounded. This is not simply a program-design concern. It is a governance concern.

The central WPS question

WPS implementation should ask not only what protection prevents, but also what it produces: greater autonomy or prolonged dependency; access to institutions or managed participation; economic security or recurring vulnerability.

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A power-linked protection model

01 TREAT SAFETY AS A FOUNDATION

Protection should create the conditions for agency, not become a substitute for it.

02 DESIGN A TRANSITION PATHWAY

Connect services to leadership, livelihoods, institutional access, and decision-making.

03 PROTECT PUBLIC AGENCY

Safeguards should preserve women's political voice, visibility, mobility, and digital participation.

04 RECOGNIZE CARE AS ECONOMIC

Account for unpaid labor, time, compensation, and the institutional benefits produced by care work.

05 MEASURE AUTONOMY

Track control over resources, choices, representation, continuity, and the ability to exit support safely.

06 PLACE ACCOUNTABILITY WITH INSTITUTIONS

Do not individualize structural dependency. Assign responsibility for changing the system.

A design test for programs and policy

ACCESS

Does protection expand or restrict access to institutions and resources?

CONTROL

Who defines the terms, duration, evidence, and exit conditions?

AGENCY

Can women make consequential choices without losing safety or support?

CONTINUITY

What remains when emergency funding or program participation ends?

WPS AUTHORITY™ POSITION

Protection should enable transition, not permanence. Its purpose should be to create the conditions under which women can move into autonomous roles with authority and continuity.



READ AND ENGAGE ONLINE

Access the complete digital insight, share it, and continue the public conversation.

abrathadoeglobal.com/wps/protection-is-not-neutral

Follow WPS Authority through Abratha Doe Global on LinkedIn

SELECTED SOURCES

UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

documents.un.org | View official source

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