

RETHINKING COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND PEACE-KEEPING THROUGH THE GENDER PRISM – THE CASE STUDY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: As a legally binding document, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (hereafter: UNSCR 1325) presents a solid legal framework for women's inclusion in all phases of conflict resolution and peace processes by urging member states to ensure increased participation of women in the security sectors. There is a presumption that the adoption and implementation of the UNSCR 1325 empower women and give them importance as subjects, as persons who should decide the highest levels of national and international security spheres, which led to women's economic development. This paper argues that the UNSCR 1325 lays the foundation and provides women with opportunities to enter into spheres of national and international peace and security as active players, but only in the lower levels of the security institutions. Regarding those higher, additional efforts should be made by the respective national actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For this hypothesis confirmation, the article reflects upon the international legal texts followed by the desk analysis of the national framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina for women empowerment. The case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates that the role of Gender Focal Points remains irrelevant for gender mainstreaming in law enforcement agencies at the state level, as conducted interviews show. The paper offers recommendations for improved women's participation in the security sector at the national and international levels.

Key words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace and Security

Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the UNSCR 1325, entering no reservations upon its ratification instruments. Following its four pillars, the UNSCR 1325 initiated further participation of women in public life, particularly their participation in security sectors of the UN member states, which adopted the UNSCR 1325 unanimously on 20 October 2000. Participation of women in the security sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter: BiH) is of paramount importance, taking into consideration 'the 1992–1995 conflict, when rape and sexual violence were carried out systematically against women, with an estimate of between 20 000 and 50 000 victims (UN Women 2019, p. 14)'. Nonetheless, a deeply rooted patriarchal society and biases on gender-appropriate public roles hinder women's empowerment in BiH.

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For example, when it comes to women's representation in the country's parliament, it went from zero women representatives in 1996 and 1998 to 21,40% in the last general elections in 2014 of representatives to the parliament of BiH (Women's UN Reporting Network, 2016). Even though women make up more than 50% of the population in BiH, only five women hold mayoral positions out of a total of 141 mayors (Sarajevo Times, 2022). The situation is particularly dire regarding the security sector, with the women's highest participation of 15%. This women's underrepresentation directly influences gender-balanced participation and the proper response of the law enforcement agencies that should serve both men and women. Research conducted by nongovernmental organisations shows a cold attitude and lack of empathy by the police in responding to violence against women and protecting women's rights (Nongovernmental organisations of BiH, 2019). Further research proved that gender-balanced police forces are essential to help women report violence (OSCE, 2019).

This article aims to show the importance of UNSCR 1325 as the first step to represent women as active players and call upon women to contribute to international peace and security. It argues that the UNSCR 1325 and WPS Agenda (hereafter: WPS Agenda) lays down the milestone for women's economic empowerment providing them with opportunities to enter into security as active participants. There is a presumption that the adoption and implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and WPS Agenda empower women and give them importance as subjects, as persons who should decide at the highest levels of national and international spheres, which led to women's economic development. Further on, the article will answer the following research question: whether the WPS Agenda provides women with economic and professional development opportunities, and what is a role of a Gender Focal Point (hereafter: GFP) in women's inclusion in the security sector?

The first part of the article reflects upon international documents (a) adopted before the UNSCR 1325, analysing how they protect and empower women in general, highlighting their slight influence on the security sector of BiH. It also gives an insight into the UNSCR 1325 and subsequent Resolutions from the WPS Agenda (b) as a stepping stone for women's active participation in the security sector of BiH. The second part presents the national legal framework for gender equality (a) and the national action plan to implement the UNSCR 1325 and WPS Agenda (b), as the first Agenda in the region developed in 2010. The WPS Agenda structure brought the country an award from the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for its effective implementation. The third part sheds light on the GFPs' roles in agencies within the Ministry of Security of BiH. This part analyses of the specific impact GFPs have on the process of deployment and promotion of police officers. They also provided insight into their respective agencies' gender-sensitive language and gender-sensitive budgeting.

The study for this article was conducted from March to the end of May 2022. As for the methodology of this article, a desk analysis of primary sources has been done, including the international legal framework for women's empowerment and the WPS Agenda for women's inclusion in the security sector globally. Accordingly, the legal framework for gender equality in BiH was analysed along with the state agenda for WPS implementation.

Due to the absence of almost any publications on the specific role of the GFPs within the agencies of the Ministry of Security, the authors conducted nine semi-structured interviews with the former and actual GFPs of the BiH's Ministry of Security, Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA), the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), Border

Police (BP), the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies of BiH (DCBP). The interviews were conducted in person in April 2022. The authors have made a purposive selection of interviewees, choosing GFPs with profound experience in this field. A participant observation method from the author's eight-year experience gained during her engagement as one of the GFP in SIPA was also utilised.

The article urges immediate actions of the state actors for special programs and measures of affirmative action development and deployment to elevate the percentage of female police officers in the security sector. This elevation creates more secure societies since 'increased gender equality could lead to higher levels of disclosure and recognition of the different forms of violence against women (OSCE 2019, p.15)'. As Edita Tahiri notes, 'women can make a huge difference and breakthrough in reaching a peace agreement. They can manage men's egos, which may become harmful in reaching peace deals (Tahiri, 2018)'.

1. International legal foundation for women active participation in security sectors - WPS Agenda

This part shows no doubt regarding improvements in the international legal framework on human and women's rights (Jerkovic, 2014) that development accelerated after the Second World War atrocities. Notwithstanding, it took several decades for the international community to place women from the private to the public sphere, from victims and survivors of violence (a) to active and equal partners in peace and security (b).

a) An international milestone for WPS Agenda

Many international documents are grounded on the principle which guarantees equal enjoyment of human rights for men and women. This principle was universally introduced by the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945⁴⁷ and subsequently elaborated through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)⁴⁸, as well as through the International Bill of Human Rights⁴⁹ and many subsequent UN resolutions and conventions. Comprehensive women's normative empowerment framework includes the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)⁵⁰ as a stepping stone for 'substantive gender equality and 'ground for developing special and positive measures for women empowerment' (Jerkovic 2014, p.199). According to the UN Women, this Convention is an international bill for women's rights. It defines discrimination, urges member states to end it and lists measures and actions (UN Women, 2009).

⁴⁷ See Preamble of the United Nations Charter, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

⁴⁸ See Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

⁴⁹ The International Bill of Human Rights includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), two Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and its Optional Protocol.

⁵⁰ See Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women, available at: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

The term gender was not mentioned in these early legally binding documents as a specific basis for the prohibition of discrimination. However, it became dominant later on in the discourse of men-women relations. Introducing the cultural differences between men and women (Feluga, 2002), the international discourse has dramatically changed in favour of women's rights recognition and the language of international conventions and resolutions. With these changes, the minds of men and women started to change and move to the recognition of women not only as objects but also as political subjects.

The first international document providing a framework to fight and end violence against women was the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993). The Declaration prohibits state violence against women, intimate violence and violence based on cultural and traditional practices of a specific region. It made violence against women an international issue (Council of Europe, 2022). The Declaration includes gender in its language, translating violence against women into any act of 'gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm [...] whether occurring in public or in private life (Article 1 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women, General Assembly, A/RS/48/104, 23 February 1994)'.

Besides those mentioned above legally binding international documents, in 1995, the UN adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.⁵¹ Even though not legally binding, it serves as the guide to the global struggle against constraints and obstacles to the empowerment of women (Ban Ki-Moon, 1995). However, measures and actions proposed in the above legally binding documents were not extended to the police or other security sector institutions by 2000, resulting in 'men-only security sectors.'⁵²

b) WPS Agenda. Towards active participation.

Member states, the UN system, and civil society played a role in promoting gender equality and recognizing the central role of women in conflict prevention, peace processes and peace-building. It took several decades and many different actors until the Security Council held its first debate on WPS and adopted Resolution 1325 in October 2000. Recognizing women's vital role in preventing and resolving conflicts (RESDAL, 2014), on October 31, 2000, UNSCR 1325 was passed unanimously (Peace Women, 2020). It was the first time that the UNSC had devoted a resolution for women during peace and conflict. The efforts from international organisations, national governments and civil society worldwide contributed to establishing the WPS Agenda (hereafter WPS) and its first-born UNSCR 1325 (United States Institute of Peace, 2020).

⁵¹ The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action treats 12 critical areas for women's empowerment, naming: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanism for the advancement of women, human rights and women, women and the media, women and the environment and the girl-child. See Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/01/beijing-declaration>

⁵² This is the term invented for this article, meaning that only men conducted police jobs, implying police powers. At the same time, women were 'exclusively' in administrative positions or positions without police powers.

As the threshold of the WPS Agenda, UNSCR 1325 embraced four pillars for women's empowerment, stepping 'passive victim-active participant bridge of security.'⁵³ Participation as the first pillar accelerated the deployment of women in the state security sector, aiming to reach the following three pillars: protection, prevention, relief and recovery (United Nations, 2000). Aiming to protect women in conflict and include them actively in peace-building and peace-making, the Security Council adopted subsequent Resolutions on WPS Agenda. According to the Agenda, one should distinguish between two types of concrete measures and actions. The first considers the participation of women, with the UNSCR 1325 as the footing. The second group tackles the prevention of sexual violence, promoting the 'zero-tolerance policies against sexual harassment' and Resolution 1820 (United Nations, 2008).

The first group of resolutions promotes women's active and effective participation in peace-making and peace-building (United Nations Peacemaker, 2019). In order to reach that aim, Resolution 1889 urges the establishment of global indicators for the WPS Agenda implementation (United Nations, 2009). The need for women's participation in decision-making positions nationally and internationally reiterates Resolution 2122, calling upon member states to actively cooperate with non-governmental organisations and prepare and update gender-based statistical reports in all public spheres (United Nations, 2013; Jerkovic, 2021). Resolution 2242 goes further with women's inclusion in the public sphere. 'It urges the Member States to assess strategies and resources in implementing the WPS Agenda [...] to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, and resolution of conflict [...] The Resolution encourages the meaningful participation of civil society organisations at international, regional, and national peace and security meetings, as appropriate (United Nations, 2015). At its 8649th meeting in October 2019, Security Council adopted Resolution 2493, reaffirming its commitment to fully implementing all WPS Resolutions⁵⁴ (United Nations 2019; Jerkovic, 2021).

The second group, beginning with the adoption of SCR 1820 in 2008, aims to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence. Resolutions 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2467 (2019) acknowledge that sexual violence, when used in armed conflicts, can be a threat to international peace and security. Proper prevention of sexual violence in armed conflicts and prevention of the worst atrocities resulting in crimes against humanity demand, once again, fulfilling the main requests of the WPS first group Resolution regarding women's active participation in decision-making positions. The Security Council reaffirms the primary role of Member States to fully implement all the WPS Resolution, as 'States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of all persons within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction as provided for by international law (S/RES/2493 (2019)).'

These resolutions are reminders of the vulnerability and suffering of thousands of women and girls, victims of rape and sexual abuse in the 1990s wars in the Western Balkan. They are of particular importance not only for women's empowerment but also for the continuing struggle of other women for lasting peace (Jerkovic, 2014). However, according to the Peace

⁵³ The authors invented this term for the sake of this article.

⁵⁴ 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015) and 2467 (2019).

Women Report, WPS Agenda globally has suffered from a gap between commitments and action due to various factors, including a lack of accountability (Peace Women, 2021).

2. State agenda for the UNSCR 1325 implementation. The case study of BiH

BiH ratified all above mentioned international documents posing a significant normative ground for the national legal framework development (a) and women's empowerment.⁵⁵ The BiH Law on Gender Equality and the BiH Law on the prohibition of discrimination recognizes special or affirmative measures to achieve a gender-balanced society. However, affirmative measures still need to take place for women's participation and promotion in security sector positions. Instead, their participation promotes and encourages policy to implement the UN Security Council WPS Agenda (b).

a) The national legal threshold for gender-balanced public sphere

Thus, the Constitution of BiH prohibits any form of discrimination 'based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status (Article II 4 of the Constitution of BiH, Annex IV of General Framework Peace Agreement, UN 1995; Official Gazette 25/09)'. Besides the Constitution, the BiH Law on Gender Equality and the BiH Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination pose the legal threshold for gender mainstreaming in all public administration sectors.

The BiH Law on Gender Equality was passed in 2003 pursuant the Articles IV 4 and II 2 and 4 of the Constitution of BiH 'as the most critical mechanism for progress toward gender equality in BiH. This Law regulates, promotes and protects substantive gender equality, guarantees equal opportunities to all citizens, in public and private life and prevents direct and indirect gender-based discrimination (Agency for Gender Equality, 2022)'. The particular importance of the law lies in Article 3 which prohibits any form of gender discrimination, direct or indirect. Following the same article, 'gender-based discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on gender, which has a purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and freedoms in all spheres of society under equal terms (Article 3 of the Law on Gender Equality in BiH, Official Gazette 16/03, 102/09, 32/10)'. According to Article 20, paragraph 2, 'equal representation of men and women exists when one sex is represented with at least 40 per cent in bodies at all levels of authority in BiH, including security sector. Regarding gender-sensitive language, the Law determines that discrimination in language exists when only one grammatical gender is used as a generic term (Article 9 (e) of the Law on Gender Equality).

The Law on the prohibition of discrimination complies with the Constitution of BiH and international standards on human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 1). It defines *discrimination* as any 'different treatment including any exclusion, limitation or preference based on real or perceived grounds towards any person or group of persons [...] on the grounds of their race, skin colour, language, religion, ethnic affiliation, disability, age, national or social background, connection to a national minority, political or other persuasions, property, membership in a trade union or any other association, education, social status and sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual characteristics [...] serving the purpose of or

⁵⁵ See Preamble and Annex 1 to the Constitution of BiH.

resulting in prevention or restriction of any individual from enjoyment or realization, on equal footing, of rights (Article 2)'. Chapter II defines direct and indirect discrimination, including but not limited to harassment, sexual harassment, mobbing, segregation and incitement to discrimination. However, based on the international legal framework, there are exceptions to the principle of equal treatment when 'legal measures or action aim to reduce unfavourable distinction or different treatment if based on objective and reasonable justification (Article 5)'. According to Article 6, the Law on the prohibition of discrimination applies 'to actions of all public bodies [...] in all spheres of life, but especially in fields of [...] equal participation of all citizens in public life [...] judiciary and administration, including activities of police and other law enforcement agencies (Law on the prohibition of discrimination, Official Gazette of BiH No. 59/09)'.

Competent bodies must take appropriate measures to implement provisions prescribed by the national normative framework and adopted policies. 'They must do so by introducing measures for gender equality, adopting new or amending existing laws, implementing the BiH Gender Action Plan, collecting data, keeping records and analysing and presenting statistical data classified according to gender (OSCE, 2022)'.

Worthy to note is the importance of the BiH Gender Equality Law and the Law on the prohibition of discrimination as promoters of substantive gender equality and non-discrimination in all areas of life. Notwithstanding existing gender legislation, there are persisting gaps in the security sector where affirmative measures are needed to improve equal representation and diminish existing discrimination in language, which the article also reveals (Title 3).

When it comes to specific policies⁵⁶, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 "WPS" (2018-2022) is in existence, which elaborates the part that follows.

b) Implementation of the UNSCR 1325. WPS Agenda.

States signatories implement the UNSCR 1325 by adopting specific national action plans (hereafter: NAP) to implement the "WPS" Agenda.⁵⁷ BiH was the first country in the Region who adopted such a plan, which is rather considered as an organic national strategy than an international obligation (Gender Equality Agency of BiH, 2014). Before the first NAP implementation, the state showed a lack of sensitivity towards gender issues and gender equality, especially at the governmental level (Mocevic, 2009). 'Bosnia-Herzegovina's first NAP addresses UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions concerning women, peace, and security. A noticeable portion of the plan discusses internal adjustments in the armed and police forces to increase the participation of women. There are outlined timeframes, partners, responsible institutions and deadlines for each of the objectives given (Miller, Pournik and Swaine 2014, p. 85,86)'.

'Analysis shows that after adopting the Action plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325 (July 2010), the number of female police officers doubled compared to the last analysis done by BH Agency for Gender Equality and EU Police mission. Based on the former analysis conducted in 2010, the fixed percentage of women in the police of BiH is 6, 3% (Gender

⁵⁶ See also Gender Action Plan (2018-2022)

⁵⁷ The Directive of the UN Secretary-General in October 2008 made it mandatory for member states to adopt national action plans for the implementation of the WPS Agenda (see: Directive S/PRST/2008/39 on 29 October 2008).

Equality Agency of BiH 2013 pp. 11,12)'. However, twelve years after the WPS Agenda's adoption, women in the security sector are under-represented, especially in decision-making positions.

The first NAP was adopted in 2010 for the period 2010-2013 as 'the first NAP in the region of Southeast Europe, and it served as an example to other countries in developing national action plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Gender Equality Agency of BiH 2017, p.3)'. The aims of the plan were increasing the participation of women in decision-making positions at all levels of public administration; increasing the number of women in leadership positions within the police and military forces; increasing the participation of women in peace-keeping operations, and introducing a gender perspective in the training of personnel for peace-keeping missions (Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, 2010). After the first NAP expiration in 2013, the results confirm that BiH's NAP is, in many ways, a global model. The country has even received awards from the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for effective NAP implementation' (Gender Equality Agency of BiH, 2014 (1)). The Gender Equality Agency of BiH highlights three critical reasons for the NAP's success:

1. It promotes cooperation across government sectors;
2. It is viewed as a national strategy rather than an international obligation;
3. The NAP presents a platform for realising meaningful change by addressing women's most pressing daily security concerns and recruiting women police officers (Gender Equality Agency of BiH, 2014 (1)).

BiH implemented its third NAP for the period 2018-2022. There are the same goals in the existing NAP, along with three strategic objectives (Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Gender Equality Agency of BiH, 2017), as follows:

1. The increased participation of women in military forces, police and peace-keeping missions, including participation in decision-making;
2. An increased level of human security from a gender perspective;
3. Improved conditions and access to the implementation of NAP.

The active participation of women in the security sector marks a cornerstone of the WPS Agenda, aiming to prevent future conflicts, better protect victims and reinforce peace-building. However, the bare NAP leads to its implementation neither in BiH nor in more developed countries. Thus, celebrating 20 years of UNSCR 1325, NATO has furthered the implementation of the WPS Agenda, urging allied governments and parliaments 'to fully translate existing NAPs for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 into practice and mainstream the importance of implementing the WPS agenda (NATO, 2020)'. Twenty-two years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, women are still underrepresented on the public security scene. They remain excluded mainly from formal structures and institutions of governance in this still post-conflict society. The figure shows a slight improvement in the contribution of policewomen since 2014 (about 2%), with women nowadays contributing from 6% in some law enforcement agencies to 15 % in the State Investigation and Protection Agency (Jerkovic 2021, p.10)⁵⁸

In the twentieth century, the women of BiH lived under six very different political systems, including two different kingdoms, two major wars, a socialist political system

⁵⁸ See Annex 1 of the Article.

and transitional democracy. Very few political systems include women in their apparatus, especially when it comes to law enforcement agencies (Women's UN Reporting Network, 2016). However, improvement is evident from 2011 and the first NAP implementation, which shows the analysis of three NAPs so far adopted.

3. The gender focal points in the national law enforcement agencies

Considering the exceptional national strategy of the WPS Agenda and its first strategic objective regarding increased participation of women, this part presents the results of the purposive field research. The insight into specific gender mainstreaming activities, developed based on nine semi-structured interviews with the GFP and the author's observation, as GFP since 2014, ends this part. The importance of GFPs highlights the United Nations Department of Peace Operations taking into account the role of GFPs 'in implementing gender equality and the WPS mandates in their respective agencies fostering institutional accountability and information sharing (United Nations Department of Peace Operations 2020, p.24)'.

Bearing in mind that the vital role of GFP stems from the WPS Resolutions, nine semi-structured interviews with the selective GFPs have been conducted. A purposive selection of interviewees has been made, choosing GFPs with profound experience in this field. They were or still are the GFPs appointed in the Ministry of Security of BiH and its respective agencies, such as the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA), the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), Border Police (BP), the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies of BiH (DCBP). The questions were the same for all survey participants, including but not limited to their specific roles in the deployment and promotion of female police officers, usage of gender-sensitive language and gender-sensitive budgeting. The respondents slightly colour a grey picture of the gender mainstreaming within law enforcement agencies at the state level, with poor improvement in women's participation.

Regarding the deployment of cadets and promotion of police officers, results show that managers neither consult GFP nor follow the gender mainstreaming WPS Agenda. There are no particular policies or affirmative actions toward gender-balanced law enforcement agencies. 'Our managers do not consult GFPs when promoting police officers, both males/females or during new cadets' deployment (Gender Focal Point 1,3,4,7,8)'. All interviewees shared that 'political influence still plays a crucial role during these processes. As regards the promotion to higher positions, we, as GFPs, cannot do much since our management "prepares" favourites in advance, sending them to training and giving them special awards (GFPs 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9)'. 'In my agency, high-decision-making positions are strictly reserved for male police officers. We do not have women head inspectors. Commissions established for the promotion to the highest ranks are 'man-only.' None of them is gender-sensitive. Their explanation for the absence of women from decision-making is that we entered the police 15 years ago and have to wait for our time to come (GFP 5)'. 'We are supposed to cooperate with the Gender Equality Agency and submit periodical reports. If one wants to be proactive, he/she must have support from the decision-makers and 'naturally' work *pro bono*' (GFP 3,4,7,8,9)'.

Regarding gender-sensitive language worthy to note is 'the reluctance of the female police officers to use the gender-sensitive language (GFP 3,4,5,6,7)'. They argue that the BiH Law on police officials does not recognise the female ranks of police officials (Official Gazette

of BiH, 27/2004, 63/2004, 5/2006, 58/2006, 15/2008, 50/2008); which one cannot deny. On another side, there are managers at the highest positions who do not allow female police officers to use their rank in female form (GFP 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9), citing the same Law.⁵⁹

Regarding gender-sensitive budgeting, the question was: 'If you receive any salary for your tasks and duties conducted as GFP?' All participants answered: 'NO!' (GFP 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9). 'We work like volunteers, with the huge difference as volunteers work voluntarily, but we are appointed, obliged to conduct additional tasks and duties that I consider crucial, but with no salary anticipated for that job' (GFP 1,5,6,7,8,9).

As presented above precondition for gender-balanced participation in security sectors and decision-making positions is the harmonisation of laws and bylaws within the scope of institutions, with the BiH Law on Gender Equality introducing measures of affirmative actions for gender mainstreaming proposed by the documents presented in the first part of the article (1.1 and 1.2). The obstacle brought to the authors' attention is that GFPs must properly influence their respective agencies. As they all note, managers do not discuss possible solutions for improved gender mainstreaming during the deployment and promotion. 'Women cannot be promoted the same way men can. Women have to work twice as much, and even then, some women never live to get what they deserve (Thomson Reuters Foundation News, 2019)'.

The role of GFPs at the state level is to cooperate with the Agency for Gender Equality, participating in the Boards to implement the UNSCR 1325 and Gender Action Plan. They collect information on gender mainstreaming in their respective agencies, making them aware that they do not have the support of the managers to pass the significant step forward. At the same time, their positions are obliged and unpaid⁶⁰, meaning they are underestimated.

Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis developed throughout this article highlights two specific areas of women's empowerment through their inclusion in the security sector as active players. The first is a normative area for women's development and passing 'the victims/survivors – active partners' bridge.' The second area is reality or practice, highlighted by GFPs in state-level law enforcement agencies. The article shows well-developed normative terrain engulfed with a void regarding women's participation in the security sector. In light of the specific history and violence experienced by women of BiH in 1990, the state actors should undertake stepped-up efforts to implement the WPS Agenda.

⁵⁹ The Law on Police Officers of BiH does not distinguish ranks by gender, even though the Bosnian language does. Following Article 69, 'Ranks of Police Officers', Chapter VIII, eleven ranks enumerate discrimination against other genders than males. It further means that female police officers must identify as males, notwithstanding their gender. Training offered by the Gender Focal Point in SIPA in cooperation with the Association of Female Police Officers improved the situation in this field's with negation minimised.

⁶⁰ According to the first analysis shows that the BiH NAP has a source of funding column by sub-activity that is very vague – most mention core budget funds of responsible institutions and/or donor funding (see: Miller B, Pournik M. and Swaine A. „Women in Peace and Security through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Literature Review, Content Analysis of National Action Plans, and Implementation.“ Institute for Global and International Studies. The George Washington University, 2014).

The first part of the article (a) reflects upon the international legal framework protecting women as the victims of discrimination and violence. However, there is also a ground for developing special and positive measures for women's empowerment relevant to women's increased participation in the security sector. The true potential for women's empowerment and inclusion in the public sphere, particularly security, stems from the UNSCR 1325 unanimously adopted by the member states in October 2000 (b). As a firstborn of the WPS Agenda it urges the UN member states to achieve gender-balanced security sectors based on its four pillars: Participation, Prevention, Protection and Relief and Recovery.

The second part gives an insight into the national legal framework (a) grounded on the extensive international threshold for women's empowerment. However, the same as the international, this legal framework tackles issues of discrimination and violence against women as victims and survivors more than their active participation in the public sphere. Even more, gender equality in the country's security sector rests on women's participation until the adoption of the first NAP to implement UNSCR 1325 and WPS in 2010. Moreover, this part highlights that the importance of the UNSCR 1325 and WPS Agenda for increased participation of women in the security sector in BiH is undeniable (b). In 2010 BiH, as the first conflict-torn country in Europe, adopted an inward-looking NAP (Miller, Pournik and Swaine, 2014). It was a model NAP for other countries in the region. The implementation of the third NAP (2018-2022) is in line with the WPS Agenda's pillars to increase women participation in military forces and law enforcement agencies. Achieving that aim brings about increased human security and improved conditions for the NAP's implementation, as subsequently set aims.

The third part paints a grim picture of the GFPs' importance in the BiH Ministry of Security agencies. According to the WPS Agenda, GFPs should play a crucial gender mainstreaming role in their respective agencies. However, their role is underestimated, with no support from the managers for further steps away from pure information collecting and participation in the Boards to implement the WPS Agenda and the Gender Action Plan. Even though their positions are at the same time obliged and unpaid, GFPs are not consulted during the deployment and promotion of police officers, where profoundly rooted political influence plays a vital role, especially in the promotion into decision-making positions. Gender-sensitive language does not function in any of these agencies due to the existing Law on Police Officials recognising men-only ranks. Additionally, female police officers and managers are reluctant to use the ranks in female forms since they invoke their unrecognition by the Law.

Given the disparity between the normative framework and its translation into practice, we need to proceed with the following recommendations to achieve the specific WPS Agenda goals: increased participation of women in law enforcement agencies, gender-balanced peace-keeping mission contingents and a high percentage of women in the decision-making positions.

Recommendations:

As the article shows, additional efforts should be undertaken to empower women to participate in the security sector at the state, *inter alia*, global level. The authors conclude the article with recommendations as a threshold for future advocacy for gender mainstreaming in the security sector of BiH.

- State actors should adopt a holistic approach to the participation of women with police powers in the security sector, from the bottom to the highest level of management, including specific activities to be highlighted in the policies in place;
- State actors should establish and develop programs of special affirmative measures until the gender balance is reached in law enforcement agencies;
- State actors should ensure appropriate and sustainable funding for additional activities of GFPs;
- State actors should include a position of the Gender Focal Point as a separate position, with specific tasks and duties recognised by the Rulebook on the systematisation of positions and working places;
- Training should be organised for law enforcement agencies, prosecutor offices and judges to reach a unified approach and response to the subject;
- The programs should be developed to ensure an increase of female police officers in management positions;
- The Ministry of security agencies should consult the GFPs during the deployment of new and promotion of existing police officers;
- Female police organisations should regularly organise conferences providing platforms for dialogues among women in the security sector, tackling the main impediments to women's participation in the security sector and their possible solutions.

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List of interviews:

Interview with Gender Focal Point 1, conducted in Sarajevo on 02nd of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 2, conducted in East Sarajevo on 10th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 3, conducted in Sarajevo on 11th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 4, conducted in Sarajevo on 11th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 5, conducted in East Sarajevo on 15th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 6, conducted in Sarajevo on 16th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 7, conducted in Sarajevo on 16th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 8, conducted in Sarajevo on 26th of April 2022.

Interview with Gender Focal Point 9, conducted in Sarajevo on 27th of April 2022.

Annexe 1: Comparison of women's participation in sixteen law enforcement agencies in BiH for 2018 and 2020 (Jerkovic, 2021).

No.	Law enforcement agency	Participation of women – police officers (2018)	(2020)
1.	State Investigation and Protection Agency	75 or 15,12 %	85 or 15,48 %
2.	Sarajevo Canton	138 or 10,13 %	144 or 10,16 %
3.	Federation of BiH	49 or 9,35 %	54 or 10,48 %
4.	Tuzla Canton	126 or 9,08 %	143 or 9,66 %
5.	Republic of Srpska	486 or 9,01 %	496 or 9,27
6.	Zenica-Doboj Canton	95 or 8,70 %	91 or 8,64 %
7.	Podrinje Canton - Gorazde	13 or 8,33 %	14 or 8,91 %
8.	Posavina Canton	12 or 8 %	12 or 7,74 %
9.	Canton 10	23 or 7,88 %	27 or 8,39 %
10.	Border Police of BiH	147 or 7,78 %	180 or 8,81 %
11.	Una-Sana Canton	57 or 7,51 %	69 or 8,48 %
12.	West Herzegovina Canton	14 or 6 %	19 or 7,16 %
13.	Brčko District Police	14 or 5,53 %	16 or 6,13 %
14.	Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	34 or 5,32 %	42 or 6,14 %
15.	Direction for Coordination of Police Bodies of BiH	38 or 5,25 %	52 or 6,59 %
16.	Central Bosnia Canton	40 or 5,06%	46 or 5,72 %