

# Norway

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## Overview

Norway's first national action plan (NAP) on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted in 2006. The third and current NAP covers the period 2015-2018<sup>2</sup> and it was launched in February 2015. Four ministries lead the implementation of the current NAP: the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Defence (MoD), Justice and Public Security and Children, Equality and Social Inclusion.<sup>3</sup> The work is coordinated by the MFA which has also designated a coordinator to oversee all Norwegian actions in support of women, peace and security (WPS). The MFA is responsible for the majority of the concrete outputs which are listed in the NAP while others fall under the responsibility of the MoD. Although they are signatories to the NAP, neither the Ministry of Justice and Public Security nor the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion are actively in its implementation. As a result, they do not participate in the meetings with civil society which are coordinated by the MFA.

The current NAP includes four priority areas:

1. The peace processes and peace negotiations in which Norway is engaged involve both women and men, and peace agreements address the rights, needs and priorities of both women and men;
2. Women's and men's security, rights and needs are taken into account in all aspects of international operations;
3. The peacebuilding processes in which Norway is involved increase women's economic and political freedom of action and influence;
4. Norway's efforts in response to humanitarian crises safeguard the rights of both women and men and address their needs and priorities.

Thematically the current NAP does not differ greatly from the previous one. The main change is that preventing and combating sexual violence in conflict is now listed as a cross-cutting element of efforts in all four priority areas. Humanitarian assistance was a cross-cutting issue in the previous NAP and it has been expanded and more clearly defined in the current version.

As part of the concentration of Norway's official development assistance (ODA), the following five countries in which Norway has been involved in peace and reconciliation efforts have been selected as priority countries for NAP implementation: Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Palestine and South Sudan. With the exception of Colombia, these priority countries are also among the twelve focus countries of Norwegian development co-operation. In addition to the five priority countries, the Middle East is singled out as a priority region.

The NAP does not include any actions to be implemented within Norway. It does, however include several commitments relating to strengthening the gender expertise of Norwegian military

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<sup>1</sup> FORUM Norway 1325 is the main umbrella network for Norwegian civil society advocacy and engagement on Norway's UNSCR 1325 agenda. Its 21 member organisations include all of the major Norwegian humanitarian NGOs as well as political advocacy groups and women's organisations. They meet twice a year to coordinate advocacy points before formal meetings with the MFA on Norway's work on WPS.

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/835065f3bbcc4bc191bbd90f56212a12/annex-4---national-action-plan-for-women-peace-and-security-2015-2018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The previous NAP had five lead ministries but in 2013, the Ministry of International Development was merged with the MFA.

personnel and increasing the number of women Norway deploys to international military operations.

The NAP specifically addresses working with men and boys and includes a specific reference to the need to ensure that women, men, boys and girls are protected from sexual violence in humanitarian crises. It also acknowledges that male victims of sexual violence may experience different problems to women in the same situation.

The lack of a dedicated budget for implementing the NAP has been a major focus of civil society advocacy. In February 2015, the Norwegian government established a funding instrument on WPS to support civil society. Administered by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), it provided NOK 30 million per year for the duration of the current NAP.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the government has pushed for the integration of UNSCR 1325 into Norway's humanitarian assistance but it has not established a specific budget line for this. During the UNSC's high-level review on WPS in October 2015, the Norwegian State Secretary, Tone Skogen, committed Norway to allocating 10% of its peacebuilding funds to gender equality and women's empowerment. It is not yet clear how this funding will be used, including whether or not any of it will be allocated in support of women's participation in peace processes.

The NAP mentions regional organisations such as the EU, the African Union (AU), the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as important partners. It highlights the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an especially important institution for Norway to advance the implementation of UNSCR 1325 commitments.

## Design

The MFA led the process of developing the current NAP. It convened several meetings with selected civil society organisations (CSOs) and several meetings with FORUM Norway 1325. The purpose of these meetings was to enable CSOs to provide the MFA with both verbal and written inputs on the NAP. However, since the NAP's final targets and objectives were not shared with the CSOs until the very last minute, it was very difficult for them to participate effectively in the meetings. The co-operation between FORUM Norway 1325 and the relevant ministries is mentioned in the current NAP. In the meetings between the Forum and the Norwegian ministries, Norway's work on WPS is discussed, lessons learned are exchanged, and the FORUM members provide concrete recommendations for improvement. FORUM Norway 1325 receives no public funding for its work and no funding is available for public campaigns to inform Norwegian citizens about UNSCR 1325.

The main issues which Norwegian CSOs recommended for inclusion in the current NAP were:

- Strengthening the participation of local civil society, especially grassroots women's organisations and other women's groups, in peacebuilding processes;
- Engaging men and boys in the WPS agenda;
- Establishing a mechanism for systematic dialogue between Norwegian civil society and the Norwegian government on the implementation of the NAP;
- Holding an annual debate in parliament to discuss progress in the implementation of the WPS agenda;
- Adopting stronger policy measures aimed at ensuring that women have real influence in the peace negotiations which Norway supports.

The demands for greater transparency on the budget, accountability to parliament and stronger policy measures around women's influence in peace negotiations have not been taken into

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<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.norad.no/en/front/about-norad/news/2016/allocation-to-women-peace-and-security-2015-2016/>

account. However the current NAP has a much bigger focus on grassroots women's organization and collaboration with civil society that is a concrete result of the FORUM's advocacy.

## Implementation

It is difficult to assess how the NAP has been implemented or to identify any major successes. NORAD's 2015 annual result report includes information about a number of Norwegian achievements on UNSCR 1325.<sup>5</sup> For example in Colombia, Norway has for several years been pushing and assisting the negotiating parties, economically and politically, in their efforts to strengthen women's participation. Norway has also supported local women's organisations, both directly and through Norwegian CSO partnerships, in their efforts to bring their requests to the negotiating parties. Women's participation in the negotiating delegations has increased, and a special gender sub-commission for promoting women's rights and gender equality in the peace negotiations has been established.

In other areas, the impact is not so evident. Many Norwegian CSOs support partners working in conflict settings (including women's organisations). For example, in Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan and Sri Lanka, women have come together, organised themselves and mobilised local support in collaboration with Norwegian organisations. Norwegian CSOs have also deliberately engaged men, religious communities and local authorities. This has resulted in a change of attitudes towards women in local areas, including increased attention to sexual and gender-based violence. However, this has not translated into national and international political support to involve women pro-actively and meaningfully as equal partners in the peace processes.

A year after the NAP was published, the MFA released guidelines for the Foreign Service on *'Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda'*. These guidelines also included indicators which will be used as a basis for an annual report compiled by the MFA. As stated above, CSOs have recommended that parliament should also be involved in ensuring accountability for the implementation of the NAP. Following the publication of these NAP indicators, FORUM 1325 Norway is considering publishing its own shadow reports on the implementation of the Norwegian NAP.

## Review

A comprehensive review of Norway's 1325 NAP was undertaken in 2013, and finalised in a progress report which was published later that year.<sup>6</sup> More recently, a review commissioned by the Norwegian government and conducted between July 2015 and March 2016 assessed the rationale for and nature of Norway's advocacy engagement in the global WPS agenda, the outputs and outcomes of this engagement, and the main driving factors for the achievement or non-achievement of desired change.<sup>7</sup> CSOs were invited to provide comments on the draft review in March 2016.

Although the current NAP was launched in February 2015, no implementation review has taken place yet and none is currently foreseen. However, the Norwegian government has taken a number of initiatives to support the implementation of the NAP, including:

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<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.norad.no/en/toolspublications/publications/2015/results-report-2015.-womens-rights-and-gender-equality/>

<sup>6</sup> This report was focused on Norway's activities in 2012. See:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/kvinner-fred-sikkerhet-framdrift2012/id735962>

<sup>7</sup> The review entitled 'Norway as a Strategic Prime- Mover: Evaluation of Norway's Support for Advocacy in the Development Policy Arena - Women, Peace and Security Case Study Report', forms part of a broader evaluation of Norway's advocacy engagement 2005-2014.

- The development of the NAP implementation guidelines including indicators for monitoring the implementation process and a commitment by the MFA to produce annual reports on the indicators<sup>8</sup>;
- Support for the establishment of a Gender, Peace and Security Centre in Oslo;
- The creation of a dedicated funding instrument for strengthening civil society working on WPS initiatives in the priority countries;
- The establishment of the Nordic Women's Mediators Network to increase the pool of women available for international peace mediation processes.

## **Conclusion**

There have been a number of improvements since the adoption of the first NAP in 2006. Unlike the 2006 version, which contained vague goals as well as no budget or indicators and was unclearly divided between the various responsible ministries, the current NAP has an end date, indicators and has been supplemented by guidance for embassies on how it should be implemented.

Despite these positive developments, the Norwegian government must be more transparent and accountable with regards to efforts toward NAP implementation. The development of benchmarks and targets for measuring progress must be a priority. In addition, the presentation of an annual implementation report to parliament is an emerging good practice in other countries which Norwegian CSOs are pressing the Norwegian government to emulate. Furthermore, predictable and sustainable earmarked financing is a prerequisite for the effective realisation of the WPS agenda and this is still entirely lacking in Norway.

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<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/fn/veilder-kfs-engelsk090216.pdf>