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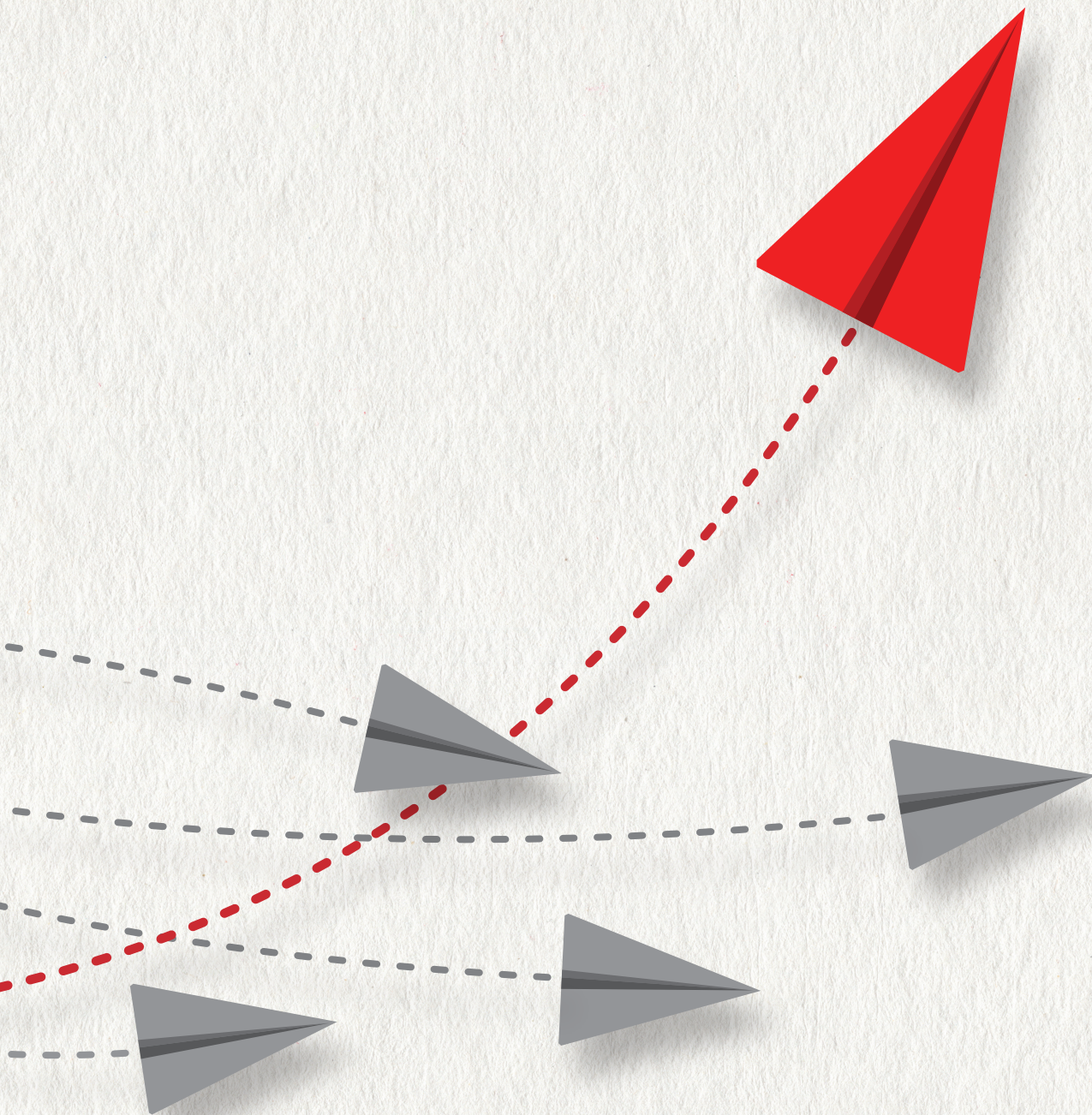
Graduation & Future Perspectives

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP PROGRAM

FOR "LEADERSHIP ACADEMY" ALUMNI

WHAT'S NEXT FOR ARMENIA AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE VISA LIBERALISATION DIALOGUE

Mariam Anastasyan

Abstract

The recent approval by the European Commission to launch the Visa Liberalization Dialogue (VLD) represents a significant political endorsement for Armenia. This decision sparked optimism among Armenians, displaying the EU's support for Armenia's democratic aspirations for deeper European engagement and integration. This article looks at Armenia's relationship with the European Union and its implications concerning the visa liberalization process. It discusses the challenges and conditionalities that Armenia should enact to accomplish visa liberalization. Simultaneously, it reflects on Armenia's window of opportunity to leverage the momentum to drive change within its legal and institutional frameworks.

Introduction

The EU-Armenia partnership is founded on a series of agreements and policies that laid the ground for the current cooperation. Started with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) in 1999 and followed by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2003 to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and its Neighbors, the integration was solidified by the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009, targeting six post-soviet states, including Armenia, and culminated in the signing of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on March 1, 2021, marking the present EU-Armenia agenda.

The initiation of the EU-Armenia Visa Liberalization Dialogue (VLD) on September 2024, marks an important milestone in EU-Armenia relations, and builds upon the effective implementation of the EU-Armenia Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements, that Armenia has enacted proactively since 2014, serving as one of the main pillars and prerequisite for the initiation of Visa Liberalization Dialogue (VLD). Yet, to achieve the momentum of the possible visa-free travel for Armenian citizens within the EU's Schengen Area in the foreseeable future, Armenia should undertake a number of technical and legal benchmarks - enactment of the biometric data and travel documentation, border management, and the fight against illegal migration, respect of human rights and rule of law - stipulated by the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP), which presents a major challenge for the Armenian Government.

The Historical Context from the EU's Perspective

To acknowledge the importance of Visa Liberalization Dialogues within the EU's integrational processes, one should look back at the EU's external oversight mechanisms from the 1990s and 2000s. During this period, the EU put forward the so-called *restraining* tools for border control regulations, migration, and security, by offering relaxed travels for the citizens of the EU Neighborhood Countries, with the incentive to implement readmission agreements and adhere to the EU standards by the "harmonization of legislation and policy convergence"[1] among the countries involved. If deemed successful, they would be granted a visa-free-regime. These policies were characterized by European scholars as confrontational,[2] that the EU pursued to securitize its "external frontiers while leveraging from neighboring countries as buffer zones."[3] They contend that this approach aimed to establish a "short-term security strategy"[4] centered on migration and border control, as a nucleus for advancing "long-term good governance"[5] in the Neighborhood countries. In doing so, the EU put forward "conditionality and

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[1] Judith Kelley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms Through the New European Neighbourhood Policy." Journal of Common Market Studies, 44 (1) 2006, 30

[2] Andrea Gawrich, Inna Melnykovska, and Rainer Schweickert. "Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP: The Case of Ukraine" JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 48(5), 2010, 1214

[3] Judith Kelley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms Through the New European Neighbourhood Policy." Journal of Common Market Studies, 44 (1) 2006, 30

[4] Ibid

[5] Ibid

institutional socialization principles,[6]" to continue to exert its "external governance"[7] standards by simultaneously "preserving its internal security from the external threats."[8] Within this context, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) frameworks played distinctive roles in introducing the notion of "positive political conditionality"[9] by incorporating visa facilitation and readmission agreements as an integral part of the EU's "common operational instruments for the negotiations within the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)."[10]

Armenia's path towards the VLP

The European Commission's green light to launch a Visa Liberalization Dialogue (VLP) with Armenia came as a culmination of a decade of hard work to achieve this anticipated breakthrough. The progression from the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCAs) to the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and consequently the Eastern Partnership Initiative (EaP) not only defined the basis of Armenia's willingness to adhere to the EU legal norms but also served as a strategic platform in addressing border management and illegal migration origination from and passing through Armenia.

The 2011 EU-Armenia Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership created a solid infrastructure for bilateral collaboration on migration-related issues, promoting the mobility of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) country citizens within the EU Schengen Area. The Mobility Partnership concluded with the signing of the EU-Armenia visa facilitation and readmission agreement in 2014, an effective implementation of which served as a "positive political conditionality" ▨ that opened the door for the initiation of the Visa Liberalization Dialogue. The applications initiating of the VLD were further articulated in the 2021 EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The agreement details areas such as "cooperation on migration, asylum, and border management," "the joint management of migration flows," "addressing the root causes of

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[6] Ibid

[7] Sandra Lavanex, "EU external governance in wider Europe" Journal of European Public Policy, 11 (4) 2004, 681

[8] Ibid

[9] Alena Vieira and Syuzanna Vasilyan, "Armenia and Belarus, Caught between the EU's and Russia's conditionalities?" in the European Union and its Eastern Neighborhood wither Eastern Partnership?" edited by Andriy Tyushka, Tobias Schumacher (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 185

[10] Florian Trauner and Imke Kruse, "EC Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements: A New Standard EU Foreign Policy Tool?" European Journal of Migration and Law 10 (2008), 418.

migration" as well as the "movement of persons and readmission," "[…] provided that conditions for well-managed and secure mobility are in place,"[11] among others.

The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is regarded as the cornerstone of current EU-Armenia relations after the infamous "U-turn"[12] of President Sarkisian, deciding against signing the long-negotiated and much-anticipated Association Agreement with the European Union back in 2014. The decision, which redirected Armenia's foreign policy towards the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) resulted in stagnation within bilateral relations and was referred to as a "missed opportunity"[13] with "negative repercussions."[14] Following the setback of ties, CEPA emerged as a "special model for cooperation:"[15] on the one hand, it differed from the Association Agreements as such, however, on the other hand, it enabled Armenia to gradually adjust its legislation with European *acquis*.

European Union as a central factor in Armenia's foreign policy reorientation: Long-term implications of the VLD

The 2018 Velvet Revolution and the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh presented a pivotal period for Armenia to project changes within its foreign policy trajectory. These new realities prompted Armenia to reflect on its long-standing alliance with its traditional partner Russia by calibrating[16] its approach and gradually shifting to renewed relations with the EU. The revolutionary changes of 2018 led to the new reform-oriented Government that aimed at more diversification in its foreign relations. This approach became more vivid after the second war in Nagorno-Karabakh, which exposed the limitations of Armenia's reliance on Russia and prompted to seek new partnerships.

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[11] "Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part." 25 September 2017 (entered into force on March 1, 2021)

[12] Richard Giragosian, "The Eastern Partnership: the view from Armenia," European Council of Foreign Relations, 2015, accessed November 22, 2022, https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_armenia3032/ .

[13] Ibid

[14] Ibid

[15] Stefania Cyclist. "CEPA as a Model of Cooperation: The Example of EU-Armenia Relations." *The Polish Institute of Political Affairs*, 2021. Accessed November 22, 2024.

[16] *De Waal, Thomas. Armenia Navigates a Path Away From Russia. Carnegie Europe, July 11, 2024. Accessed November 26, 2024.* https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/07/armenia-navigates-a-path-away-from-russia?lang=en

In this context, the EU reemerged as a vital partner for Armenia's political and economic modernization. According to the 2024 Partnership implementation report on Armenia,[17] the country has gone through a difficult path over the past years and CEPA has emerged as a "blueprint"[18] to conduct reforms and support the Armenian Government in modernizing the country and building "functioning democratic institutions."[19]

As emphasized by the Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Maragos, on November 12, at the Crossroads of Peace, Combining Security and Democracy conference attended by PM Nikol Pashinyan "[… European Union and Armenia have been working relentlessly together, to strengthen our partnership, explore new opportunities, and identify the tools and the mechanisms which will bring us closer. [...] these joint efforts are grounded in shared values and commitments to a rules-based international order and human rights, the rule of law, and democratic governance."

The Ambassador also mentioned the perspectives of signing a new EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda - a new all-inclusive document, which is being currently negotiated and is set to prove more ambitious goals on all dimensions, including the Visa Liberalization Dialogue.

Indeed, the launch of the Visa Liberalization Dialogue is a key breakthrough for Armenia, followed by a series of turbulences within the country's political landscape that have shaped its pathway toward closer integration with the EU. However, it is imperative, that Armenia requires a great deal of *homework* to fulfill and deliver the technical and legal *conditionalities* prescribed by the EU.

What are those technical and legal conditionalities that Armenia shall meet for visa liberalization, and most importantly, how can Armenia leverage this process for long-term implications, to not only diversify its foreign policy but also remedy its legal and institutional frameworks for deeper EU integration?

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[17] European Commission, *Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia*, 2024, accessed November 22, 2024. https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6452-2024-INIT/en/pdf.
[18] Ibid
[19] Ibid

The legal and technical criteria for the implementation of the Visa Liberalization Dialogue, in general, are listed in the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) that Armenia has yet to receive. VLAPs are tailor-made documents designed per each partner-country seeking visa-free-regime with the EU. The VLAPs are comprised of several primary baskets of conditionalities that Armenia should meet: 1) Security of the travel documents, 2) Border Management 3) Legal and Institutional Reforms.

The security of travel documents is closely related to the use of biometric passports and the collection of biometric data. To establish efficient border control and collect data in a safe and secure manner, Armenia shall develop and establish a biometric passport data system. The biometric data system creation is not only principal for domestic security matters but also is one of the prerequisites for the establishment of the Visa Free Regime with the EU. This will facilitate unified collection and exchange with the EU Member States thus aligning Armenia with EU norms regarding border management and visa policy.

According to the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Arpine Sargsyan during the Government session on October 3rd. "The Armenian government is in the final stages of a tender process for the companies to provide biometric passports and identification cards. The winning companies will be identified by March 2025 with production scheduled to start by mid-2026. These passports are designed to provide high security for biometric data, facilitate the detection of forgeries, and guarantee the smooth passage through border crossing points."

Border Management: In parallel to document security and biometric data collection, Armenia shall strengthen its border management and security control to address illegal migration, human trafficking, smuggling, and other forms of organized crime. These regulations are important from the perspective of meeting EU standards regarding migration and asylum policies. By ensuring these compliances, Armenia on the one hand, shall re-enforce its internal security and prevent its appearance as a "country of origin" for illegal migration, and on the other hand, will meet EU's expectations and strengthen its policy framework with long-term implications.

Legal and institutional reforms: Armenia shall demonstrate a firm commitment to strengthening judicial independence and the rule of law by guaranteeing universal human rights and freedoms of all individuals, including refugees and asylum seekers. It should

combat corruption, enforce transparency, and fair legal practices. The specificities of the so-called *reforms portfolio*, as mentioned, are still subject to the VLAP that Armenia is currently negotiating with the EU. The reforms envisaged by the VLAP will be assessed against their strong adherence to EU standards within Progress Reports as a measure of Armenia's readiness to embrace the visa-free regime.

To leverage long-term implications for Armenia both internally and externally, Armenia should not refer to these reforms merely as technical obligations on its way to deeper European integration but rather should use them as a strategic opportunity to advance democratic governance within the country by advancing internal political modernization and institutional change. Meantime, it should be noted, that despite the importance of technical conditionality, political conditionality remains an even bigger decisive factor within the visa liberalization process. The unanimous endorsement of all EU Member States (MS) is required to grant Armenia with a visa-free-regime. Therefore, Armenia should also seek active diplomatic engagement with individual EU MS by advocating for the effectiveness and efficiency of its reforms.

To date, Armenia has made few developments to address its needs and obligations under the VLD through structural and institutional approaches. In October 2024, a working group was established under the direct headship of Armenia's Deputy Prime Minister to oversee VLD talks and coordinate VLAP with the EU, including a number of representatives from the Government's sectoral institutions. Subsequently, in November 2024, a delegation from Brussels visited Yerevan to start the negotiations and develop the road map, reaffirming both sides' commitments to advancing political and technical cooperation towards Armenia's preparations in meeting EU standards for visa-free-regime.

Conclusion

Migration management and border security remain a critical issue within the European Union and its Member States. As a result, the conditionality for better governance was put forward within its Neighborhood Policy, requiring implementation of the *basket of criteria* that must be fulfilled for the visa-free regime. For Armenia, this process necessitates a strategic approach and strong diplomatic ties with individual EU MS to advocate for the meaningful implementation of the benchmarks outlined in the VLAP.

As noted by Margaritis Schinas, the Vice-President of the European Commission during the launch of the VLD with Armenia. "[...] the launch of the EU visa liberalization dialogue is an important decision, underpinned by the democratic reforms initiated by the Republic of Armenia. We view this process as a strategic agenda for further modernization of migration, mobility, and border management fields and we acknowledge the necessity for continued and focused efforts to achieve this objective."[20] Indeed, Armenia should further commit to undertaking these reforms, not only solely to secure a visa-free regime but also to signal its dedication to progressing democratic reforms and moving the country forward. Only, in doing so, Armenia can leverage from EU's technical and financial assistance in capitalizing its institutional and legal frameworks thus not only aligning with European norms but also aspiring for a better future for its citizens.

Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that the path to visa liberalization is not just a technical process but also a political one since unanimous approval from individual EU MS will be required at the end of the day. Therefore, Armenia shall have to work diligently on its national legal norms and legislation, while simultaneously, cultivating strong relationships with the EU MS grounded in shared values.

The argument that Armenia's unique position presents geopolitical challenges[21] for the country to achieve its European aspirations is not without precedents. The three European Neighborhood Policy countries - Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine - had already achieved the *long-fought*[22] visa-free regime with the EU. Armenia should learn from the experiences of fellow *neighbors*, who, despite similar geopolitical hardships, successfully navigated the complex process of European integration. Therefore, Armenia should seize the opportunity to strengthen its democratic institutions, cultivating progress for both the country and the European future of its people.

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Note

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TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP PROGRAM

FOR "LEADERSHIP ACADEMY" ALUMNI

Empowering Women for Peace: The Armenian Perspective on UNSCR 1325

Greta Gevorgyan

Abstract

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 highlights the importance of engaging women in peacebuilding and security-related processes. While progress has been made in many countries, still many nations, including Armenia, face obstacles in fully implementing their National Action Plans (NAPs). This article examines the two NAPs developed by Armenia, analyzing women's roles in peace processes locally and globally. It also contextualizes UNSCR 1325 within broader international frameworks on women's rights and anti-violence initiatives. Finally, recommendations are offered to enhance Armenia's alignment with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, ensuring women have the opportunity to play a critical role in preventing violence and promoting sustainable peace.

Introduction

Conflicts devastate communities, leading to loss of lives, destruction of property, displacement, and significant emotional trauma. Women and children are often among the most affected, bearing the effects of violence, displacement, and systematic exploitation. In many cases, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is used as a deliberate tactic during conflicts, with minority and impoverished women being particularly vulnerable. Despite making up half of the world's population, women are significantly underrepresented in peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery processes.

Globally, 70% of women experience different types of violence at some point in their lives, and only 20% of lawmakers are women (UN Women: I know Gender Training: Women, Peace, Security). In Armenia and worldwide, women also face wage inequality, earning approximately 30% less than men for the same work (The Armenian Mirror-Spectator). Incorporating a gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding not only ensures justice but also promotes inclusive and sustainable outcomes. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent international frameworks calls for integrating women's perspectives into peace and security policies as a matter of international obligation and necessity.

Women, Peace, and Security: Expanding the Global Framework

Women are disproportionately affected by conflict, yet they remain grossly underrepresented in peacebuilding and decision-making processes. The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on October 31, 2000, marked a historic moment in global affairs by recognizing the critical role women play in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This landmark resolution builds upon foundational international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted in 1993, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995. These frameworks highlight the importance of women's rights and gender equality as essential to achieving long-term peace and security.

UNSCR 1325 was the first resolution to explicitly link women's experiences in conflict with international peace and security. UNSCR 1325 is based on four main pillars that guide the WPS agenda:

1.   Participation: Advocating for women's engagement in decision-making and peace negotiations.
2.   Protection: Addressing SGBV and ensuring women's safety in conflict zones.
3.   Prevention: Reducing violence against women through systemic reforms.
4.   Relief and Recovery: Ensuring gender-responsive aid and reconstruction efforts.

Despite some progress has been made as a result of the adoption of 1325 resolution, significant challenges persist in relation to women's rights and representation. Globally,

women remain significantly underrepresented in peace processes. From 1992 to 2022, women made up only 13% of negotiators, 6% of signatories, and 3% of mediators in formal peace negotiations (UN Women). Research shows that women's engagement in peace processes leads to more sustainable agreements. However, as we see, there are still lots of systemic barriers to women's full participation.

Over the past years, the Women, Peace, and Security agenda expanded. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 laid a foundation for a broader Women, Peace and Security agenda. New resolutions that stem from the 1325 agenda, have addressed emerging challenges and reinforced the framework:

- UNSCR 1820 (2008): Addressed sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, emphasizing prevention and accountability.
- UNSCR 1888 (2009): Strengthened efforts to end sexual violence against women and children in armed conflict.
- UNSCR 1889 (2009): Emphasized the need for women's inclusion in post-conflict reconstruction and governance.
- UNSCR 1960 (2010): Established a monitoring, analysis and reporting mechanism on conflict-related sexual violence.
- UNSCR 2106 (2013): Called for greater accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict and stressed women's political and economic empowerment.
- UNSCR 2122 (2013): Addressed persistent gaps in the implementation of WPS agenda. (UN Women).

Together, these resolutions create a comprehensive framework to address the diverse roles of women in conflict and peacebuilding. They emphasize the need to prevent violence, protect rights, and ensure women's active inclusion in all peace and security processes.

To contextualize the WPS agenda in different countries, National Action Plans (NAPs) were developed, which are essential tools for implementing the WPS agenda. As of early 2024, 108 countries (56%) have adopted 1325 NAPs. Fifty-six countries have developed one NAP on WPS, 27 have developed two, 15 have developed three, 6 countries are on their fourth; and 2 countries are on their fifth NAP. However, only 43% of these plans are

fully funded, significantly limiting their effectiveness (1325 NAPs). Funded NAPs, such as those in Norway and Sweden, have stronger outcomes thanks to comprehensive monitoring mechanisms and greater community engagement. In contrast, underfunded NAPs often lack measurable and realistic outcomes and rely heavily on international funding.

Armenia adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) in 2019 for the period 2019-2021. The development of NAP was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it does not indicate civil society inclusion in the development of the NAP. Armenia's NAP focuses heavily on increasing women's participation and awareness of the protection of women's rights within the defense system (military, police, and peacekeeping missions). The NAP also highlights the relevance of creating comprehensive and targeted programs to address the needs of women and girls impacted by or displaced because of conflicts. The NAP includes components on the international implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, especially in light of the ongoing Artsakh conflict. The first NAP of Armenia identifies 18 objectives that are grouped under the primary pillars of Resolution 1325: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. Each objective has respective actions, indicators, and responsible parties. The first NAP was primarily funded by external sources, including international organizations and non-governmental organizations, there is no allocated funding by the government. (Armenian Government NAP, 2019-2021).

Armenia adopted its second NAP in June 2022 for the period of 2022-2024. The second NAP builds upon the first by strengthening women's roles not only in peace processes but also in post-conflict governance and community rebuilding efforts. An important new emphasis is put on the displacement of women and girls caused by the 2020 Artsakh/ Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which posed urgent challenges in terms of their protection and reintegration. Unlike the first NAP, the second one along with the state institutions was developed in cooperation with CSOs and forcibly displaced women from Artsakh.

Moreover, the second NAP introduces a new cooperation pillar, focusing on enhanced partnerships between national institutions, civil society, and international organizations to ensure the effective application of WPS principles. This NAP includes more detailed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. A significant novelty in the second NAP is its focus on forcibly displaced women, particularly those affected by the Artsakh conflict. The

plan recognizes the need for tailored support for these women and girls, including reintegration programs and the strengthening of local support systems. (Armenia National Action Plans, 2022–2024).

It is worthy to note that both National Action plans face the ongoing challenge of securing sustainable state funding. As Armenia continues to navigate post-conflict recovery, these plans provide a critical roadmap for empowering women and ensuring their voices are heard in peacebuilding efforts. Currently, the third NAP is being developed for the period of 2024-2028.

Empowering women to participate fully in peace and security processes is not just a way to restore justice but a strategic necessity. Evidence shows that peace agreements are 35% more likely to last 15 years or more when women are involved (A Global Study on the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325).

The WPS agenda aligns with other international frameworks, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, which emphasizes women's leadership in peace and security, and UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, which prioritizes gender equality. It also addresses intersecting vulnerabilities, particularly for women from marginalized communities or living in poverty, who face compounded risks during and after conflicts. By localizing the WPS framework—such as addressing sexual violence in conflict, ensuring women's active participation in peace processes, and incorporating gender perspectives into post-conflict governance—Armenia will make tangible progress toward gender equality and long-lasting peace. The lessons learnt from global practices, particularly the necessity of dedicated resources and political will, are essential for turning these commitments into actionable outcomes.

Conclusion

Many states across the world began to recognize the importance of women in the spheres of peace and conflict resolution, thanks to the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions. In light of recent global developments, one notable example of this would be the approval of two National Action Plans by Armenia under the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Nonetheless, these plans also

underscore significant challenges that remain, particularly in terms of underfunding and the limited representation of women in key decision-making positions.

For Armenia to fully implement the WPS agenda, women's participation must be prioritized not just as a policy goal, but as a central component of its peacebuilding and security strategies. This priority is closely linked to the political representation of women. In Armenia, women currently account for approximately 37% of the Parliament (RA National Assembly), but their representation in government leadership roles has traditionally been low. Recently, however, some progress has been made. For the first time, four out of twelve ministers are women (RA Government). This is a step in the right direction, a positive step, however more steps should be undertaken to ensure that women are equally represented and actively engaged in the shaping of the nation's security and peace policies.

The political leadership of Armenia should have enough political will to further invest in women's representation and empowerment thus improving political and socio-economic landscape for women in Armenia. Building on this momentum will help strengthen Armenia's commitment to the WPS agenda and lead to more sustainable, inclusive peacebuilding outcomes.

Recommendations

To ensure Armenia effectively implements the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda while empowering women to play a transformative role in achieving sustainable peace, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Enhance Women's Leadership and the Role of Women Moving Forward

   The involvement of women in the processes of peace and security is critical for peace to be realized. For this goal, Armenia should work to increase the number of women involved in the peace talks as well as reconstruction processes after the conflict. This can be done by establishing gender quotas for the upper leadership and decision-making structures.

2. Allocate Sustainable Resources for WPS Goals and Strengthen Accountability

As discussed above, the implementation of Armenia's National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325 is still dependent on foreign funding. In order to enhance the results of these plans over time, the government of Armenia should provide a national allocation which will be used to implement the WPS program. Clear financial mechanisms are important in order to limit reliance on international aid. It can be stated that they can enhance the effectiveness of the objectives more readily. At the same time, evaluation and monitoring system need to be established that are based on both the process and output aspects of the work. Women, and especially women's rights NGOs are the most important for the assessment of these outputs.

3.   Start More Collaborations with Local and Global Partners

For the WPS agenda to be realized, it is essential that local communities, civil society organizations, international organizations and the government work together. The partnership must be based on shared responsibility in which all parties are committed to the advancement of women's rights and roles in peace and security processes. Therefore, the best practices of those who have succeeded in domesticating the principles of WPS in their countries' frameworks, would be a good lesson for Armenia.

4.   Campaign to Raise Public Awareness

Women's leadership in Armenia is also limited by traditional perceptions of gender roles and prevailing attitudes. In order to eliminate these stereotypes and barriers, well coordinated public awareness raising activities are needed highlighting the critical role that women play in governance, peace processes and handling conflicts. Such campaigns should aim to change the perception of society, promote women's participation in governance as active leaders.

Through these approaches, it can be envisaged that Armenia would enhance its commitment to the WPS agenda and guarantee that women's voices will be heard during the peacebuilding processes and the country would strive to create a more just and advanced society.

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Note

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