

President Biden: Statement on the women, peace, and security report

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My Administration is committed to a simple but profoundly meaningful proposition—all people, everywhere, are entitled to be treated with inherent human dignity. Yet, in far too many places, women and girls are denied their basic rights, cut off from opportunity, subjected to violence and abuse, or prevented from pursuing their dreams and ambitions. And, in conflicts around the world, rape and sexual violence are used systematically to terrorize civilians—not as incidental to conflict but as a weapon of war itself. It's an atrocity, meant to destabilize nations and dehumanize communities, and it is intolerable.

I learned from my father that the cardinal sin was the abuse of power. That's a major reason why fighting to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence in the United States and around the world has been a central part of my life's work. Under my Administration, we will harness our full toolset to prevent and respond to gender-based violence wherever it occurs, including in areas of conflict. There is no justification or excuse. It's just wrong. And advancing the rights of women and girls starts by ensuring their safety.

Beyond the moral imperative to advance gender equity and gender equality around the world; beyond principles of justice and fairness; beyond clear notions of right and wrong, it's just basic math. No community, economy, or undertaking can reach its potential if women are denied the ability to fully participate in their societies—to contribute their ideas and energies. No nation will be able to keep up with the speed and scale of today's challenges if half of its talent and brain power is left behind.

We know that everyone in a society does better when everyone participates. Economies grow. Poverty shrinks. Education rates and health outcomes improve. Political instability and extremism decline. When women are engaged fully in

building and maintaining peace and security in their countries, we see more sustainable and more equitable outcomes, less conflict, and longer-lasting peace agreements. If we hope to succeed in building peace and prosperity and delivering real progress, women must be engaged at every step. That's why, during the Obama-Biden Administration, we developed the first comprehensive National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in American history. And in 2017, the United States passed bipartisan legislation to translate those commitments into law.

This report takes stock of the progress we have made over the past few years in implementing that law, and points the way forward across four agencies of the United States Federal Government—the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—as we continue to advance the Women, Peace, and Security agenda globally. It evaluates four lines of effort, including meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to conflict and crises, protection, internal U.S. capabilities, and partner support. While we have made important strides, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have unfortunately also seen too many examples where we are moving in the wrong direction. We have been reminded how fragile our progress can be and how quickly the potential of women and girls can be lost. The pandemic has exposed so many of the inequities in our world—hitting the most vulnerable the hardest, exacerbating challenges that impact the most marginalized in our societies—and as we rebuild, we cannot be content to just get back to where we were. We have to seize this moment to fundamentally change our approach.

While this [report](#) focuses on the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security and USAID, I have instructed departments and agencies across the Federal Government to prioritize gender equity and equality. The persistent unequal treatment of women around the world— particularly women of color, LGBTQI+ women, and other women who face overlapping forms of discrimination—remains a critical, unfinished project of our time. I am committed to making the promotion of human rights for all people a core pillar of our foreign policy. Our goal is a world where every individual has the tools and the opportunity they need to thrive, where everyone can pursue their unique purpose free from the fear of violence. Empowering women globally—ensuring their inclusion in decision making and leadership positions—is essential to achieving that goal.

To view the report, visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/USG-Women-Peace-and-Security-Congressional-Report->



[June-2021.pdf](#)