

## 'Crippling to our credibility' that number of women peacekeepers is so low: UN chief

Despite greater participation of women in building and sustaining peace and the recognition from all quarters of the value they bring, the realities on the ground show that much more remains to be done, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres told Security Council members on Thursday.

"Every year, we make laudable commitments," Mr. Guterres [said](#) at the Council's annual high-level debate on women and peace and security.

"But they are not backed with the requisite financial and political support," he continued, noting lack of inclusion in mediation efforts and limited space for women to participate as peacebuilders.

He said it was "crippling to our credibility and protection capacity that women represent only 4 percent of our military peacekeepers and 10 percent of police." He added that the UN "fully supports the innovative efforts launched by Member States this year to incentivize greater representation."

Furthermore, women's organizations overall are not provided with adequate funding while resources for empowerment programmes are constrained, added the UN chief.

In his briefing, Mr. Guterres outlined key action points, which he will prioritize over the coming months, beginning with a commitment to ensure gender parity as well as stamping out all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse within the Organization.

He went on to note he will continue to push for greater and more meaningful participation of women in mediation efforts, as well as for a gendered approach to peace and security.

He said this meant "supporting peacebuilding at the local level, even during conflict ... We must consistently support the local women's groups that negotiate humanitarian access and support community resilience; learn from them; and build peace from the ground up."

Ensuring full financing for these and other measures is vital, added the Secretary-General, noting also that he has set up a task-force to review the UN's funding for gender equality, including in the peace and security pillar.

"Finally, from now on, I will include gender analysis in my reports to this Council whenever it is relevant to inform your decisions," he said.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director UN Women, briefs the Security Council meeting on women and peace and security

### **‘Continued tolerance’ of limited space for women ‘is shameful’**

Also speaking at the Security Council debate, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the head of UN Women, the Organization’s main gender equality and women’s empowerment agency, briefed on the Secretary-General’s report on women and peace and security.

Stating that the report is a “loud alarm bell” on systemic failures which have prevented women’s full involvement in peace-making, she called on UN Member States to ensure “genuine” efforts to include more women. “Our continued tolerance for the limited recognition of women’s expertise and lived experience is shameful.”

The 20th anniversary of the landmark Security Council resolution 1325, in 2020 will be an opportunity to shape the agenda for the next decade with new commitments and priorities, she continued, calling on everyone to participate sincerely in the process and contribute to lasting change.

Adopted in 2000, [resolution 1325](#) reaffirmed the critical role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, including peacebuilding, peacekeeping and in humanitarian responses. It also stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

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# Oslo leads the way in 'Breathe Life' campaign for cleaner cities in climate change era

Norway's capital Oslo is paving a fossil-free, electrified, path in its push toward improving air quality, the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) has announced.

The city is a global front runner when it comes to sustainability, having implemented methods of recycling waste into heat and electricity, and allowing cyclists precedence over private cars.

The Executive Director of UN Environment Erick Solheim, said the capital city's pollution reduction sets the example for "turning climate action into an opportunity."

A major contributor to dwindling emissions has been the city's transition toward renewable fuel solutions. Oslo has the highest number of electric vehicles in the world per capita, which alone has decreased CO2 emissions by 35 per cent since 2012, [UN Environment reports](#).

Benefits for drivers include reduced taxes, access to bus and taxi lanes, free travel on toll roads and public ferries, together with free municipal parking. All public transport in Oslo, and neighbouring Akershus, is to be powered completely by renewable energy by 2020.

Oslo is one among 42 cities taking part in Breathe Life, a campaign led by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), UNEP, and the [Climate & Clean Air Coalition](#) aimed at exploring clean air options and reducing pollutants to safe levels by 2030.

The network of participating cities are spread across the world, each tailoring their approach to clean air issues locally.

In Colombia's Santiago de Cali, the city has focused on the reduction of agricultural burning along with transport emissions. While in the capital of Ghana, Accra, where long hours are spent near wood and charcoal cookstoves, the city has outlined strategies to improve household and ambient air pollution.

Highlighting that such changes will improve the everyday lives of citizens, Mr. Solheim said, "I hope that other cities around the world will be inspired by what Oslo is doing."

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# 'Essential step' towards universal health care made at pivotal UN conference

United Nations Member States have unanimously vowed to strengthen primary health care, as an “essential step” towards achieving universal health coverage for all.

The commitment came at the [Global Conference on Primary Health Care](#), being held in the capital of Kazakhstan this week. Known as the [Declaration of Astana](#), it reaffirms the historic 1978 [Declaration of Alma-Ata](#), which was the first accord reached by world leaders on primary health care.

Thursday's declaration is also intended to help the world achieve [Sustainable Development Goal 3](#): “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.”

Today, instead of health for all, we have health for some – *Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General*

The 1978 declaration laid the foundation for universal primary health care, but progress over the past four decades has been uneven: today, half the world's population lacks access to essential health services – including care for non-communicable and communicable diseases, maternal and child health, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health.

The new Declaration has been made as a global movement grows for greater investment in primary health care to achieve universal health coverage: so far, health resources have been overwhelmingly focused on single disease interventions rather than strong, comprehensive health systems – a gap highlighted by several health emergencies in recent years.

“Today, instead of health for all, we have health for some,” said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). “We all have a solemn responsibility to ensure that today's declaration on primary health care enables every person, everywhere to exercise their fundamental right to health.”

The signatories to the Declaration made pledges in four key areas: for bold political choices for health to be made across all sectors; to build sustainable primary health care; to empower individuals and communities; and to align stakeholder support to national policies, strategies and plans.

The World Health Organization (WHO), UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the Government of Kazakhstan are co-hosting the Global Conference on Primary Health Care, described as “pivotal” by the WHO, with participants including

government ministers from around the world, health workers, activists and leaders from civil society and the private sector.

In a joint statement, UNICEF and WHO promised to help governments and civil society to act on the Declaration of Astana and support the implementation of the pledges made in the Declaration.

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## **FROM THE FIELD: Enslaved Guatemalan indigenous women wait for reparations**

Fifteen Guatemalan women from the Q'eqchi indigenous group, who were enslaved and raped by the military during the Central American country's 36-year-long civil conflict, are still waiting for hard-won reparations to materialize.

✘ With the help of local women's rights organizations, including UN Women and other UN partners, the women from Sepur Zarco in the east of Guatemala succeeded in securing the conviction of two former military officers on charges of crimes against humanity, back in 2016.

The women of Sepur Zarco in Guatemala fought and won a groundbreaking case against two former military officers accused of crimes against humanity. (April 2018)

UN Women/Ryan Brown

It was a groundbreaking legal decision; the first time anywhere in the world that a national court had prosecuted sexual slavery during conflict using national legislation and international criminal law.

The women were granted a total of 18 reparation measures, including education for the children of their community, access to land, a health-care clinic and other interventions which would help to confront what UN Women has described as "the abject poverty their community has endured across generations."

But UN Women say that many of the reparations have not been paid.

[Read more here](#), about the women known respectfully as the abuelas (grandmothers) of Sepur Zarco.

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# UN agency ramps up effort to counter growing nuclear threat from cyberspace

As part of its efforts to strengthen nuclear security worldwide, the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)), announced on Wednesday that it has developed a training programme designed to protect facilities from the growing threat of cyber-attacks.

The programme kicked off in October with a course entitled “Protecting Computer-Based Systems in Nuclear Security Regimes,” which brought together 37 participants from 13 countries for two weeks of immersive training on best practices in computer security.

The IAEA is the world’s central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field.

The new course, developed together with the US Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and hosted by the Idaho National Laboratory, is the first in a series of IAEA information and computer security courses focusing on raising awareness of the threat posed by cyber-attacks, and their potential impact on nuclear facilities around the world.

Participants tested their skills on mock-ups that accurately replicate state-of-the-art digital systems common in today’s control rooms, where digital technologies provide functions that support safe operations, security, and the protection of sensitive information.

“Everyone with responsibility for nuclear security must have a thorough understanding of the vulnerabilities of their systems,” said Raja Adnan, Director of the IAEA’s Division of Nuclear Security, adding that “they must know how to prevent and mitigate possible cyber-attacks on those systems.”

In June, IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano [warned](#) a Paris conference on the use of digital technology in the nuclear industry, that instrumentation and control systems in nuclear power plants could be subject to cyber-attacks, with potentially serious consequences.

He urged the nuclear industry and national regulators to build up the data and experience needed to ensure that new systems meet all reliability and performance requirements.

The IAEA, which is headquartered in the Austrian capital, Vienna, works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations’ [Sustainable Development Goals](#).