

The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of stylized line art depicting the profiles of women's heads. The women have various hairstyles, including braids, buns, and loose hair, and are wearing different types of head coverings like headscarves and headbands. The pattern is rendered in a light blue color against a darker blue background.

# The Women, Peace and Security Agenda after 25 years: a data-driven report on UN Security Council debates

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By Júlia C. L. Pastick and Antonio Pires

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# How has the WPS Agenda been discussed in UN Security Council debates?

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) addresses the issue of women and gender in the context of international peace and security. The premise underlying this initiative is that women and gender should be discussed in all themes (what is known as “gender mainstreaming”)<sup>1</sup>, specially topics which have long been addressed absent a gender lens, as it is the case for peace and security.

Although since at least 1992 there were Security Council resolutions mentioning women in conflict scenarios, Resolution 1325 (2000) marks the true turning point in how the matter was addressed:

“Landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on the women and peace and security agenda reaffirm the important role that women play in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, providing humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction, and stresses the importance of their equal and full participation in every aspect of the maintenance and promotion of peace and security” – Mr. Lam Padilla, Guatemala, Meeting 8886, 21 October 2021, Women and peace and security.

In October 2025, Resolution 1325 will have completed 25 years. This report provides a broad overview of the impact that the WPS Agenda has had over international peace and security during this past quarter century.

To comprehend Security Council practice on the WPS Agenda, we have collected and processed the public debates transcripts from the [UN Digital Library](#) to create an updated version of the [UN Security Council Debates dataset](#), consisting of 106,302 speeches delivered by 629 Member States and organizations between 1992 and 2023. After processing these transcripts into a structured dataset, we apply some of the analytics available within the Data Diplomacy Academy’s toolkit for knowledge generation. In doing so, the Academy presents data-based insights on Member States, agenda items, and concepts presented in discourses about the WPS Agenda in the UN Security Council (UNSC).

The share of mentions of women and gender is not linear throughout the years, though the graph shows a continuous increase, especially after [Resolution 1325](#) (2000), triplicating the share of mentions of women and gender, compared to the previous year.

<sup>1</sup> Cohn, Carol, Kinsella, Helen, & Gibbings, Sheri. (2004). Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6(1), 130–140.

The adoption of other landmark resolutions in the WPS topic are also correlated with peaks of mentions of women and gender in UNSC debates. Namely, the [Resolution 1820](#) in 2008, Resolutions [1888](#) and [1889](#) in 2009, [Resolution 1960](#) in 2010, Resolutions [2106](#) and [2122](#) in 2013, [Resolution 2242](#) in 2015, [Resolution 2272](#) in 2016, and the Resolutions [2467](#) and [2493](#) in 2019. Beyond the resolutions, the study [“Women, peace and security”](#) was published in October 2002.

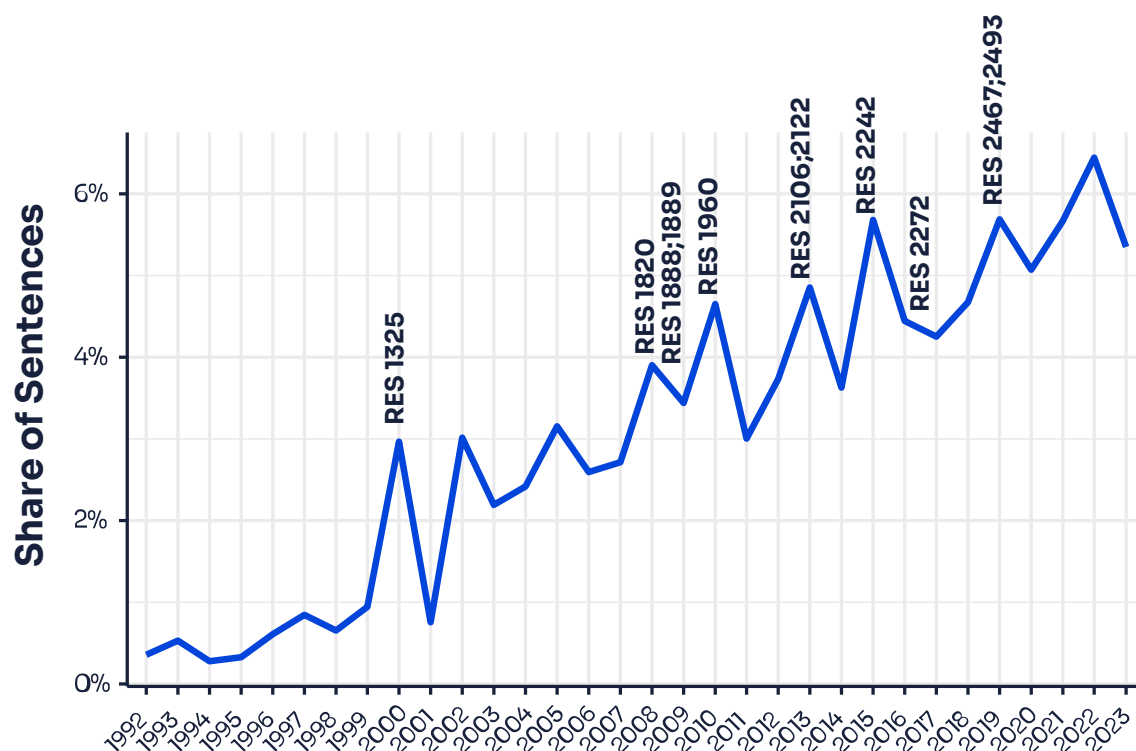


Figure 1: Share of mentions to women and gender in Security Council debates.

The graph shows that the UNSC has been successful in leveraging the gender debate in its meetings. Although this is clear evidence that the topic is now more salient, more is needed, besides aggregate counts, to verify whether the issue has been mainstreamed. That is: are debates on women and gender confined to a single agenda item or are they distributed across all topics?

The UNSC agenda items are divided into two major categories: thematic Items and country-specific issues. The latter are organized in five major groups: Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Beyond the scope, the structure of meetings is also distinct depending on the category: thematic issues are usually discussed in open debates, allowing more Member States to participate and give their speeches. For this reason, thematic issues take about 40% of all discourses in the database.

As seen in the figure below, 70% of all sentences mentioning women and gender were expressed in thematic meetings. This preponderance of thematic items over country-specific ones began in earnest after the adoption of the Resolution

1325 in 2000, which inaugurated the agenda as a thematic item. Since then, the debates that have carried on with WPS continue to take place primarily in thematic issues. However, mentions in country-specific debates began to increase only in recent years, with a recent peak marked by the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August 2021.

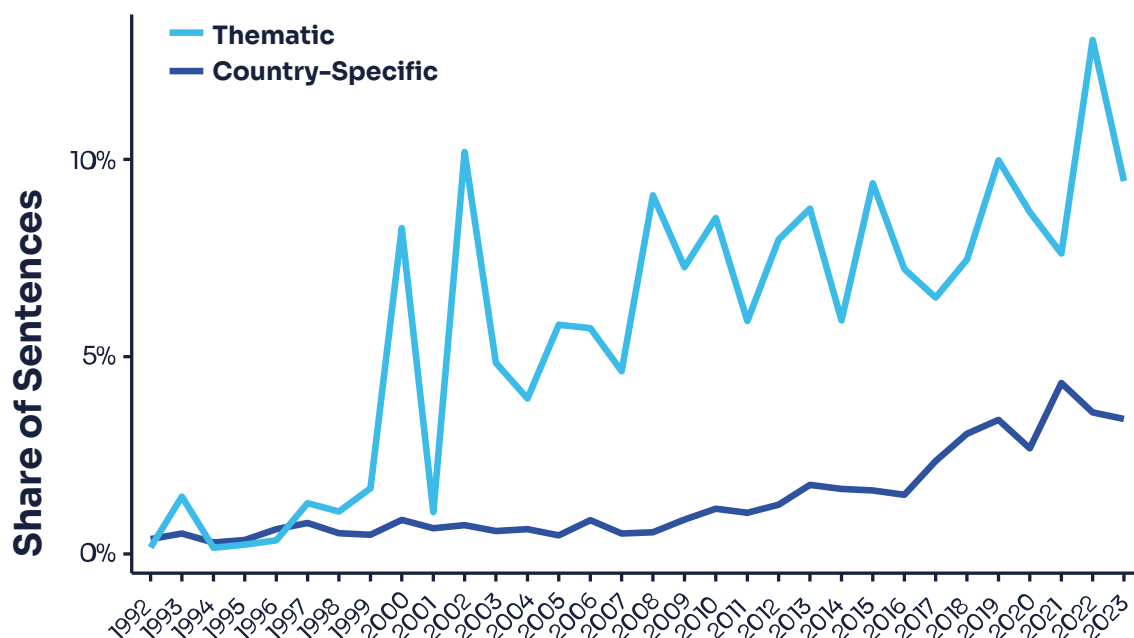


Figure 2: Share of mentions per agenda item over the years.

Although there is a high concentration of mentions of women and gender in the debates on thematic issues, different thematic issues have not addressed this topic the same way: almost half (49%) of all mentions to women and gender in the UNSC were made within the Women and Peace and Security topic, as displayed on the treemap below. This shows us that gender is not yet fully mainstream in the UNSC. Rather, it is still focused on the thematic agenda item where it originated.

Other agenda items mention women and gender far less. With only 6%, the second item with most sentences is about Afghanistan. The Taliban restrictions on women's rights caught the attention of the Council, emphasizing women and gender during these country-specific debates.

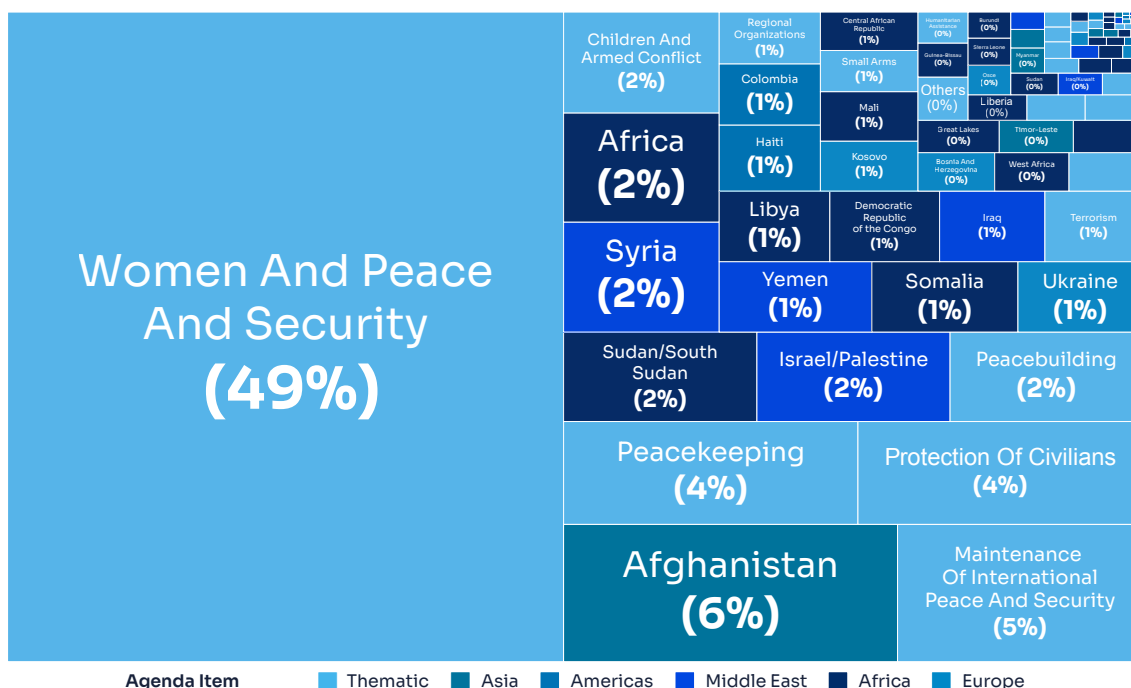


Figure 3: Share of mentions per agenda item.

**By tracking this distribution among country-specific issues over the years, we can also see that, since 2002, the Middle East has been a key focus of the debate.**

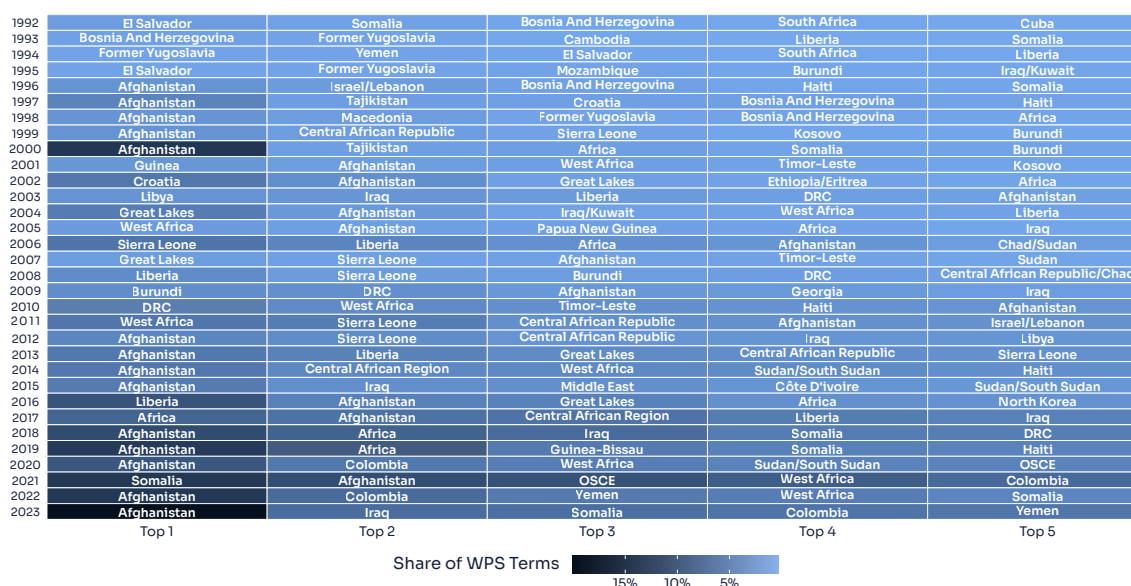


Figure 4: Top country-specific issues with mentions to women and gender.

“We urge the Taliban to roll back those restrictions and allow women and girls to have access to education, which would enable their full, equal and meaningful participation in society” – Mr. Wood, United States, Meeting 9423, 26 September 2023, The Situation in Afghanistan.

“We urge Afghan factions, and in particular the Taliban, to end discriminatory policies and to recognize, protect and promote the equal rights of men and women, including access to education and health facilities, employment, personal security and freedom from intimidation and harassment” – Ms. Rasi, European Union, Meeting 4039, 27 August 1999, The Situation in Afghanistan.

The advancement of the WPS Agenda rests in the four pillars of the Resolution 1325: prevention, participation, protection and relief and recovery.

Source: United Nations Development Programme (2019), A Global Handbook. Parliament as partners supporting the Women Peace and Security Agenda.

decision-making afghanistan  
 prevention resolution\_1325 empowerment  
 peacebuilding security civil\_society  
 peacekeeping human\_rights sexual national  
 young political role  
 organizations children civilians  
 support people  
 protection work law men action vulnerable  
 economic equality  
 conflict violence internacional  
 operations rights peace need social  
 groups ensure processes  
 meaningful victims equal implementation  
 needs  
 ensure participation  
 efforts humanitarian development  
 armed\_conflict government

7



“**Sexual violence** poses a grave threat to women **security** in fragile post-conflict countries and undermines efforts to cement **peace**” – The Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, UN, Meeting 5916, 19 June 2008, Women and peace and security.

“Efforts to combat **sexual** and gender-based **violence** in **conflict** must be strengthened” – Mr. Grunditz, Sweden, Meeting 7109, 12 February 2014, Protection of civilians in armed conflict.

“Women leadership and **participation** are essential tools to address sexual **violence** in **conflict**” – Ms. Yelich, Canada, Meeting 7428, 15 April 2015, Women and peace and security.

“We want to fast-track women's full and **equal participation** in every aspect of life. That includes across **peace** processes and **political** transitions” – The Secretary-General António Guterres, Meeting 8886, 21 October 2021, Women and peace and security.

The adoption of Resolution 1325 also represents a change on how women and gender are debated in the UNSC after the year 2000. Prior to that date, women and gender were predominantly viewed in a protection framework. Even though this frame continues to be the most common, mentions about feminine participation have been increasing over the years.

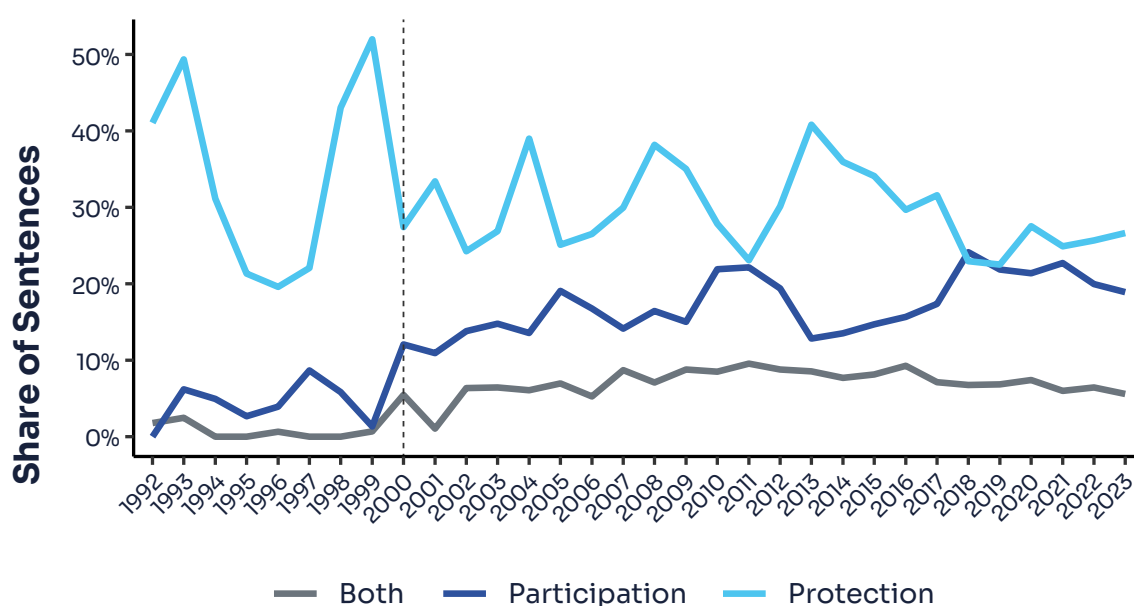


Figure 6: Salience of the Protection and Participation frameworks in UNSC debates.

Women's participation became especially relevant in the last five years. Whilst the term "participation" was less frequent during 1992 to 1996, it now is one of the four most frequent terms. Besides the word "participation" proper, other terms such as "inclusive", "parity", and "equal", which were rarer before, now present



themselves more frequently at the main discussion about women and gender. The figure below shows this change in vocabulary at the UNSC by ranking the most distinctive words for five-year periods, with "participation" terms highlighted.

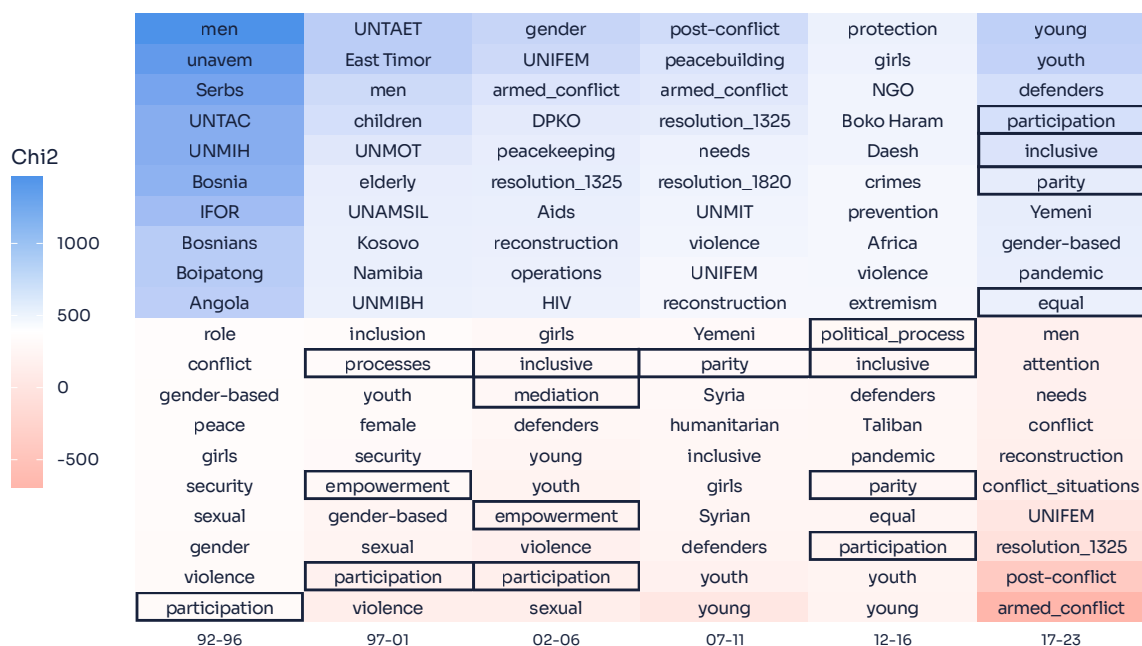


Figure 7: Distinctive terms in UNSC debates, at five-year intervals.

# Which Member States emphasize the WPS Agenda the most?

From 1992 to 2023, Malta was the member state that has proportionally made the most references to WPS in its Council speeches. It has alluded to WPS over 703 times, which corresponds to 9,5% of all their discourses. Beyond its speeches, Malta launched its first [National Action Plan to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS](#) in October 2020, joined the "Women Peace and Security Shared Commitments" within the UN Security Council in 2022, and has contributed to the implementation of the UN Women Afghanistan Country Office.

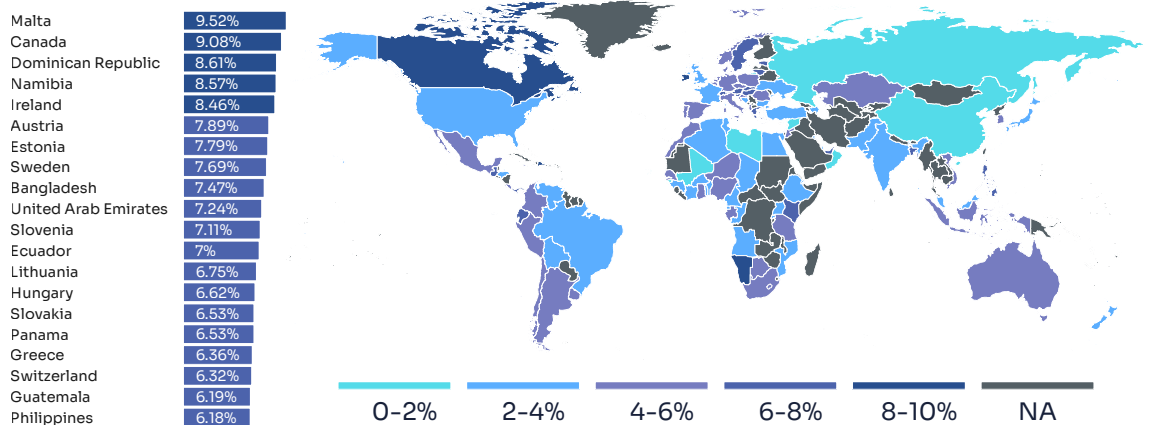


Figure 8: Mentions to WPS per country.

Malta's spotlight as the country that most emphasizes women and gender is also a recent achievement: only in 2023 did it rise to first position. Prior to that, different countries were the leading orators, normally sustaining a strong attention to WPS for two consecutive years. However, women and gender have been mentioned with more frequency only in recent years, especially after 2013, when Resolutions 2106 and 2122 were adopted. The rank of top mentioning countries per year is shown in the figure below.

"We remain convinced that it is important to ensure that women and girls in conflict, post-conflict and fragile situations can, on an equal basis, participate in all political, economic, security and social aspects of their societies. This is a prerequisite for the creation of inclusive and peaceful societies, sustainable development and peace. By embarking on our women and peace and security journey, Malta is doing its part to close the implementation gap. We fully support the United Nations in its work on this agenda"

– Mr. Sacco, Malta, Meeting 8649, 4 November 2019, Women and peace and security.

1992	Pakistan	Morocco	Ecuador	Venezuela	United States
1993	United States	Morocco	Pakistan	United Kingdom	Venezuela
1994	Pakistan	Oman	United Kingdom	United States	Argentina
1995	Botswana	United States	Rwanda	Indonesia	United Kingdom
1996	Italy	United States	United Kingdom	Indonesia	Germany
1997	Chile	Guinea-Bissau	Kenya	Republic Of Korea	Sweden
1998	Costa Rica	Gambia	Gabon	Sweden	Portugal
1999	Namibia	Gabon	Canada	United States	Gambia
2000	Jamaica	Namibia	Canada	Bangladesh	Netherlands
2001	Jamaica	Bangladesh	Mauritius	Norway	Ireland
2002	Cameroon	Mexico	Norway	Syria	Mauritius
2003	Mexico	Cameroon	United Kingdom	Angola	Pakistan
2004	Chile	Germany	Brazil	Angola	Philippines
2005	Argentina	Tanzania	Philippines	China	United States
2006	Congo	Tanzania	Greece	Denmark	Ghana
2007	South Africa	Slovak Republic	Ghana	Congo	Belgium
2008	South Africa	Viet Nam	Panama	Croatia	Italy
2009	Austria	United States	China	Viet Nam	Croatia
2010	Austria	Mexico	United States	Bosnia And Herzegovina	Gabon
2011	Lebanon	United States	South Africa	Portugal	Gabon
2012	United States	Portugal	Togo	Pakistan	South Africa
2013	Argentina	Rwanda	United States	Republic Of Korea	Togo
2014	Argentina	Chile	Lithuania	Republic Of Korea	Rwanda
2015	Chile	Angola	Lithuania	United States	Nigeria
2016	Uruguay	Senegal	Malaysia	Angola	Spain
2017	Sweden	Bolivia	Kazakhstan	Uruguay	Italy
2018	Sweden	Peru	Poland	Bolivia	Netherlands
2019	Dominican Republic	Germany	Poland	Peru	South Africa
2020	Dominican Republic	Niger	Estonia	South Africa	Germany
2021	Ireland	Norway	Mexico	Estonia	St Vincent And The Grenadines
2022	Ireland	United Arab Emirates	Ghana	Gabon	Albania
2023	Malta	Ecuador	Switzerland	United Arab Emirates	Gabon
	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3	Top 4	Top 5



Figure 9: Mentions to WPS per country over the years.

# Conclusions and recommendations

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## → Resolution 1325 is a landmark...

...that paved the way for new resolutions and reoriented discussions about women with regards to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

## → Yet, there are still a lot to achieve

Women, peace and security discussions are not yet mainstream, with 49% of all mentions spoken only in meetings that specifically address the WPS theme. Therefore, there is a need to bring the gender debate and acknowledge women's role across conflict and peace discussions.

## → Women are part of the solution

Not only talking about women, but guaranteeing their participation and empowering local NGOs and women's rights organizations are important to promote equitable, stable and peaceful societies. The rise in attention towards "participation" is an encouraging sign in that direction.



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